



NEWSLETTER 206 September 2005

When is a hotel not a hotel?

The answer is, when it's a house in multiple occupation. Two former hotels on the western side of Regency Square seem to have managed to acquire this status. The practical result is that they are able to operate as hostels for the homeless.

If this is true it seems to go against the Council's policy of trying to maintain the number of hotel rooms in the central area, for use by tourists and conference visitors. They have been very reluctant to grant hotel owners permission to convert their properties into self-contained flats.

We are trying to find out the exact status of the two properties and to clarify the Council's policy on change of use.

A quiet drink on the green

Society members have been meeting on the top green once a week during July and August for a chat and a glass of wine. The weather was generally kind to us and it was a very pleasant way to spend a summer evening. (Many thanks to Society member Margaret Monod who originally suggested the idea.)

Quite often we shared the green with another group who, like us, were enjoying a drink in the evening sun. However, they differed in two significant ways: they drank rather more and they didn't clear up afterwards.

They were residents of one of the former hotels and they have been making themselves fairly unpopular with some local people because of the way they behave. Hoteliers around Regency Square are particularly concerned that they are having a negative effect on business.

One hotel has been broken into. Another has had guests leave after witnessing drug dealing outside their bedroom window. A third has a breakfast room from which you can watch people urinating (and worse) in the bushes at the top of the green.

Hotel owners have invested large amounts of money in the square in recent years. Naturally they are unhappy to see hotels turning into hostels and attracting people to the area who will frighten their guests away.

What can be done?

The homeless need somewhere to stay. Has the Council granted permission for some of the houses in the heart of Brighton's tourist area, to meet this need? If so why?

We are trying to get a straight answer to this question.

In the meantime, anti-social and illegal behaviour is a matter for the police. One local officer has been quoted as advising people to dial 999 whenever they see a crime taking place such as drug taking and urinating in public. The Society does not believe that these are emergencies and they do not warrant a 999 call.

There is another number that is probably the right one to use: 0845 607 0999. If you see any sort of

illegal or threatening behaviour in the street or the gardens please call the police and report it immediately.

If one person calls, the call may get low priority, but if there are several calls about the same incident, action is more likely.

More about drinking

The Society objected to an application for extended pub hours for the Pull and Pump in Clarence Gardens. Committee member, Diana Dunn organised a campaign, which resulted in 36 written objections. Several local residents attended the hearing and presented their views.

As a result some minor changes were made to the application. The pub will close by 11:30pm in the week and the terrace must be cleared and all doors and windows closed by 11pm every night.

However, the Council has agreed to allow the pub to trade until 1:30 am at the weekends. We cannot see how this makes sense when it is so close to a significant amount of residential property.

If there are problems, the onus is now on the neighbours to keep a record of what happens and to complain to the Council.

We have also objected to a similar application for the Regency Tavern, which is due to be heard as we go to press.

A Day at the Races

A few members are planning a trip to Brighton Races on Tuesday 20 September
If you'd like to come you will be very welcome.
Contact John Gavin for details (☎ 749747)

The Little Things

There are always a few little problems that the Society is trying to solve. It may take months or even years to sort out something that seems very simple. Recently we have had two small successes.



“Regency Square” has moved

The “Regency Square” street name sign outside the Regency Restaurant was destroyed recently. We suggested that the replacement could go on the railings opposite rather than on the pavement. It would be more visible to motorists and leave the pavement clear. The Council accepted our suggestion and the new sign is now in place.

The Greening of the Dog Bin

The bottom fell out of the red dog bin on the east side of Regency Square. This meant that when dog owners did the decent thing and cleaned up after their pets, the mess went straight back on the grass. It took a while but the Council has now replaced the bin with a new green one.

Many thanks to committee member, Ros Boulden for her perseverance with these two issues. It's the little things that make a difference!

Wartime Memories

One of our members has recently made contact with Roman Skulski who was a Polish pilot during the Second World War. He has sent us his memories of living in Regency Square. The hotel he mentions was at numbers 59-63.

If you would like to find out more, he has a web site you can visit: www.members.shaw.ca/rskulski

In 1943/44 I was stationed in Brighton while taking preliminary courses for pilots. I lived in the Stratheaden hotel and our courses were delivered in a hotel located on a south/west corner of Regency Square.

At the centre of the square there was an underground shelter that we used every time German planes arrived, and sometimes for "smooching".

The Western pier was behind barbed wire and out of bounds to civilians. We did our submachine gun and shotgun practice there, shooting from the far end of the pier over the water. We had our meals at the Metropole Hotel, just around the corner.

We found out that if we go into the basement of the Stratheaden hotel there was a loose wall board and we could squeeze into the basement of the hotel located north and from there to the next one where there was an unlocked door leading into the alley behind the hotels. We used that exit quite frequently to visit our girlfriends in the evenings.

I have very fond memories of Brighton, and my wife is a Brightonian.

Brighton Museum made easy

Have you ever visited Brighton Art Gallery and Museum and felt overwhelmed by its incredible range of exhibits? To solve this problem we have organised a one-hour guided tour.

For just £3 per person we will be shown round by one of the museum curators who will be able to fill in the background to some of the wonderful displays.

The date is Saturday 11th November at 11 am. Pre-booking is essential. You can book by sending your name and telephone number plus £3 (cash, or cheque payable to the Regency Square Area Society) to:

Ron Bakere, RSAS Visits Organiser, 11B Sussex Heights, St Margaret's Place, Brighton BN1 2FQ.

Have you paid your subscription?

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

