

## NEWSLETTER 341

Autumn 2020

### How much can we fit in???

It has been another jam packed month, with lots going on, despite the ongoing coronavirus situation. So we have another bumper newsletter to keep you up to date with everything that is going on. We have already had a number of members get in touch to say they are enjoying the longer, more indepth articles in recent months – please do get in touch with your comments (good or bad!)

### The sky is falling down...

Well, maybe not quite, but a nasty accident was narrowly avoided on the morning of 18 August, when a central chunk of masonry fell from above the 3rd floor window of no. 8 Regency Square. As most residents will know, the masonry surrounds on many of the original facades are held on wooden supports, and it seems one just gave way.



The masonry chunk tore through the balcony railings below on its way down, but luckily no-one was outside on their balconies or on the street below.

The fire brigade quickly arrived and closed the road and after some toing and froing to get the right ladders in the right place was able to inspect the damage. Shortly afterwards scaffolders arrived to make the whole area safe.



*Fireman inspecting the damage*



Massive thanks to Roger Hinton, our “man on the scene” for the report and the action pictures.

### South African War Memorial to shine again

We reported back in Spring on the very welcome news that the Council intends to restore the South African War Memorial. RSAS was recently contacted by the Council again to discuss plans as the work is getting underway.

This refurbishment has been stuck in the Council pipeline for many years. However, by combining this restoration work and the restoration of the Hilder's Field ancient flint wall in Rottingdean - with both projects coming from the same £20,000 funding - it has now become possible to carry out this work (and nothing to do with tourist signatures, despite what some wish to claim!)

Committee members Julie Wright and Mary Hunter had a socially distanced meeting with Barbara Goodfellow, the B&H council building surveyor in charge of the project, to understand exactly what the work will entail.

First, alarmed scaffolding has been erected to allow inspection of the monument to fully assess any damage. The aim of the work is restoration not conservation, and



the project has been specified in accordance with Historic England guidance on war memorials. The current scope of works is as follows:

- Condition survey before and after;
- Hand cleaning of bronze work;
- Steam cleaning of other areas;
- Wax treatment of bronze;
- Inspection and assessment of lettering & fixings, with a view to removing any active corrosion to lettering, leaving existing sound patina intact;
- Replacement of corroded railings with new galvanized ones; and
- Replaced and restored railing are to be painted black, as at present.

The contractors being used for the restoration work have also done extensive work on the Pavilion and St. Peter's Church. Completion is scheduled for the end of December.

Further good news for local residents is that the access tunnel to the beach should be able to remain open whilst the work is underway.

Although there is no budget for cleaning and repairing the surrounding steps, Mary and Julie suggested that this would really enhance the work on the memorial. They also pointed out what a shame it would be for motorbikes to return once work was completed. Barbara said she would see what could be done on both counts!

## Cannon Place Hotel Planning Application

Regular readers will know the Society has been tracking this potential development since early 2019.

Mike Davies, our planning officer provides the latest status as we go to press:



*The original Royal Newburgh Assembly Rooms, corner of St Margaret's Place and Cannon Place*



*And the proposal – a welcome restoration of the Grade II listed elements plus less welcome significant additions to make the north elevation of Cannon Place Hotel.*

**Early 2020:** Planning permission specialists Lichfields was hired by Topland Group to lead development proposals for a Cannon Place Hotel through the local

Planning process. The initial designs are by EPR Architects Limited.

**June 2020:** Lichfields provided a website [www.cannonplacehotel-consultation.com](http://www.cannonplacehotel-consultation.com) of Cannon Place Hotel information, through which it conducted a simple online public consultation. Only a small number of local residents were leafleted by Lichfields. RSAS along with other amenity groups and our ward councillors spread the word and drove up the number of individual responses.

**July 16 – July 30:** Lichfield's planning application numbers BH2020/01951 and BH2020/01952 (one for planning permission and one for listed building consent) were received and validated at the council's Planning Department. Although Lichfield's consultation process promised to carry forward all residents' and organisations' submissions into the application, only a cursory and selected summary has appeared.

**August 26:** Saw the deadline for public comments on the application, supporting/neutral/objecting. RSAS made every effort to encourage all organisations to submit their consultation comments again to the council's Planning Department.

**October 29:** is the target date for the council's determination of this planning application. Should there be insufficient, missing or challenged information in the application, the Planning Department can ask for a further revised submission. Should there be public or consultant or council comment raising aspects requiring new consideration or modification, again a revised submission would be required. In each case, planning application BH2020/01951 would be refused. The Planning Department would give an 'Officer's Report' and an accompanying 'Decision' in

which the reasons for approval or refusal would be listed.

We may be going round this loop a number of times!

## Protecting the privacy of numbers 33 to 42 Regency Square

The Society has been in touch with premises on the north of Regency Square to alert them to a renewed attack on their privacy.

Refurbishment of Russell House in 2016 was a very contentious planning application as the resultant flats would always stare down into the listed buildings to the south - at the top of Regency Square. Approval was only given on condition that a 1.5m high obscured glass screen be installed all along the fourth-floor terrace PLUS that all south facing windows had obscured glass and were non-opening.

- In 2018 Russell House tried to have these essential privacy conditions removed – their attempt was rebuffed by the council, some residents and RSAS.
- In February 2020 Russell House tried again to reduce the essential screening in a new planning application. Due again to submissions from the council and from RSAS, that application was refused - the privacy conditions are as essential today as when they were first granted in 1987, when the building was offices, and reaffirmed during the change of use from offices to flats.

Russell House is now appealing against that February 2020 Brighton & Hove local planning decision to the Secretary of State, attempting to overturn the decision and increase overlooking of its neighbours.

The Society has made a representation. We also encouraged each affected Regency Square resident to submit their own Comment of Objection against the Appeal and to protect their hard won privacy. We fear this Appeal will be successful without submissions from residents.

And yet, Russell House is ***already in breach of planning rules today:***

**Breach (1)** There is no privacy screening along the entirety of the existing south elevation terrace. See through to the bedroom and living room windows of Regency Square ...



*Estate Agent Photograph of the fourth floor terrace of Russell House – chicken wire instead of required 1.5m high obscured glass!*

**Breach (2)** The installation of opening windows in some south facing flats also breaches the planning conditions. Flats 40 and 39 have installed a window each in their living room that, although still obscured glazing, ***now opens***, contrary to conditions and causing considerable overlooking of the Regency Square premises:



*Opening Windows – South Facing. Might as well not be obscure glazing*

The Council really needs to step up its enforcement processes, as otherwise developers will just agree to planning conditions to get permission and then ignore any conditions once they're done – as is so obviously the case here.

**Don't forget**, if you want to check what's being planned in your area, try typing in your street name in the Brighton & Hove City Council Planning Portal, search <https://planningapps.brighton-hove.gov.uk/online-applications/>

## Talking Rubbish....

If we mention the following three words yet again, please don't give up on us:

## RUBBISH RECYCLING BINS

Instead, join us in contributing (before November 24<sup>th</sup>) to the Council's consultation on tightening the rules about trade bins in the streets.

Our area is covered by the proposals, and you can make your views known at:

<https://consultations.brighton-hove.gov.uk/rubbish-recycling-and-streets/commercial-bins/>

No puns. Serious business. Your views are valued.



## Why Did The Pillar Box?

... Because it saw the iron fence! (with thanks to Roger for the pun).



Well, this pillar boxed – and looks to have come off the worse. We cannot confirm exactly how it came to be lying on its side

outside Kings Hotel on Kings Road – there are no police reports, only a resident having heard a crash early morning on the 4th of March. However, we can confirm it is an important and historic piece of street furniture. The royal cypher (see picture below)



shows it to be from the reign of King Edward VII and likely a 1905 example. Our assumption had been that the Post Office or council highways department would simply reinstate the pillar box. However, we received reports that it might just be taken away! Not if we could help it.

The Society sought help from the Letter Box Study Group <http://lbsg.org/> who kindly put us in touch with 'Royal Mail Post box Appearance' to seek assurances to protect its future.



monument to King Edward VII.

“Royal Mail Post Boxes” – is the title of a **Joint Policy Statement** by Royal Mail and Historic England (In consultation with the Letter Box Study Group and The Postal Museum).

The new policy confirms their commitment to the conservation of the historic character and diversity of post boxes and sets out how Royal Mail intends to continue to manage and conserve the post box estate. Let's hope our letter does the trick ... we just need somewhere to post it!

.....**Post – Haste!**

As quick as that we have had a result! Our fallen icon is back on its feet to fight another day – or one hundred and fifteen years based on the last round. The Society's correspondence with Royal Mail and the Letter Box Study Group has resulted in a win for all as we can confirm that the dislodged Edward VII pillar box has now been reinstated.



Our actions may be being guided? This fallen icon has a guardian angel looking on from across the road. The Peace Statue is actually a memorial

Given it has lain on its side throughout the coronavirus restrictions since March this really is a result!

## Stop press!

As regular readers of our newsletter will know, the Society likes to promote local businesses wherever possible, especially in these difficult times. In our Summer newsletter we produced a full guide to all the local restaurants that were participating in the Eat Out to Help out Scheme.

The Artist Resident's Clubhouse and the Set re-opened **just** after our last publication date, so we wanted to make readers aware that they are both now open and Covid safe. The Clubhouse is open daily for breakfast and lunch, and dinner Thursday to Saturday. The Set is open for dinners Monday to Wednesday, but will now only host twelve people – so make sure and book ahead!

## Update on our gardens

Below, Gill Wales, leader of the volunteer gardening group, provides an update on how our gardens are doing...

In September, we heard that City Parks would allow volunteer garden groups to resume work in October as long as the local covid alert remained at green or yellow. Which it did – until October 6, when the council raised the alert level to amber. Six days later, the government's new three tier alert system was introduced. At the time of writing, we are waiting to hear what this means for volunteer groups.



*Tiny green shoots of grass recovering from Summer's scorched earth in Regency Square*

Meanwhile, the cooler weather and autumn rains are helping Regency Square's battered shrubs put on new growth. Some shrubs, including a few that had in any case reached an advanced state of old age, have definitely given up the struggle. Most of these have been removed by volunteers permitted to work solo. They (the shrubs, not the volunteers) are piled in a temporary heap within the north border. The casualties include some of the small flowering shrubs from the circular bed.

The circular bed in Regency Square's top garden was created in the spring of 2012, by the society's previous garden volunteer group. The large shrub in the centre, a *Cytisus*, still produces bright yellow flowers every spring. Earlier this year, we under-planted it with some grape hyacinths, sourced for free by one of the current group. Look out for these little purple flowers in the spring of 2021.



*Fabulous yellow Cytisus and grape hyacinths to look forward to in Spring*

As with the current group, the first job the previous volunteers had to tackle was tidying the overgrown borders in the top garden of Regency Square. These borders had been created just nine years earlier, but council budgets were already being squeezed in the aftermath of the financial crash, and the borders needed more tlc than the council gardeners could supply.

The previous volunteers also planted wildflowers and wild grasses on the sloping upper edge of the middle lawn. Sadly, these were not so successful. Establishing wildflower plantations is not as easy as one might suppose, as the current group found this year.

Of course, it's not wholly accurate to refer to the 'previous volunteers' and the 'current group', since the latter includes several members of the former! What's more, one of our current members was part of the team that planted 200 tulip and daffodil bulbs in the Regency Square garden in 2002.

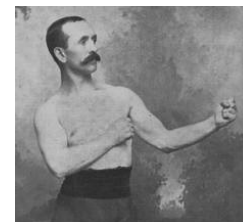
Back to the present and the Norfolk Square gardening group is hoping to obtain some young Hebe bushes from Plumpton College. At the time of writing details were still being finalised but, if all goes to plan, Norfolk Square has kindly offered to share the bushes with other local volunteer groups, including ours. Hebes do well in all three of our gardens and their flowers are beloved of bees, so these will be very welcome additions to the three squares.



*Hebes and bees – gorgeous!*

### **Suzanne's local history column**

This month, well-known local historian, and still missed RSAS Committee member, Suzanne Hinton (with thanks to by Gill Wales' fact checking expertise) answers the question: **Why "Queensbury"?**



It is often assumed that Queensbury Mews is named after the 9th Marquess of Queensbury, originator of the Queensbury boxing rules and arch nemesis of Oscar Wilde. In fact, this little street, hidden behind Regency Square and the Metropole Hotel, bore the name Queensbury well before the 9th Marquess came to Brighton.

Let's go back a few years to the very early 19th century. By 1820, between Regency Square and the area that would later become the Metropole Hotel, a row of grand houses had been built in Kings Road on the seafront, facing the sea. Two of those houses are now numbered 127 and 128 Kings Road. The latter was demolished in about 2002 and replaced by a modern building. The former, an elegant bow-fronted Regency house, has suffered much from the enclosure of the original wrought-iron balconies.



128 and 127 Kings Road between Abbots and Queensbury Mews

As early as 1814, these two houses together were known as Queensbury Place – in much the same way as Nos 132 and 133 Kings Road were together called Belle Vue (see ***“Regency Square, its history and its stories”***). Contact RSAS if you would like to buy the book!

The deeds of 128 Kings Road show that it was originally 1 Queensbury Place. These two houses were very much precursors of Airbnb. Contemporary news cuttings - from 1826 and the mid-1860s - constantly mention comings and goings such as:

The Duke and Duchess of St Albans have taken a house in Queensbury-place, in addition to the one which their Graces now occupy in Brunswick-square.

BRIGHTON GAZETTE 26 November 1829

Mrs Priest vacates her residence in Queensberry Place

BRIGHTON GAZETTE 11 August 1831

Mrs Lewes is at 1 Queensbury Place

BRIGHTON GUARDIAN 1 October 1865

Original, Queensbury Mews - or Queensberry Mews, if you prefer, the local newspapers never could make up their minds what the correct spelling should be – ran up from the seafront beside what is now the Metropole Hotel, turned left behind Nos 123 to 130 Kings Road and emerged into Regency Square. In 1823 the Mews was extended northwards to accommodate stabling for Nos, 51 – 69 Regency Square.

Over the years, the little street behind Queensbury Place / Kings Road, has been called variously Regency Square Mews, Lower Regency Mews and Queensbury Mews. The earliest recorded of the present-day name was in 1841:

A VERY HANDSOME GRAY HORSE 15 hands high, 8 years old, well trained to both single and double harness; has been used to the saddle, and being well-bred would make a good hunter. Warranted sound, quiet in harness, and free from vice. A trial allowed – Enquire at No. 2 Queensberry Mews, Regency Square.

BRIGHTON GAZETTE 29 July 1841

The 9th Marquess of Queensberry (he of the boxing rules) was not born until 1844. He was known to frequent the Metropole Hotel (opened in 1890), often coming to Brighton for the purpose of better hounding Oscar Wilde in the mid-1890s.

So, if Queensbury Place and Queensbury Mews were not named for the 9th Marquess, how did they acquire their name?



The most likely candidate is that “old reprobate”, the 4th Duke of Queensbury, often known as Old Q. The Duke was an ardent and honest sportsman, even going to the extent of riding (and winning) races with his own horses, although he won only one race on the Brighton course in mid-May 1789.

He was, by all accounts, a generous man and is credited with being one of the three main promoters (and possibly a financier) of the Brighton racecourse which opened in 1783. Old Q died in 1810 – at much the time when the stretch of Kings Road between the





Metropole Hotel and Regency Square was first being developed. What better way to honour a patron of the town that to name a "Place" after him?

### Queensbury Mews' most famous resident!

Of course, you cannot mention Queensbury Mews without mentioning its most famous resident - the Queensbury Arms! Committee member Julie Wright pops in to investigate the history of this local gem (it's a tough job but someone's got to do it...!)

I bet few of you know that our famous little pub even predates the French Protestant Church opposite - that hallowed ground used to be the pub's beer store! Originally the pub was even smaller than it is today with 2 bars at the front each with its own door. What is now the back bar was the landlord's sitting room, which ladies were allowed to enter to use the landlord's own toilet - gentlemen were outside around the back! No wonder they needed a third door with a hatch, hence the local name of Hole in the Wall (which you can just make out in the picture), to serve fishermen and latterly WW2 soldiers camped out locally preparing for action in France.



The Queensbury Arms is moving forward on to its next chapter of history. John Osborne, who has run the pub since 1998 is to retire. John started his career in Blackpool in the 1960's, which was then in its heyday. People would book-in with a landlady for their week's holiday and you could catch as many as nine shows a week. Theatre, especially musicals, was

king with line-ups constantly changing. John enjoyed musicals and was keen to spot hotels throwing out posters from the ever-changing shows. This started a life-long collection of theatre billboards which can be seen in the pub today.



*The Queensbury Arms bar, with its billboards*

John moved on and started his long working relationship with Geoff and Joe Waters. First at The Mason Arms Whitney Oxon, Alston Hall Devon and then coming to Brighton to start-up The Bulldog! But he didn't stay here long. He went on to manage more pubs in Essex and the West End of London, adding more posters to the collection, some of them signed. Wanting a quieter life John came back to Brighton, where Geoff and Joe bought the Queensbury Arms for him to manage.

The rest as they say is history, now 22 years on he's moving again but for a real rest this time. We wish him all the best and YES, those posters are staying. It's worth popping-in you never know who you'll meet, be it Tom Watson, Mabel or even Joe Wilkinson, the banter is always



good. And, if you pop in soon, you'll be able to have a pint of the Queensbury Arm's very own new Craft Pilsner lager called – you've guessed it – The Queensbury!

All our best to the new owner who will inherit a wealth of locals and visitors from local hotels and conferences.

The Queensbury Arms is Covid compliant and open for business every day 4pm – 10pm.

### Even more local history....

The RSAS website has had a bit of a revamp! As part of our work to spruce up the website, local author and historian Gill Wales has produced a captivating history of the three garden squares: Clarence, Russell and Regency. She explains how they first came to be, how they were used during the war, and the post war landscaping and re-landscaping that led to the gardens we have today.

You can read this history, and see some rare photos of the gardens over the years, like the ones below, at [https://regencybrighton.com/our\\_garden\\_squares/](https://regencybrighton.com/our_garden_squares/)



*Russell Square, c. 1914-20. James Gray Collection. Courtesy of The Regency Society.*



*Clarence Square 1960s. Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton & Hove.*

And after you have read about the gardens' history, maybe you might also want to take a look at the plans (developed from your input) for the further regeneration of the Regency Square gardens [https://regencybrighton.com/regeneration\\_strategy\\_for\\_regency\\_square\\_document/](https://regencybrighton.com/regeneration_strategy_for_regency_square_document/)

The results from our extensive survey of local residents and businesses are clear: the Regency Square gardens should be maintained largely as they are, but with greater maintenance, planting and replaced and improved hardscaping. Residents love the formal top garden and the open green spaces in the middle and lower gardens.

We know that individuals who do not live on Regency Square have proposed adding tennis courts, giant sundials based on the i360's shadow, and ripping out the circular bed in the top garden to replace it with an 'entertainment space' but these radical proposals are just not supported by local residents and

businesses who want the essential character of these gardens maintained.

The RSAS Committee continues to pursue the promised garden regeneration funding from the Council (courtesy of the requirements under the BA i360's planning permission) in order to make these plans a reality.

### Anti-social behaviour in the community

There is no doubt that anti-social behaviour in our community has increased in recent months. The RSAS Committee are working with our local PCSOs and our ward councillors to see what more can be done to address this rising problem – watch this space for further news on those discussions.

In the meantime, the advice we have received to date is that police resources will be diverted to the areas with most need. So it is **essential** that we all report all incidents to the police – no matter how small – so they get a clear picture of what is happening in our area.

We understand how frustrating it is to be kept hanging on the telephone line, which is why a good way to report non-emergencies is to either email [101@sussex.pnn.police.uk](mailto:101@sussex.pnn.police.uk) or via the Sussex Police form on their website [www.sussex.police.uk/contact/af/contact-us/](http://www.sussex.police.uk/contact/af/contact-us/).

### Fly tipping

This mattress was dumped in the Regency Square garden in August. A day later and a few metres away, a broken bicycle was dumped.



At times fly tipping in Clarence Square is so bad that you could almost set up home with the number of articles left by the communal bins.

The council clears fly-tipped rubbish swiftly once they know it's there. But they rely on members of the public to let them know. There is now a dedicated hotline for this. So if you see fly tipped rubbish in any of our streets and public gardens, let the council know by calling 01273 295063.

The hotline is staffed Monday – Friday 8am to 5pm. Out of these hours, messages can be left, or you can report the problem any time online: <https://new.brighton-hove.gov.uk/report-problem-and-request-clean>

### Our Tidy Up Team



Another way to get involved to improve our neighbourhood is to join the Tidy Up Team. Despite the limitations due to social distancing guidelines, the Council's training and induction for Tidy Up Teams have been going ahead and there are already a number of individuals in our area who have been inducted.

RSAS has also been in contact with Goodgym – who do an amazing amount of good work locally and more widely – on setting up a much bigger communal tidy up and graffiti cleaning day. More on that shortly! Check out the Goodgym website to see



the great work that they do:  
<https://www.goodgym.org/areas/brighton>

In the meantime, if you would like more information on getting involved with the Tidy Up team, please contact committee chair Diana Dunn.

## Brighton Little Theatre

Members will know that this is a tough time for Arts venues, and we want to do everything we can to help those venues in our area. So if you are thinking of an evening out to the theatre, the Brighton Little Theatre on Clarence Gardens is open and covid safe.



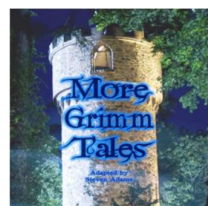
*Coward Coupling, Brighton Little Theatre's most recent production*

They have a brilliant upcoming programme this winter including:



### 3-7 November

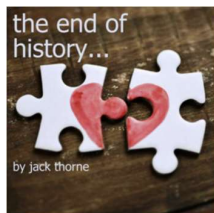
A double bill of A Visit from Miss Prothero and Afterplay



### 11—19 December 2020

A follow up to the brilliant 2018 production of Grimm Tales including:

Rapunzel, The Frog Prince, The Pied Piper Hamelin, Hans-my-Hedgehog, The Donkey Cabbage, and others.



### 2—6 February 2021

The End of History

More details, including how to book tickets, are available at  
<https://www.brightonlittletheatre.com/productions>

## The RSAS Xmas tree

While it is ridiculous to be thinking about Christmas while it is still October (!), the Committee has been giving some thought to the annual Christmas tree lighting event. Sadly, given the ongoing coronavirus restrictions, it is very unlikely that we will be able to hold our annual community event with the BA i360 and the Artist Residence this year to view the lighting of the community Christmas tree in Regency Square.



However, we are hopeful that with some goodwill and Christmas cheer we may still be able to erect a Christmas tree in the Square. Rest assured, if it is safe to do so, we will get a tree up to spread some Christmas cheer this winter.

## Final thoughts....

As a potentially difficult winter closes in, we wanted to remind you that the RSAS Covid-19 Community Initiative will continue to run for those who need it. If you need any more information, you can find it on our website at  
[https://regencybrighton.com/society/rsas\\_covid\\_19\\_community\\_initiative/](https://regencybrighton.com/society/rsas_covid_19_community_initiative/)

And a reminder that RSAS membership remains free for this year, so if you know of anyone who would like to join, please pass along this offer and ask them to contact any member of the Committee.

As always, we are very grateful to all our members who have made donations and rolled their fees forward after we took the decision to suspend subscription fees during these uncertain times. Your generosity never ceases to amaze us!

**Thank you all, and stay safe and well**

***The RSAS Committee***

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