



NEWSLETTER 189 October 2003

Meet your councillors

Don't forget the Society's autumn meeting on Wednesday 22 October. It will be your chance to meet our two elected councillors, Dawn Davidson (Liberal Democrat) and Roy Pennington (Labour). They will be pleased to hear your views and will try to answer your questions on any local issues.

The meeting starts at 7:30 with refreshments and will be in the Sandringham Room at the Metropole Hotel. (We have not used this room before: it is on the ground floor; go in the front entrance, walk past the restaurant and the room is on your right before you get to the stairway.)

Digging for Brighton

Many thanks to the Council's Brighton in Bloom team for the hanging baskets and flower troughs around Regency Square this year.

The Society has decided to do its bit for next year. We have purchased 350 bulbs and a team of energetic planters have been planting them around the square. The lack of rain has left the ground very hard, which is slowing down the work, but

hopefully all the bulbs will soon be safely in the ground.

Watch out for Bobbies of Bikes!

In the last issue we reported that police community support officers would be trying to persuade cyclists not to ride through the twitten by the Regency Tavern.

It's a pity they weren't around one recent Sunday afternoon when a couple of police officers on cycles were seen to ride through from Regency to Russell Squares without getting off to walk in the twitten.

We are trying to find out just what is the official police policy about pavement cycling, especially by police officers.

Brighton History Begins Afresh

The Brighton Local Studies Library has become the Brighton History Centre with enlarged premises in what used to be the reference library. Several members have used the library in the past and two of them, Ron Bakere and Andrew Walker attended a press preview before the opening on 3 October.

The Centre has much better facilities than before with audio and video booths and a variety of reference materials, including microfilm and CD-ROM. There is free use of the Internet for family history research.

It is well worth a visit. You get to it through Brighton museum, which now has its entrance in the Pavilion Gardens.

Society Contacts

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Looking at the Shops

On a Sunday evening a few weeks ago you might have seen a group of Society members wandering around Western Road looking at the shops – the buildings that is.

We were on a guided walk led by local historian, Geoff Mead. Geoff has a wonderful ability to bring the past to life. And the way he does it is by telling you not only what happened but why.

For example, did you know why it is usually the west end of British towns which are favoured by the better off members of society? It is because the prevailing winds are from the west and so those who live at the west end did not have to breathe as much of their neighbours' smoke as those in the centre or east.

Hence the development of fine houses to the west of the old town of Brighton, and of course the grand department stores of Western Road to serve them.

And did you know that Western Road is so called, not because it goes towards the west but because it ran through land owned by a man called Western?

And have you noticed how many shops, having started in the west, then move east? Think of Boots, or before that Woolworths and Marks and Spencer. Geoff showed us the premises in which all these stores had first opened in Western Road.

And what fine buildings some of them are – particularly those on the north side, which was demolished at one stage for road widening and hence allowed the creation of grand retail palaces. If you look up, you see that they are still there to be admired, even though at ground level many have been split into smaller units.

Coming soon to a parking space near you?

The Council will be starting a trial in January of a new approach to refuse collection.

Normal refuse collections, as we now know them, will be discontinued, except for blocks of flats which already have communal bins on their own premises.

Everyone else will be required to put their refuse into communal bins located at various points around the area. These bins will be located in what are currently parking spaces. The exact location will be decided in consultation with residents.

These bins are designed to be lifted and emptied by new specially designed vehicles which will be able to lift them directly from the road. Collections will be either twice, or possibly three times a week, depending how many bins are in place.

The intention is to provide one bin for every 40 households and to ensure that everyone will have a bin within 25 yards of their front door. This would mean, for example, that there could be 6 bins in Regency Square.

Council officers will monitor the bins closely to prevent overflowing, graffiti, dumping of commercial waste. The bins are “ergonomically” designed to be easy to open using a foot pedal.

On yer re-cycle!

In addition to these new arrangements for collection of general waste the Council will be encouraging much more re-cycling.

There are two ways this can be done, depending on the area. One is by giving householders plastic boxes to put recyclable waste in. These are put out on the pavement at an appointed time and Council workers come round and manually sort the rubbish into appropriate containers on their vehicle.

The alternative approach is for recycling containers to be located in the street for people to take their recyclable rubbish to. This is more likely to be the option chosen for an area like ours with lots of small households.

When?

The trial will not affect our area but it will be in some nearby streets such as Sillwood Road and Oriental Place. If it is a success it will be extended and would probably be introduced in and around Regency Square. We have been assured that this will not happen without full consultation with the Society.

And Why?

What is the point of these changes?

Two of the Council’s aims are to reduce the number of rubbish bags dumped in the street and to prevent the seagulls and other vermin from getting at rubbish while it is waiting for collection.

However, it seems clear that the real aim is to reduce the cost of waste collection. The Council is facing increasing costs for the use of landfill sites for disposal of general household waste. It is also under pressure from central government to increase the amount of waste which is re-cycled.

Hence the re-cycling scheme, which will reduce the amount of general waste and contribute to achieving the government re-cycling targets. But re-cycling costs money, so it has to be paid for. The Council hope to do this by cutting the cost of collecting general waste. They are hoping that as more and more waste is re-cycled they will be able to cut down the frequency of collections from the communal bins.

What is the Society’s Views?

Your committee had a meeting recently with two of the Council officers who are planning these changes.

We voiced a number of worries about the proposals:

- communal bins and re-cycling units will be unsightly
- they will take parking spaces
- they will attract fly tipping
- they will overflow onto the road and attract litter
- they will smell in hot weather
- some people will still dump rubbish on the pavement
- no one will want one outside their front door

More is Less

For years we have been asking the Council to spend more money collecting our waste. It seems clear that what they will actually be doing is spending less money, not because that is what local people want but because it is what the government has told them to do. In the process they will turn our streets into rubbish storage areas.

**See for yourself:
the Council will be displaying the new bins at the
Old Market Centre in Upper Market Street, Hove –
6pm-8pm on 26 November and
11am – 2pm on 27 November**

Society Autumn Meeting
Meet your Councillors
7:30 pm - Wednesday 22 October
The Sandringham Room, Brighton Hilton Metropole Hotel
Members and guests welcome
Refreshments