



NEWSLETTER 184 April 2003

End of the campaign

It was Thursday the 13th September 2001 when the Society held a public meeting in the Beach Hotel to alert local people to the dangers posed by new proposals for the West Pier. As a result a campaign group was formed which called itself "Save our Seafront".

The group was organised by two of our committee members, Clive Buxton, who acted as its secretary, and Sue Paskins who had spoken passionately at the meeting about the impact that the proposed "enabling development" would have on Brighton's **seafront**.

Representatives from other amenity societies lent their support and the group set about the task of raising public awareness. Their success was evidenced by the fact that St Modwen, the developers, were forced to revise their plans and thousands of people wrote letters to the planning committee opposing the whole scheme.

Unfortunately councillors on the committee decided to support the revised scheme. The Secretary of State decided that it was not important enough to warrant a public enquiry. So the main obstacles to it going ahead have been removed.

The Noble Organisation, which runs the Palace Pier, is still trying to raise legal objections to the use of public money to subsidise what it sees as a competitor. However, there now seems to be a high probability that St Modwen's monstrous pavilions will rear their heads above King's Road and block out our views of the sea and the pier.

Did SOS fail?

In one sense the answer is clearly yes. The aim was to persuade the powers that be to deny permission for the scheme and that has not been achieved.

From another point of view however, the campaign was a great success. It demonstrated beyond doubt that the people of this town, while they would like to see the West Pier reconstructed, do not think the price demanded is worth paying.

Without the efforts of SOS the true impact of these proposals would never have come to light until the buildings actually appeared. It is not SOS which has failed, but it is our councillors who have failed us.

Ken Bodfish will now, it seems, be able to take his grandchildren onto the West Pier. But will they thank him for it?

Thank you!

To all those people who gave time and money to support SOS.

Most importantly thank you to Clive Buxton and Sue Paskins for their time and their untiring and enthusiasm, without which the campaign would have been nothing.

The Society has presented each of them with a framed print of the seafront as a token of our thanks for their efforts to save it.

Pier, what Pier?

What will happen next to the remains of Eugenius Birch's marvellous 19th century structure?

At the end of December half the concert hall fell into the sea. Last month the theatre was consumed in a ferocious fire which left the wooden decking smouldering for well over a week.

See it first on the web site!

Congratulations to member Brian Smith who took the Society's digital camera down to the beach and managed to get a sequence of photographs of the West Pier fire from just after it started up to the point where it had consumed virtually all of the theatre. The pictures were on the Society web site before the flames had subsided.

**Keep up to date with what is happening:
www.regencybrighton.com**

Your Committee

At the AGM last month the following committee was elected to run the Society for the next year:

Chairman:	Roger Hinton, Regency Square ☎ 321794 ✉ hinton@clara.net
Secretary	John Gavin, Queensbury Mews ☎ 749747
Treasurer Court	Andrew Walker, Chartwell ☎ 700340
Members:	Ron Bakere, Sussex Heights Ros Boulden, Abbots Clive Buxton, Dean Street Diana Dunn, Clarence Gardens Tony Lowery, Metropole Court

Police called to Society AGM!

Well "invited" is probably a better word. We asked our local community officer, Matt Ebeling to come and meet members at our meeting last month. Unfortunately he was called away on other duties at short notice, but he arranged for Inspector Steve Barry to stand in for him.

Steve is one of Brighton's new cycling police officers and he arrived fully kitted out in a brilliant yellow jacket and regulation cycling helmet. He was in fact on duty and had just come from dealing with some troublesome drunks in Norfolk Square.

He gave us some statistics for Regency Square and Queensbury Mews. Between September 2002 and February this year there have been 24 offences reported, including 12 burglaries and 5 thefts from or of vehicles (2 in the underground car park). Only 2 incidents were classified as "violent" and they did not involve robbery.

Things seem to be improving with only 6 of the 24 offences falling into the second half of the six-month period. By the date of the meeting there had been no incidents reported in March. This may reflect the success of Operation Robust, a police initiative to target crime in the whole of central Brighton.

We asked Steve what someone should do if they saw a crime in progress, for example drug dealing. His reply was "Dial 999".

We also asked him whether Regency Square was a suitable area for Neighbourhood Watch. He said it was because a large part of the area can be seen from most of the properties. The key to the success of a Neighbourhood Watch is an active co-ordinator.

Could you be Co-ordinator for a Regency Square Neighbourhood Watch scheme?
For details contact PC Matt Ebeling on 07 766 602 622.

Blooming good show

The bulbs which members planted last year in Regency Square are now in bloom. Thanks again to Stella Richardson at the Council for her help.

Any bets on louvered panels?

The Society has objected to an application for wooden louvered panels to be installed in place of the windows in the betting shop in Clarence Square.

Counting Pot Holes

At the AGM one member raised the problem of the condition of the road surface, especially in Clarence Square. We are making a survey to see how bad the problem is throughout the area. We will then contact the Council.

Thanks

to the Hilton Metropole Hotel for use of the Chartwell Room for our AGM.

Also to those who provided prizes for the raffle.

Casino Exhales

Residents of a block of flats in Little Preston Street are suffering from the effects of new ventilation units fitted at the rear of a Casino without planning permission. The Society has objected to a retrospective planning application and advised that the units should be vented above roof level.

Everything in its place!

There are some people who obviously don't realise that the newly laid out garden in Clarence Square is not the right place to play ball. We are asking the Council for a "No ball games" notice.

Bring on the Enforcers!

There was much praise at the AGM for Matt Easteal's efforts to stop people from dumping rubbish in the street. Let's hope his newly recruited team of enforcement officers can improve things even more.

Pedestrian Association

Sounds, well... a bit pedestrian, but membership of the newly formed Brighton branch can be your chance to help promote safe, enjoyable use of Brighton streets on foot and influence the Council's Walking / Transport Policy. For further information contact Suzanne Hinton (01273) 321794 or see the Association's web site: www.livingstreets.org.uk

Most members have now paid this year's subscription but there are still a few outstanding. If there is a cross in the box below we have not yet had your subscription for the current year.



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 2003/2004 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	_____
Optional donation	_____
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 sub is due.

