



NEWSLETTER 187 August 2003

Sad News

This month we have to report the death of three old friends of the Society. Our thoughts are with their families at this sad time.

Harold Lawson

Harold became treasurer of the Society in 1984, a job he did until 1993 when he became chairman. As a former county treasurer he was well qualified to look after the Society's money, and his inside knowledge of how local Councils work was invaluable

He lived in Chartwell Court where he was chair of the residents association. He finally stepped down from the Society committee in 1999 and shortly after that he moved away from Brighton to live nearer his family. His down to earth ideas and dry sense of humour were much missed by his fellow members.

Ivor Lott

Ivor and his wife Madeleine ran the newsagent shop in Preston street for several years. Ivor was a generous supporter of the Society's activities. He and Madeleine continued their connection with Regency Square after they retired by delivering newspapers around the area for the new owners of

the shop. Ivor's funeral was held in Brighton on 19 August.

Pat McCulloch

Pat was a member of the Society committee from 1986 until 2000. She was secretary from 1995 to 1998. She was also an active member of the local Labour Party. She moved away from Brighton in 2000 to be nearer her family in Winchester. Her funeral was held in Brighton on 18 July.

Not an Appealing Prospect

The Society objected to plans for a new seven storey block of flats at 128 Kings Road. We were very pleased when the Council refused permission. The developer is now appealing against the decision. We will support the Council by objecting again.

Patchwork Pavements

Our recent survey of road surfaces in the area revealed that there are six different pavements surfaces in use, ranging from smart paving slabs to shabby concrete and tarmac.

Committee member Diana Dunn raised this issue with the Council engineer managing the work in Clarence Square. She suggested that it would be nice if the excellent work done in the gardens could be complemented with some attractive pavement surfaces around the square.

Small paving slabs and bricks have been laid outside the betting shop. But directly opposite there is newly laid concrete and most of the square is a mix of tarmac and old cracked slabs. The improvement to the road surface is also only a partial job, applying to the road on the northern side but not elsewhere.

What a pity that the opportunity has not been taken to complete the improvements to Clarence Square by upgrading the whole of the roadway and pavements.

Welcome to the sights and smells!

Churchill Square is the flagship of Brighton's hugely popular shopping facilities. But if you approach it from the west you have to walk through the passageway next to the Prince of Wales pub.

You wend your way between overflowing waste containers and recycling bins. You enjoy the smell of rotting food and walk on filthy pavements.

There are huge storage areas underneath the main building. So why is it necessary to store rubbish in one of the main pedestrian entrances? There are cleaners who wash and sweep other parts of the square. So why is this bit so dirty? We will be raising these questions with the management company.

Link up with the Brighton Society

The Brighton Society has a long history as a campaigner for the protection of the urban environment. Its Secretary, Selma Montford, is well known and respected for her forthright views.

It also provides a forum through which local societies such as ours can meet and share experiences. We are therefore very pleased that our Secretary, John Gavin, has been co-opted as a member of the committee of the Brighton Society.

Membership of the Brighton Society is open to everyone. If you want more details you can contact John on ☎749747.

Continuing Education

We have been sent some leaflets by the University of Sussex about part time courses starting in September. If you would like to have a copy contact Roger Hinton (☎321794).

Communal Rubbish Bins

The Council is starting a trial of communal rubbish bins in place of the normal weekly collection. The trial will not be in our area, but if it is judged a success these bins could soon be in our squares.

The Society is opposed to the plan for a number of reasons. Firstly, they will take up parking spaces and they will be located outside people's houses - who would want one near their front door?

Secondly they will only be emptied twice a week so are likely to overflow. Thirdly, residents who currently put rubbish in the street on non collection days may well continue to do exactly what they do now rather than walk to the nearest communal bin.

Fourthly, there are some local traders who illegally dump refuse rather than pay for a the trade refuse service; they may well use these new bins thus increasing the problem of them overflowing.

Finally, the bins will look a mess and smell in hot weather. Rubbish needs to be moved quickly not left lying in the street, whether in bags or in bins.

Annual General Muddle

Several of our members attended the recent AGM of the West Pier Trust. They were very disappointed in the way the meeting was conducted.

The chairman started by saying he could not stay long and left as soon as the formal business was over.

Speakers on the platform had to be asked repeatedly to use the microphone so they could be heard.

Martin Foster, a former treasurer of the West Pier Society, asked for details about the Trust's accounts, in particular the salary paid to the chief executive. He was subjected to a succession of evasive answers

from the Trust's finance officers. It was only later, after the formal meeting had finished, that the chief executive himself cleared up the issue: he said he was paid on an hourly basis and earned between £20,000 and £25,000 a year.

In spite of all this, board members standing for re-appointment were re-elected unopposed. The overall impression given was of an organisation that really did not want to have to talk about itself and would really rather not have to face its members.

So what is happening?

One of the few pieces of real information to come out of the West Pier AGM was that English Heritage were about to give their view on whether the pier could still be restored.

This is a vital decision since the National Heritage Lottery Fund will rely on English Heritage's advice when deciding whether to continue funding the pier. Geoff Lockwood, the West Pier chief executive, was confident that English Heritage would be issuing a statement within a couple of weeks announcing its continued support for the restoration.

Since then things have gone very quiet. Recent enquiries with Brighton and Hove Council have revealed that English Heritage has not issued a statement as expected, and has not given any indication of when it will. The saga drags on.

All at sea with the date!

In our last issue we gave an incorrect date for the evening boat trip. The correct date is 6 pm on Saturday 30 August The boat leaves from Brighton Marina - just behind the Jackson's Wharf pub. The trip will last about an hour.

There are still a few places available. If you want to come please send your name and telephone number to Ros Boulden, 8 Abbots, 129 Kings

Road, Brighton, together with £6 per person (cash or cheque payable to the Regency Square Area Society).

Regency Rumbles

- ❖ A mystery wooden bench has appeared in Regency Square donated, presumably, by late-night revellers.....a man, who found it handy, after erecting a tent and sleeping in the square for three nights, used the bench when having breakfast consisting of a cucumber in one hand and a banana in the other.
- ❖ Hats off to George local resident and super-citizen, who picks up litter and weeds the garden in Clarence Square.....so different to the lout in Queensbury Mews who, when challenged about throwing away a pizza box in the street, said he was helping to ensure that road sweepers kept their jobs.
- ❖ Whilst in Castle Street the council demonstrated that swift action is possible by dealing with a demolished bollard within an hour or so of receiving an email from the Society.
- ❖ And finally, for the intellectuals, look out for 'Van Gough' - car and van rental company seen recently in Regency Square.

Join your neighbours for a Guided Walk of our Area

7pm -9pm Sunday 21 September
Meet outside Marks and Spencer
Finish at the Regency Tavern

Guide: local historian, Geoff Mead

Advance booking essential
Send your name, telephone number
and £3 per person to
Ros Boulden, 8 Abbots, 129 Kings Road,
Brighton