



## NEWSLETTER 176 July 2002

### **Onto the Board**

Save our Seafront campaigners have adopted a new strategy to stop the development of large commercial buildings either side of the West Pier. They are seeking election to the West Pier Trust board.

The SOS supporters standing for election are: Clive Buxton; Martin Foster; Derek Grainger; Sue Paskins

If you are a member of the Trust and support the SOS campaign please contact Clive Buxton (☎ 328994) who is co-ordinating plans for the election. Even if you are not going to the AGM on 12 July your vote can still count if you complete a proxy form, but it must be returned to the office on the pier by 10 July. Contact Clive Buxton for more details!

### **Campaign Successes**

The SOS campaign has had some good news. The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) has recommended that the Council should reject St Modwen's planning application.

CABE is an influential national body. It is not entirely against the scheme but it is critical of many

aspects. It says that the proposals "do not appear to reflect the heritage or the spirit of the pier".

A second piece of good news is that the Secretary of State has said that an Environmental Impact Assessment must be carried out for the scheme. The Council had previously rejected campaigners' arguments that such an assessment was needed.

### **How long is "temporary"?**

The Society has objected to a planning application for a four-year extension of permission for "port-a-cabins" on the root end of the West Pier.

The Trust should make an effort to improve the appearance of the one bit of the pier open to the public. It is now used as a car park. Is this really appropriate for such an important heritage site?

### **Preston Street Blues**

Local street sweeper, John Lawrence can spend as much as two hours a day trying to clean Preston Street. Rubbish bags are dumped regularly, including some from business premises. They are torn open by the birds and John then has to tidy up.

Even when he has finished the street still doesn't look good because the pavements need a regular wash to clean away the grease which builds up on them.

We have written to the Council Chief Executive to remind him of our discussions with him earlier in the year when he told us he was committed to solving the rubbish problems in central Brighton. We have pointed out to him that our area is still a disgrace.

**Guided Seafront Walk**  
**6pm Saturday 7 September**  
**Book now - full details overleaf**

### **Watch your step!**

There is a basement light well next to the front door of number 21 Clarence Square. Until recently it was protected by a number of attractive iron bars.

The corresponding well to the other side still has its bars, but those on the left have all disappeared. This creates a hazard for pedestrians, particularly at night. It also creates yet another suitable spot for dumping rubbish - there is already a bag in the well.

We have told the Council about this hazard; they have said they will "issue an order" to the property owner. This is hardly the sort of prompt action needed to avoid potential injury to pedestrians.

### **Counting the Cost**

The Jubilee party in Regency Square cost over £1,000. However most of this was met by donations and money taken on the day for catering and amusements. The net cost to the Society was £139.

### **Web Site Success**

Have you visited the Society's web site recently ([www.regencybrighton.com](http://www.regencybrighton.com))? It is full of up-to-date information such as news about the West Pier plans and photos of the Jubilee party. The site is becoming very popular with visitor numbers averaging over 2,800 a month.

It is at this time of year that we need to pay for our annual subscription to the Internet Service Provider which hosts the site for us. The cost will be about £300 so we are looking for sponsors to help meet the cost. Sponsors are listed on the site with links to their own web sites if they wish.

If you would like more information about becoming a sponsor please contact Roger Hinton (☎ 321794 email [hinton@clara.net](mailto:hinton@clara.net)).

## 128 Kings Road is falling down!

What a sorry site it is with masses of scaffolding holding up the remains of a once fine building!

This listed building next to Abbots has been allowed to fall into total disrepair as a result of neglect by its previous owner. The final blow came when a fire destroyed what was left of the interior and roof.

Fortunately it has now been bought by new owners. However, they have found that it is in an almost unrepairable state. So they have only three options:

- 1 Rebuild and restore as original
- 2 Retain facade but build a new structure behind
- 3 Demolish and build a modern building

Needless to say the Society supports the first option: too many historic buildings have already been lost in this area. We need to preserve what is left. However, this is the most costly option.

We would be very unhappy to lose the facade altogether, so option 2 would be better than 3.

We have told the Council's conservation officers what our views are.

## Give it some bottle!

Stand opposite numbers 39 and 40 Regency Square and look up.

At the top of number 39 you will see some quite attractive "bottle" shaped balusters. These were installed in 1988 on the instructions of the Council's conservation officers, as were similar ones further along the terrace.

At the top of number 40 there is a solid wall where the bottle balusters should be. This was installed in

2002, also on the instructions of the Council's conservation officers. This solid wall reduces the light and view for residents of the top floor.

Why the inconsistency? It seems that the conservation officers have decided they were wrong about the balusters. They now think that the original buildings had solid walls at the top - after all the top rooms are for servants, who don't need light, and if they have a view, they'll only look at it!

What nonsense! Conservation is not about putting things back exactly as they were. That is impossible. It's about restoring buildings sympathetically with the area's architectural heritage.

Number 40 is scaffolded at the moment so we have asked the Council to pay for the wall to be replaced with bottle balusters to match its neighbour.

## A date for your diary

We have organised a guided walk along the seafront for 6pm on Saturday 7th September (weather permitting). The walk will take about an hour and be from the Palace Pier to the Peace Statue on the Hove border. The cost is £3 per person.

The guide is Michael Robins who used to take tours on the West Pier until they were stopped for safety reasons.

So this is your chance to enjoy a stroll with your neighbours and learn something new about your local area.

To reserve your place send £3 with your name and telephone number to Ros Boulden, 129 Kings Road, Brighton BN1 2FA. (Payments by cash or cheque payable to Regency Square Area Society please). The £3 will be refunded if the walk is cancelled because of the weather.

## Society Contacts

Chairman: Roger Hinton ☎ 321794 email [hinton@clara.net](mailto:hinton@clara.net)

Secretary: John Gavin ☎ 749747;

Treasurer: Andrew Walker ☎ 700340

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

## Is your subscription due?

Thanks to those members who have renewed their subscriptions. There are still a few outstanding. If there is a cross in the box below, your subscription is now due. Please help the Society by renewing today!



To Andrew Walker, Treasurer, RSAS, 9 Chartwell Court, Russell Square, Brighton BN1 2EW

I would like to renew my membership of the Regency Square Area Society for the year 2002/2003 in the category ticked below:

	£
Ordinary member	4.00
Family	4.50
Senior Citizen	3.50
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Payment by cash or cheque payable to Regency Square Area Society please. Members' details are stored on computer for administrative purposes only.

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