

Regency Square Area Society

**NEWSLETTER 275
NOVEMBER 2012**

LEST WE FORGET



On a beautiful sunny Sunday morning at 9am on the 11th November there gathered at Regency Square a small band of Army veterans from the Royal Sussex Regiment and the Mayor of Brighton. After a minutes silence a wreath of poppies was laid to

remember those who gave their lives to fight in the Boer War in South Africa 1900-1902.



Those soldiers who joined the Royal Sussex Regiment were recruited from Brighton and the surrounding villages so it was decided that Regency Square was the central position for the memorial to be erected.

The memorial, sculptured by Charles L. Hartwell, is a bronze figure of a Bugler with his left leg raised on rocks, in battle dress, with great coat open, no hat. Represented in the act of sounding a bugle. Surrounding him are four gun shells.

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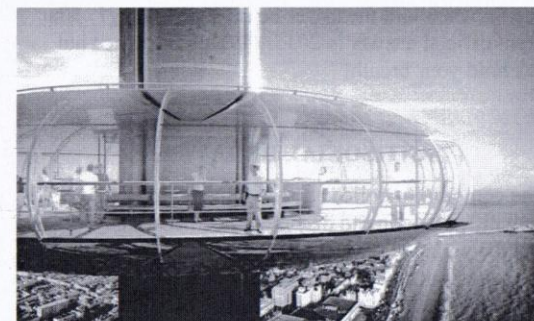
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I360 UPDATE



If you have been down to the front recently you will see that work has started to reinforce the arches from the West of the Pier to Alfresco's, the work is to take 11 months.. The area has been cordoned off with the cycle lane and pedestrians being rerouted. The traffic lights are in effect allowing traffic from Regency Square to turn right onto Kings Road and pedestrian lights from in front of the memorial to the sea front.

At the recent AGM of the West Pier Trust, the scheme project manager presented a mass of technical detail about construction plans. He clearly thinks the 175 met high observation tower is going ahead. In fact he has already done a lot of work in preparation.

He said that construction would start on site early in 2013. The first task will be to re-route an old Victoria sewer. It runs directly under the root end of the pier and would therefore be in the way of the tower's foundations.

The tower itself will be made up of 17 huge, tubular pieces of steel, which have already been manufactured. They are currently stored in Holland. They will be carried to Brighton by sea and landed on the beach just opposite Regency Square.

Meanwhile the Argus reported recently that there are still "question marks" over the financing of the scheme.

This is in spite of the Council's offer to lend over £17 million towards it. West Pier Chairman, Glynn Jones reassured those present at the AGM, saying that the Argus is out of date and all the finance is now in place. So when will the tower be up and running? The current official answer is 2015. Watch the space but don't hold your breath!

ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The community police attended the monthly RSAS committee meeting to discuss concerns we may have and the police response to those concerns. Anti social behavior was discussed. The police advice is, if you have any concerns about Anti social behavior, to ring 101. Your identity is protected. The message from the police is that if you don't report anti social behavior they are not aware of problems. If a problem is highlighted then appropriate policing will be implemented.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



Christmas drinks at the Regency Tavern on the 18th December at 8pm. Come and meet the committee and celebrate Christmas with us.

New Years Day breakfast at the Regency Restaurant 10am onwards on 1st January 2013 come and enjoy a sustaining start to the New Year.

An early note of our AGM to be held on 18th March. Timings and speaker to be arranged.

WILD FLOWER GARDEN

As you will know the slope at the top of the Middle Garden was planted with wild flowers early last spring. In spring and early summer they seemed to be doing

quite well – with Campion, Cowslips, Scabious and other species coming into flower. However, as summer progressed Couch Grass gained the upper hand and the wild flowers failed to fight back... That is why our wild flower meadow now looks more like a patch of neglected lawn than a valuable semi-natural habitat. Should we write this wild flower meadow as a failure and go ahead with something new?

We do not think so.

An area of wild flowers even in an urban environment can dramatically improve the natural wildlife of an area, as well as looking good. There have been many more butterflies in the gardens this year. Invertebrates breed and feed on natural native plants – the insects in turn attract insectivorous birds, and the same plants attract seed eaters such as Goldfinches.

This wild flower meadow is not just a one off experiment. Brighton & Hove Council are strongly committed to improving the natural environment across the city by encouraging a network of natural habitats. Try visiting Ashton Rise, a street to the North of Eastern Road consisting of 1970s blocks of flats – an unlikely location for a wildflower meadow. On a steep slope the council gardeners have created a rich natural environment with Scabious, Vetch, Basil, Marjoram and Trefoil and many other natural meadow plants thriving. When I was there in late summer the meadow hummed with bees, and there were Meadow Brown and Chalkhill Blue butterflies moved among the grasses. It added a vibrant extra dimension to what is quite a grey and unprepossessing environment.

There is no reason why we cannot achieve an even better environment in Regency Square. So we are consulting with the Council on how to move ahead.

Latest Grade II Listed Building

Most of the listed buildings in the Regency Square Conservation Area are what we call "high status" - designed for and originally used by people with money. But in the small streets behind the squares and terraces interesting lower status structures were built to provide services to the big houses, and few of these have formal protection. One example is the Fly Stables at 12a/13

Stone Street, which came within a whisker of demolition last year. Luckily the planning application was thrown out by the Council's Conservation Team on a technicality, despite the lack of interest shown in the building by most involved in the planning process.

This gave some of us the chance to put together a listing application to English Heritage – which has succeeded with much support from The Ancient Monuments Society, the Georgian Group, the Brooking Foundation, the National Carriage Society and Brighton & Hove's Conservation Team.

Most listed stables buildings in England are attached to high status residences and were used to house private carriages and the staff and horses associated with them. A Fly Stables on the other hand was something like a minicab company – relatively low cost, hired out for short periods, and in the case of this building, serving the sort of people who stayed in the Boarding Houses and Lodging Houses of Mid and Late Victorian Regency Square. Down-market in other words. Henry Mayhew, the great London journalist of the time, describes the type of people who used Fly Carriages as "shabby genteel"!



Although the building is in very poor condition the basic structure is almost intact and you can easily pick out the Hay Loft (centre First Floor), the Stables Lads' accommodation to left and right of the Hay Loft (accessible only by ladder) and the pedimented carriage entrances to the right and left of the courtyard.

This building urgently needs sensitive and creative restoration and has to be considered as "At Risk". We hope the current owner will come up with a plan that does justice to this unique structure.