



Regency Square Area Society

NEWSLETTER 170
December 2001

Regency Breakfast

The day is Sunday 30 December 2001. The time is 10 am and the place is the Regency Restaurant at the southwest corner of Regency Square.

Be there to enjoy a leisurely breakfast with your neighbours.

No pre-booking is required. Just turn up and take a seat.

Cooked or continental breakfast will be available. The cost depends on what you choose. A typical cooked breakfast will be less than £4.

If you want more information call Roger Hinton (☎ 321794).

Society Contacts

Chairman and Acting Treasurer: Roger Hinton
☎ 321794 email hinton@clara.net
Secretary: Andrew Walker ☎ 700340

www.regencybrighton.com

Local PC Retires

For several years PC Andy Rolmanis has been the local community police officer for the sea front and surrounding areas.. This month he retires from the force.

In a letter to the Society he said "It is with great interest that I have read all the Society's news letters... There is always something that you are collectively campaigning for to improve your area. That is a credit to you and long may it continue."

Thanks to Andy for his own efforts to improve our area. We wish him a happy retirement.

His place will be taken by PC Dan Stevens.

Light at Last

Street lighting is vital. It reduces the risk of accidents and helps people to feel safe as they walk around the town after dark.

For the first time since March we now have all the street lights working in Regency Square!

A new light has also been installed at the bottom of Queensbury Mews. It is attached to the side of number 66 Regency Square and is much welcomed for illuminating a previously gloomy corner.

Ghosts and Gaslights



Did you know that the Brighton's Theatre Royal is haunted? Or that the expression "in the limelight" comes from the fact that when theatres were lit by gas the powerful spotlights were created by burning lime in the gas flame.

These were just two of the fascinating bits of history which a group of Society members learnt when we had a guided tour of the theatre.

It was a Saturday morning but the theatre was full of activity, including a TV crew filming a day in the life of a pantomime star (to be shown on the Nickelodeon cable channel on Christmas day).

We went backstage and met Bill who looks after the stage door. We had our photo taken on the stage. We visited the star dressing rooms (unfortunately the panto stars weren't there at the time). And we ended the tour in the Gods looking down on the whole auditorium.

A fascinating visit to one of Brighton's most wonderful buildings!



Best wishes for a merry Christmas and a happy new year from the committee to all members of the Society.



Don't forget to join your friends and neighbours for breakfast.



The Regency Restaurant
10 am
Sunday 30 December 2001

New Plans - Same Old Idea

The plans for a major development either side of the West Pier have been changed.

The new plans were presented to the Save our Seafront campaign group and representatives of other amenity societies at a meeting on 10 December.

Nick Doyle, a director of St Modwen Properties, the company hoping to develop the pier, said that the scheme had been modified to take account of comments made on the original plans.

The new scheme does look a bit different from the previous one. However, the concept is still the same: major structures projecting above the upper promenade either side of the pier.

Now you see it ... now you don't

The form of the buildings has been changed a bit to try to deal with objections that views of the pier and sea will be lost.

There will be fewer but larger gaps in the buildings and the roof lines have been varied a bit. David Keirle of architects KSS said that the resulting effect would be of a series of pavilions, rather than a single building.

Those who saw the drawings were not convinced. The impression is still very much one of solid slabs of building.

Another view put forward by the architects is that the gaps will provide tantalising glimpses of the sea and the pier as people walk along the upper promenade. "Now you see it ... now you don't."

Conservation or Commerce?

Walkways leading from the promenade will tempt people through the new buildings and lead them ultimately onto the pier itself.

This is a grand idea if your main interest is to make money out of new, prime site commercial property. Glimpses of the Pier may well tempt customers towards the points of sale

In the meantime the whole point of the exercise, a restored West Pier, will be hidden, as will be the sea itself.

How low? How high? .

The new plans involve reducing the height of the lower promenade a little. However this does not seem to have reduced the height of the buildings above the upper promenade which are shown to be about the same height as the Rock Shop and the Al Fresco Restaurant. From lower promenade to roof the new buildings will be over 10 metres high which suggests they might be higher than originally suggested..

A slightly larger gap has been allowed between the buildings and the pier itself - between 1 and 1.5 metres extra. The architects' presentation included a view down Regency Square which showed that the new buildings will be clearly visible. The further you walk down the Square the more visible they will become, blocking out views along the coast to east and west.

Under the Pier

The plans do not show precisely what sort of businesses will occupy each building. There has been mention of a food court in the former concert hall on the pier.

There are fairly definite ideas for the area under the pier. This will only be developed as far as the existing beach front walkway, which will be retained pretty well in its present position. The building under the pier to the north of it will be used as a heritage centre by the West Pier Trust and may also include public toilets.

This or Nothing at All

St Modwen Properties shares the view put forward by the West Pier Trust that we must accept a development on this scale or lose the pier.

From the views expressed at the meeting with St Modwen it is clear that the Save our Seafront campaigners do not agree. There has to be another way because the pier is too important to lose, or to hide behind a row of shops and cafes.

The Decision ...

... will be made once St Modwen have submitted their planning application, which they expect to do early in January.

There will be three main decision makers. The Heritage Lottery Fund (advised by English Heritage) has to decide whether to put their money into the scheme. The Council has to decide whether to give planning permission. The final decision will probably be made by the Secretary of State.

The Regency Ward and Pavilion constituency Labour Groups have already decided that they are against the scheme. Let's hope they can persuade their councillors to take the same view.

Have You Paid Your Subscription?

There are still a few members who have not renewed their subscriptions for the current year. If your subscription is due there will be a cross in the box below. Please help keep the Society strong by renewing your membership today!



To Roger Hinton, Acting Treasurer, Regency Square Area Society, 39 Regency Square, Brighton BN1 2FJ

I would like to renew my membership of the Regency Square Area Society for the year 2001/2002 in the category ticked below:

	£
Ordinary member	4.00
Family	4.50
Senior Citizen	3.50
Junior	2.00
Associate (non-resident)	3.50
Business (non-resident)	6.50
Basic subscription	_____
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Total enclosed	_____

Name

Address

Payment by cash or cheque payable to Regency Square Area Society please.
Members' details are stored on computer for administrative purposes only.

A cross in the box means
your subscription is due!

