



NEWSLETTER 255
October 2010

Goodbye to Estate Agents' Boards

'For Sale' and 'To Let' boards will soon disappear from Regency Square. New regulations came into force last month banning these boards from most of the conservation areas in the city. Boards already in place can stay until the property is sold, but no new ones are now allowed.

However, the rules do not apply to the whole of the Regency Square conservation area. In fact, in our bit of it, only Regency Square is included.

So, Russell and Clarence Squares will still be festooned with agents' boards. Why? They may not be as grand as Regency Square but they are important examples of 19th century development in Brighton. Russell Square in particular has some very attractive buildings. Like Regency Square, they are both subject to a uniform painting scheme.

For once, we can't blame the Council. They wanted to include these squares but were told not to by the Department for Communities and Local Government, following lobbying by estate agents. The argument was that some parts of the Regency Square conservation area are 'drab and uninspiring' and include 'busy commercial streets' where the new rules 'would have little impact'.

This may be true of some streets, but not Russell and Clarence Squares. We believe that they should be included in the new regulation, but since it has only just been introduced, it seems unlikely that we will be able to get it changed in the near future.

Where should we put it?

Having been awarded a grant for a heritage display board in Regency Square, we now have to decide where to put it.

This has proved to be surprisingly difficult. On the one hand we want it to be in a prominent position so that as many people as possible see it. On the other hand, we don't want it to spoil views of the square.

We have decided to try to install a low level board at the top of the square, by the central gate into the top green.

Making it a low level board will mean those reading it will be able to look around at the square at the same time. It will also make it more accessible for children and wheel chair users.

Neither the position nor the design of the board is final yet because we need to get planning permission. Who knows? the Regency Square Area Society might object!

Let's get gardening

The gardens in Regency Square need some tender loving care. Council gardeners do the basics. Even so, the gardens could look much better if a bit more time was spent on them. We tried to get a gardening group going a while back but without any success. So we're having another go.

The first step will be to talk to the Council's parks department to find out what they do at present and to see if they think there is anything we could usefully do.

There are no firm ideas yet about where we go from there. It might be a small group of volunteers doing a few hours work each week. Or we might even think about employing a professional gardener for two or three days a month, though we would need some serious fund-raising for that.

If you've got any thoughts or you might be interested in wielding a trowel contact Duncan Cameron (✉ duncan.g.cameron@googlemail.com ☎ 01273 771542).

The French Church

A planning application is being considered for further development at the former French church in Queensbury Mews.

The recent conversion of the church to a private residence has been done very sympathetically. Even the foundation stones on the west wall have been restored so it is now possible to read what they say.

The new application is for an enlargement of the basement and a roof terrace at the northern end. We have looked at the plans and do not see any reason to object.

Ken's memories on video

Last month we reported the sad death of long time Russell Square resident, Ken Kennar.

A year or so before he died, Ken was interviewed on video about his memories by Society chairman, Roger Hinton. The technical aspects of the production were being looked after by Matt Roylance, who lived in the area at the time. He has since moved and had not been able to finish editing the material because of other commitments.

However, he is now back on the job and we are hoping that it will be finished shortly. When it is ready we plan to add it to our web site and maybe have a screening at a Society meeting.

Brighton Little Theatre (Clarence Gardens) presents

'Talking Heads'
by
Alan Bennett

The Society is organising a group to go and see it on Thursday 4th November. Full details over the page.

Last night I dreamt of Mandalay

This famous opening line of Daphne du Maurier's novel, Rebecca, is not included in the stage version, even though it was adapted by du Maurier herself.

However, the performance last month at the Little Theatre in Clarence Gardens had plenty of other delights. The main characters, the urbane and aristocratic Maxim de Winter and his terrifying housekeeper, Mrs Danvers were brilliantly portrayed.

The production was of a very high standard, right down to the two housemaids who appeared between scenes to tidy the stage and made a point of plumping up the cushions each time before they left, just as, no doubt, you expect your maids to do.

A group of nine members and friends from the Society went to the show together, suggesting that our Little Theatre visits are becoming quite popular.

And now for something ...

The next production at 'The Little' will be completely different: Alan Bennett's 'Talking Heads'. We will be going on Thursday 4th November. The show starts at 7:45pm and tickets cost £7.50. If you would like to come please send your name and telephone number, plus £7.50 per ticket, to Ros Boulden, 8 Abbots, 129 Kings Road, Brighton BN1 2FA, **by October 21st at the latest.**

Super-fast means super-size

If you want super-fast broadband for your emails and your Googling, it seems that you have to put up with super large green boxes on your pavements.



The box pictured here has recently appeared in Clarence Square near the Pull and Pump. We believe that, fortunately, it is the only one planned for our immediate area.

Have you noticed?

Our communal bins now have a new notice stuck on them.



When these bins were first placed in our streets they had a notice saying 'No Dumping of Rubbish!' Yes, really! Eventually someone realised that this might be misunderstood and the notices were removed.

Then came the notices warning people not to climb inside the bins. If you were climbing into a rubbish bin, would you stop to read the notices before proceeding? Ok, maybe you would, but most people wouldn't.

And now the compulsive notice writers at the Council have realised that the occasional small business in the area might conceivably think about cancelling their trade refuse collection service and using the communal bins instead. Didn't they think of this possibility before the bins were installed? We certainly did. In fact we told them about it.

Do we really need all these pointless notices plastered on the already unsightly communal bins? No! Will anyone be fined £50,000 or put in prison for five years for dropping trade waste into one of them? No!

Let's get rid of the notices (but not in the communal bins)!

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We're applying for another grant

After our success in getting a grant for a heritage board, we've decided to try again.

This time we're applying for a grant to help meet the cost of re-designing the Society web site. We also want to get some training for committee members so that we will be able to maintain it ourselves in future.

We have found a well qualified web site designer who can do both these jobs for us, but obviously we will need to pay his fees. So another grant would be very useful.

Any news on the i360?

The developers of the proposed i360 viewing tower on the old West Pier site are still 'working to secure the final tranche of funding.' The West Pier Trust's latest newsletter says that they are 'still confident that it will happen but are unable yet to talk in terms of timescales.' In other words no, there is no news.

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