



NEWSLETTER 258 February 2011

The AGM is coming - put in your diary!

The Society's annual general meeting will be held at 7:30 pm on Thursday 24th March 2011 in the Osborne Room at the Brighton Hilton Metropole Hotel.

Geoff Mead on the seafront

The evening will start with an illustrated talk by local historian, Geoff Mead. He has chosen as his topic:

Metropole to Meeting Place;
Brighton seafront structures, past and present

Geoff has spoken at a number of our meetings in the past and his talks are always informative and entertaining. Guests will be welcome if you want to bring someone.

The talk will be followed by refreshments and a raffle.

Elections

The AGM proper will follow and will include the election of officers and committee members. We currently have one nomination for chairman (Roger Hinton) and one for Treasurer (Trix Webber).

The Society has been without a secretary for almost a year and we are keen to find someone to fill this important role. The main job of the secretary is to prepare an agenda for each of our monthly committee meetings and then to write the minutes.

If you are interested in discussing the job in more detail please contact the chairman (Roger Hinton ☎ 01273 321794 ✉ hinton@clara.net).

Members can nominate any other full member of the Society for any of the three officer posts or as a committee member. Just send their name and address to the Chairman before the meeting. It's probably a good idea to make sure first that they're willing to stand!

Bins on the move

We reported in the last issue that several large wheelie bins were parked on double yellow lines in Clarence Square.

Many thanks to Councillor Jason Kitkat who saw the story our newsletter and took up the issue with the head of street cleansing services. The bins belong to two shops in Western Road, Game and Phones 4 U.

They have now been moved back onto private land and the situation is being monitored.

A never ending battle

Meanwhile we are trying to get some action to move the trade waste bins blocking the pavement in the north east corner of Clarence Square. It never ends!

Lighting up the underpass!

The Council has received money from the i360 developers for improvements to the underpass between the Regency Square car park and the lower promenade.

The payment was one of the conditions of the i360 planning agreement. The payments became due because work has now started on the i360 (don't laugh – it's official!).

So what is the money going to be spent on? All the lighting is will be renewed. A full site inspection will be carried out in the next two or three weeks to find out exactly how much work is involved

Let's hope the new lights that are installed are more vandal proof than the old ones.

Brighton Little Theatre presents
Lady Windermere's Fan
by Oscar Wilde

We're planning for a group to see it on
Friday 11th March 2011 at 7:45pm.

Tickets cost £7.50 each. If you'd like to come
please send your name, telephone number and
money to Ros Boulden, 8 Abbots, 129 Kings Road
Brighton BN1 2FA by 25th February at the latest.

Cannon Place bottleneck

Have you ever tried to drive up Cannon Place from the seafront when there's a queue into the Churchill Square car parks?

If so, you'll know that it's not a good idea. There is supposed to be a passing lane for through traffic to get past the queue. The trouble is, it very easily gets blocked. Then you're stuck in the queue. One member who lives in Chartwell Court had to wait twenty minutes the other day.

It's not right that residents should be denied access to their homes in this way. We are planning to ask the Council to look again for a solution to the problem.

One idea is that local residents with cars could be issued with a special pass allowing them to drive along Western Road and into the north side of Clarence Square. This route is not legal for most vehicles.

Passes would be needed by residents of Russell Square, Clarence Sq. / Gdns, Cannon Pl. and St. Margaret's Pl.

What do you think of the idea? Would you be willing to sign a petition to support it?

Many thanks for sponsoring the newsletter to
Mail Boxes Etc.
your friendly print, copying and mailing
service (opposite Waitrose)

Ask your neighbours!

Next time you pop next door to borrow a cup of sugar, why not try to persuade your neighbour to join the Society?

The more members we have, the more we can really represent our area when talking to the Council, the police etc.

We've enclosed a copy of our current membership leaflet with your newsletter this month. If you want more copies you can print them from the web site or contact the chairman.

More members mean a stronger Society.

Ask an ecologist!

We are still trying to get information on the unfinished pruning of bushes in the north east corner of Regency Square.

We asked the Council parks department what was going on. They responded by asking us if we wanted them to complete the pruning or leave the bushes as they are now.

We then asked them if further pruning would have a detrimental effect on the local sparrow population.

The park ranger who is responsible for the square has done quite a bit of research. He has contacted the RSPB and the Council's own ecologist Matthew Thomas.

The general view seems to be that sparrows need thick cover so they can feel protected from predators. Hedges and bushes also provide food.

The high bushes in the square were cut right down to encourage them to grow thickly but at a lower level. This would prevent their use for undesirable human activity, while still providing cover. Obviously this removes some of the cover temporarily, but that is not a problem if there are other bushes nearby which have not been cut down.

We are waiting for Matthew Thomas to visit Regency Square later this month to clarify his advice on whether the remaining bushes should be pruned.

Once we know what he thinks we will need to make a decision on how to reply to the Council's original question – do we think the pruning should be completed?

Let us know your views.

BT pulls the plug

Take a last look at the phone boxes at the southern end of Regency Square. They won't be there much longer.

Not that they will be much missed. They have not been working for some time and are in a very sorry state.

So when we asked BT to tidy them up they said that they were not profitable and would therefore be removed. It's hardly surprising they are not profitable: they don't work.

Anyway, the decision has now been made: they will be gone in a few months – yes it will take several months!

If you need a phone box after that, the nearest will probably be in Western Road, either outside Primark or just before you get to Waitrose. There's also a payphone in the Metropole Hotel.

Counting Crimes

Latest figures from the police for our area suggest that burglaries from homes are increasing. This reflects a trend in central Brighton generally. So if you have accessible doors and windows, keep them secure!

The only other type of crime occurring in significant numbers is described as "rowdy behaviour". This covers things like shouting, fighting and being aggressive.

In the period from November to January there were no drug related offences reported in our area. Likewise for robbery, street drinking, begging and noise.

If this doesn't sound like the area you know and love, remember that these are the number of offences reported to the police. They haven't yet found a way to count crimes that are not reported!

No listing for the church

Our neighbours in the Montpelier and Clifton Hill Association were worried when they heard about a planning application to make further changes to French Church in Queensbury Mews. So they made an application for it to be listed.

The response from English Heritage is that while it is a "building of clear local interest", it is "not strong enough architecturally or historically in national terms to merit listing".

They also say that the building "has been converted to a dwelling in a manner that respects its integrity, with minimal external alteration to the visible elevations."

Our committee looked at the original application for further changes but did not make any objection.

Improving Regency Square

Two of our committee members are putting their heads together to produce a plan for improving the garden areas of Regency Square.

They will be looking at ideas such as new flower beds, wild flowers, additional benches and painting the railing. Maybe we can even install one of the West Pier relics that are currently on sale.

Where's the money coming from you ask. Good question! The Society certainly doesn't have enough money to do these sorts of things.

The idea at the moment is to decide what we would like to do and to find out how much it would cost. Then at least we'll know how much we would need to find to make the ideas a reality.

Let us know if you've got any thoughts about how to improve the square, or how to pay for improvements.

Subscriptions are due!

Many thanks to those who have already renewed. If your subscription is still outstanding you will receive a renewal form with this newsletter.

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