



## NEWSLETTER 293 January 2015

### 30 MARCH - AGM

The must-do date for your diary. The Society's 35th AGM will be held on Monday 30th March in the Osborne Room of the Metropole Hotel.

At 7.30 there will be an illustrated talk by Jackie Marsh-Hobbs: "The British Seaside Holiday". There might even be mention of seaside observation towers!

Jackie's talk will be followed by refreshments, a raffle. The main business of the AGM will start at about 9pm.

Once again, we are very grateful to the Metropole Hotel for allowing the Society to use the Osborne Room free of charge.



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#### MEETING WITH THE WEST PIER TRUST

On 18 December, two committee members of the Society met with three officers of the West Pier Trust (WPT): Glynn Jones, Chairman; Steve Pavey, Treasurer; Rachel Clark, Chief Executive. Here is a report of the meeting:

" The WPT believe that there is no possibility of stabilising the remains of the old pier. Structural engineer Jon Orrell produced further information on the state of the structure in October 2014. Mr Orrell has been monitoring the pier for 20 years. He was diving on the site until the late 1990s, at which point it became too dangerous. There is now a large quantity of metal being moving around on the sea bed by tides and waves beneath the Sea Island.

The WPT will invite bids for the development of the Sea Island in May. There is, however, no support for a commercial development of a sea-based structure (for example, a new pier) amongst members of the Trust.

Before any development of the Sea Island site can happen, the sea bed would have to be cleared of this debris and the cost of this would be enormous. It is not even clear how it would be done.

The WPT are not in a position to talk about long term plans for their income from the i360. They are contractually bound to clear the debris from the old pier near the shore. This will cost approximately £250 thousand. They must also repay their debt to Marks Barfield.

The WPT bid for Heritage lottery funding to build a heritage centre has been refused. The Trust is still committed to this project and will be looking at other funding possibilities.

The heritage centre would consist of a small kiosk rescued from the main structure of the pier. It would be placed on the site formerly occupied by the children's paddling pool to the east of the i360."



The Committee of the RSAS remains opposed to any commercial development of the land controlled by the WPT. Let us have your opinions via the website ([www.regencybrighton.com](http://www.regencybrighton.com)) or to any officer of the Committee listed below.

#### QUIZ NIGHT

A very small group of members spent an extremely enjoyable evening in the bar of the Hotel Una on 21 January. Many thanks to barman, Ben, for sharing his wealth of knowledge about alcoholic drinks with us and for entertaining us with his anecdotes.

Unfortunately there were not enough members present to make up any teams for the quiz. If you think you might like the quiz to be rescheduled later in the year, do let the committee know, or contact the website: <http://regencybrighton.com/contact/>

**30 May 2015 Come and have  
your say at the AGM:  
Metropole Hotel, 7.30 pm**

## ARCHES NEW AND OLD

The seafront arches either side of the i360 site are being restored to a high standard by the Council. Well, that's not entirely true. The facades are being restored with some very impressive traditional brickwork. Inside it's a different story.

The new structures behind the brick facades are not arches at all. They are modern rectangular structures, built to withstand the weight of heavy vehicles. They are directly under the roadway, but a vehicle could drive off the road onto the footway which is above them. Such a manoeuvre would of course be illegal but it could still happen, for example in an emergency.

Meanwhile there are also arches beneath the footway in front of the i360 site. These will be used as storage and plant rooms once the i360 is completed and will not be seen by the public. However, because they are part of the pier site, they are listed.

The i360 developer had hoped to restore the original brick structures. However, once they examined them in detail it became clear that they are very fragile. In fact some are already starting to collapse.



Photo courtesy of i360

So the i360 company is now applying for listed building consent to demolish them. They will be replaced by new structures, but these will not need to be built to the same standard as those behind the brick arches on either side. The reason is that the footway in front of the i360 platform will be protected from traffic by high security bollards to prevent a terrorist attack. So these structures will only need to support the weight of the crowds of visitors pouring on and off the i360.

Ideally the original, listed, brick arches would have been rebuilt, but since they will not be seen by anyone, the Society, is not making any objection to the application to replace them with modern structures. English Heritage has also been consulted and has taken a similar view.

## YET ANOTHER ON-GOING BATTLE

This e-mail from a Committee member to City Council Officers sums up the frustration the committee is feeling about ..... gates:

"In spite of your many promises to attend to the non-functioning gates in Regency Square and Russell Square, the most recent of which was in your e-mail of 21st November, NOTHING, absolutely nothing appears to have been done.

The padlock you attached to the north-east gate of Regency Square upper garden, was never correctly installed and just hangs uselessly from one of the bars. It should have been attached to a different bar so as to make it impossible for visitors to raise it. The padlock is meant for the wheelchair users. As things are, this gate is open almost permanently.

The southern gate to Russell Square is still wide open and its bolt stuck in the mud so that it is impossible to close.

Both of these problems have easy solutions and I find it impossible to understand why you have not yet remedied them. The springs may need renewing or perhaps only greasing, but there is no great expense there."



## WEST PIER PROJECT

Two Committee members of the Society attended the Policy and Resources Committee (P&C C) of the City Council on 4 December. The leases of the three properties housing hostels in Regency were discussed. The Society gave evidence to the Committee, fully supporting the Homeless Strategy, but expressing concern that the West Pier Project was not achieving their objectives.

The minutes of the meeting record the Chair of the P&C C as stating: " The Council believes that the service at West Pier Project is fit for purpose and providing a good level of support." The Chair then went on to outline the various services which were involved in the running and overseeing of the hostels.

Prior to the P&C C meeting , several councillors had appeared sympathetic to the Society's position. However, the upshot of the meeting was that the leases of the three properties will be renewed for a maximum of five years.

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