



## NEWSLETTER 204 June 2005

### A Saturday Morning Out

We have arranged a visit to the Hippodrome in Middle Street, now a bingo hall, but once one of Brighton's leading theatres. Join your neighbours for this chance to see a little of Brighton's past.

Meet outside the main entrance at 11 am on Saturday 11 June. There is no charge. Everyone welcome. Bring your friends!

### “We always like a West Pier story”

This was the comment made by Southern FM's Richard Lindfield when he interviewed Society chairman Roger Hinton about our recent policy statement. The pier has always been good for a headline and a photo, mainly because of the strong but differing opinions about its future.

### Our Policy

After approval by members at the AGM, our new policy about the pier was sent to the press recently.

We now believe that, sadly, the West Pier cannot be restored. Its remains, meanwhile, are a blight on the seafront and need to be tidied up.

The central section, which has collapsed into the sea, is dangerous and must be cleared away. The far end could possibly be kept as a memorial to the fine building which once stood there. The small, restored section at the shore end should be cleared of temporary buildings and parked cars.

The West Pier Trust has no money to do any of this and should therefore be wound up. The pier would then pass into public ownership where it now belongs.

### The Trust's Reaction

Not surprisingly the Trust disagrees. Chief Executive, Geoff Lockwood pointed out that residents of Regency Square objected when the pier was first created. This is true but hardly relevant. Many people in this area have been active supporters of attempts to save it.

He also says that the site of the pier is “part of the heritage of England” and is “crucial to the continuing regeneration of the Brighton & Hove seafront”.

At the moment the Trust is an obstacle to completion of regeneration between the Palace Pier and the Peace Statue. As long as it has no money and continues to own the pier, it will continue as an obstacle.

Geoff Lockwood sees a way forward for the Trust as a property owner, entering into a deal with commercial developers to build a modern pier.

The Trust is a charity. Its original plan was to raise public and private money for a scheme to save a fine old building. That would have been a charitable project. Commercial re-development is not. A Charity has no business promoting such a scheme.

### Society Contacts

Chairman: Roger Hinton ☎321794 ✉ [hinton@clara.net](mailto:hinton@clara.net);  
Secretary: John Gavin ☎749747;  
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### What do others think?

Other comments on our policy have been supportive. The Brighton Society is in “total agreement”.

Councillor Dawn Davidson says our views are “realistic and achievable”. Councillor Roy Pennington says it is “a shame that the council did not have a formal position in the Trust board over the years”.

The Argus gave our policy good coverage and found it “difficult to disagree” with our views. The editor's comment column supported our case eloquently: “Once a thing of majesty, the Grade I listed building has become nothing more than a blot on the seascape”.

### A Sad Footnote

One of our main points is that the pier's remains are dangerous. Geoff Lockwood says that they are safe. The day after our policy was published a canoeist got into difficulty. The local lifeboat was seriously damaged rescuing him from the wreckage of the pier.

### What Now?

The way forward rests in the hands of the members of the West Pier Trust. They need to tell their board of directors that the Trust must be wound up. Let's hope they deliver this message at the Trust's next AGM.

### A Day Out in Kent

On Thursday 28 June, the Kingscliffe Society is going to Tunbridge Wells and Chiddingstone Castle. They have invited us to join them.

Cost: £17 including coach and entry to the Castle. Leave from Royal York Buildings at 10:05 am. For more details contact Jean Penney (694240) or Vivienne Carter (271269).

## Oops! Sorry!

If in doubt, blame the Council? Well not always. In our May newsletter we suggested that the Council's planning committee was responsible for allowing a new block of flats to replace what had been a fine 19<sup>th</sup> century house at 128 Kings Road.

Councillor Sue Paskins, a long time friend of the Society and a member of the planning committee, has pointed out that we were wrong. The committee approved demolition of the building but refused permission for the new flats. Their decision was overturned by the Secretary of State on appeal.

## Planning is Getting Better

Sue goes on to explain a little of the background:

“The Planning Committee is getting better at turning things down now. We allowed demolition of 128 Kings Road because if the scaffolding were to be removed it would fall down. Now we know better and would refuse demolition without approved plans in place for the rebuild.

Also we now have a Planning Committee member to front an appeal where we overturn an officer's recommendation. This means we get a better presentation of our argument. Unfortunately the plans for 128 Kings Road came to our first meeting after the election and most of us were still learning.”

**A behind-the-scenes visit to the  
Hippodrome Theatre  
in Middle Street**

**11 am, Saturday 11 June 2005  
Meet at the main entrance.**

**No charge. Everyone welcome!**

## News from the Heights

At this time of year Brian and Andrew Smith, who organise our website, tend to concentrate on the goings on in the peregrine falcon nest box on Sussex Heights. This year has not been particularly good: four eggs were laid, only three hatched; one chick died after a couple of days, so only two have survived.

Last year's offspring have returned to Sussex Heights, which is very unusual; normally when the young leave the nest they never return. They have even been in the nest box, feeding the new chicks.

On 25th May Brian and Andrew went up onto the roof of Sussex Heights, with Graham Roberts of the Sussex Ornithological Society. They put rings on the two new chicks. The website has a very good photo of the two chicks, one male and one female, in the nest box after ringing.

## Otter Returned by General Election

The Labour Party victory in the general election means that there will be another major security operation when the party conference comes to Brighton this year. The dates are 25 – 29 September. The security arrangements are known as “Operation Otter”. Exact details are “subject to continuous review”. However, it seems that they will be fairly similar to last year.

If you have any concerns or questions you can contact the organisers at [conference.questions@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:conference.questions@brighton-hove.gov.uk). Alternatively, let the Society know and we can pass on your queries and comments.

**Late news:** the Metropole Hotel has applied for planning permission to remove the loading bay doors in Queensbury Mews and replace them with a solid wall. Hopefully this will solve the noise nuisance for neighbours when there is a function with music.

## Dutch Delight

A 25 strong male voice choir performed in Regency Square one afternoon at the end of May. It was a Barbershop group from Holland who were attending a convention at the Brighton Centre. The hour-long impromptu concert, and their beautiful voices, gave a great deal of pleasure to residents and visitors.

## Are you up to date?

If there is a cross in the box below, your membership subscription is overdue. Please help the Society by renewing today!

## Membership Renewal

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

I would like to renew my membership of the Regency Square Area Society for the year 2005/2006 in the category ticked below:

	£
Ordinary member	4.00
Family	4.50
Senior Citizen	3.50
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.

**If there is a cross in  
the box, your  
subscription is due**

