



REGENCY SQUARES COMMUNITY

WINTER NEWSLETTER



FEBRUARY 2024



WINTER NEWS

Welcome to the Winter edition of the Regency Squares Community newsletter.

From all of us at Regency Squares Community we hope you're all well and happy and have braved the winter months!

Spring is just around the corner so we bring to you some news from the local community to cover the winter months behind us.

MERCEDES GLEITZE



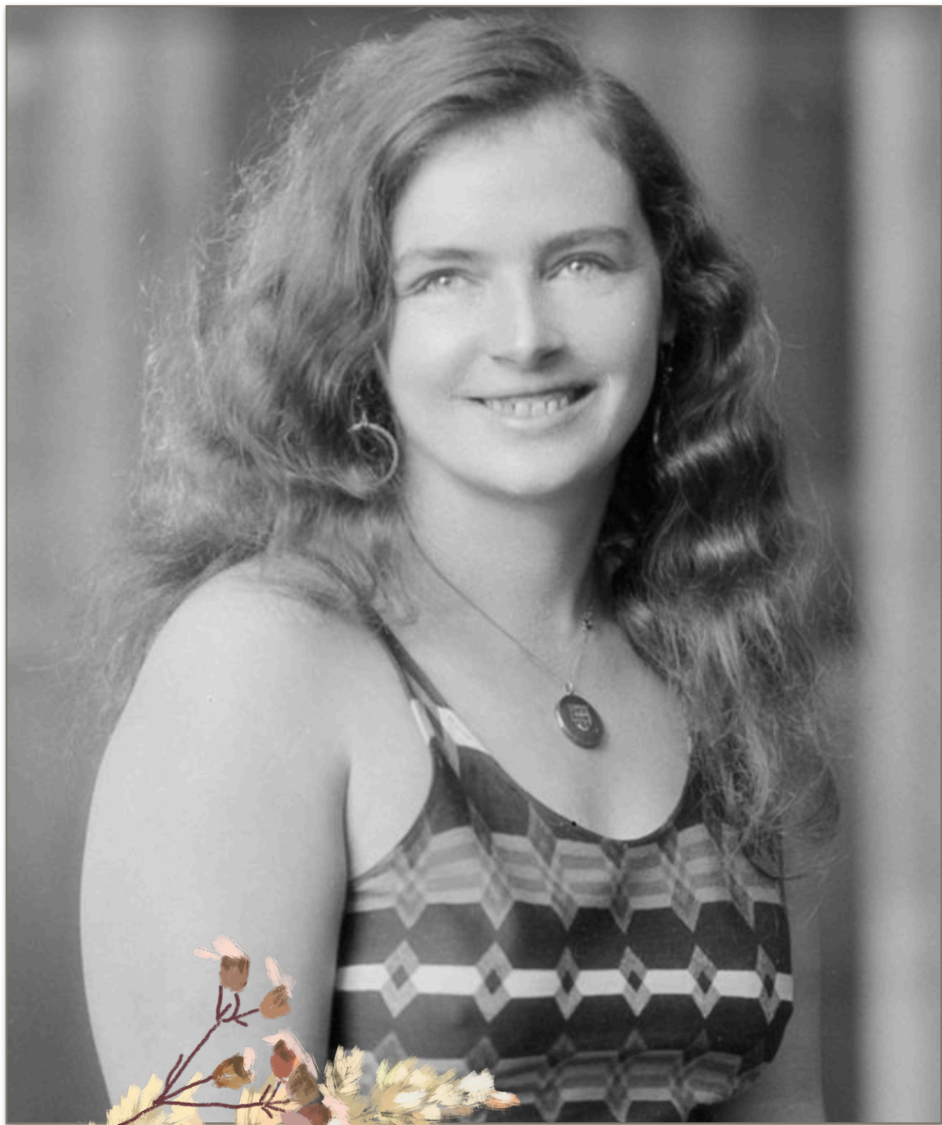
I would like our Community to put backing behind a very exciting proposal for a new beach front statue. It would be only the 3rd statue our city dedicated to a woman - the other 2 being to Queen Victoria, who reportedly was not all that fond of Brighton in the first place! It would be to Mercedes Gleitze and sited near the National Open Water Swimming Centre (Sea Lanes) looking out to sea with Madeira Terrace behind.

Mercedes was born in Brighton on 18 November 1900, to German parents, Heinrich Gleitze and Anna Kerr. They rented 124 Freshfield Road, a house close to the seafront, and it became their family home.

Mercedes Gleitze was an open-water swimming pioneer, becoming the first British woman to swim the English Channel in 1927 and the first ever person to swim the Straits of Gibraltar in 1928. As well as completing many long-distance swims around the world, Mercedes established endurance records and became a trailblazing female sporting icon.

Gleitze gathered a large number of companies who were keen to be associated with her achievements. Consumers were asked to toast her with Paddy Whiskey when they were

not drinking Lipton's Tea, which had reputedly helped her "beat the channel" and there was her enduring role as a brand ambassador for Rolex watches.



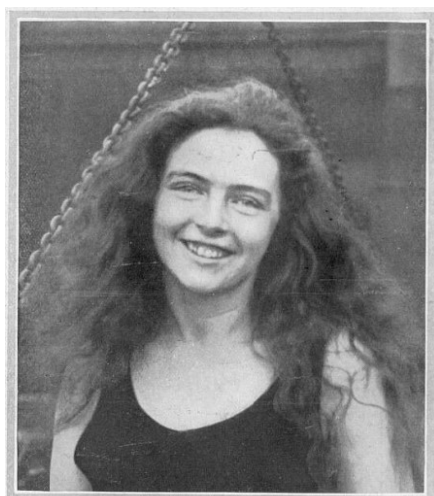
MERCEDES GLEITZE



After her retirement from swimming, Gleitze became a housewife, had three children and became increasingly reclusive, concealing her past from her neighbours and not discussing her achievements with her family. She died aged 80.

A film, *Vindication Swim*, about her upstream struggle in overcoming both the cold waters of the English Channel and the oppressive society of 1920s England will be released Nationally on 8th March. It will be premiered at The Duke of York Cinema in Brighton with a Q&A session afterwards with director and screenwriter Elliott Hasler.

Search *Vindication Swim* on Youtube for a compelling trailer.



THE FIRST OF THE TWO ENGLISH WOMEN TO CONQUER THE CHANNEL: MISS MERCEDES GLEITZE, THE LONDON TYPIST.

MERCEDES GLEITZE'S BLUE PLAQUE -
FRESHFIELD ROAD, BRIGHTON

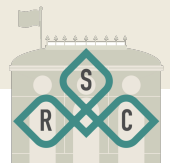


The statue would be sculpted by the celebrated Sir Phillip Jackson, famous for many works including of Queen Elizabeth II in Windsor Great Park, Bobby Moore at Wembley and Mahatma Gandhi at Parliament Square. It would mark Mercedes's extraordinary achievements; how she challenged the role of women in society and pushed the boundaries of physical endurance. Her legacy will go on to inspire and motivate others to not give up on their dreams and potential.

A forgotten Brightonian well worth celebrating.



JULIE WRIGHT





NOTES FROM ANI WATSON

Christmas came and went and we hope all had an enjoyable time. Now it's 2024 and it's been cold, it's been miserable but at least we have been blessed with some wonderful sunshine on and off. January is a rotten month. It always seems the longest month of the year.

The idea of summer seems a long distant dream. Even if one has a holiday planned it seems a never ending uphill struggle till that time one can dispense with thermals and extra jumpers till the idea of, dare I say it, swim wear becomes a reality although there are some hardy people who still go for gold and are stripping off to enjoy cold water swimming. Good luck to them all and I am sure the health benefits and wellbeing it creates are multitude but not something this writer would consider unless I wanted a trip to A&E.

Whilst walking the other day there were a few hardy individuals enjoying a daily dip which made me shiver but each and every one seemed to be enjoying themselves heartily so good luck to them and I admit to being slightly envious of their panache and bravery.

Restaurants are opening after the break with many offers for food and drink with events taking place to try and encourage the punters to choose their establishment. A few have also got the accolades they deserve, Palmito in Western Road having achieved a Bib Gourmand and Furna achieving The Good Food Award for "Drinks List of the Year" no mean feat considering the standard of opposition - congratulations to both.

Brighton Little Theatre has a full schedule of some interesting and fun performances and jazz evenings seem to be popping up around the City and, as they usually do in winter, quiz nights abound so there are a lot of activities out there to partake of if one wants to wander out. Sometimes this is the best way of spending these dark days of winter and usually more fun than one thinks and worth giving a go regardless of how awful one's memory is with trivia or current affairs.

We have noticed a few foxes around Clarence Square. A few days before Christmas one was spotted in The Square around early evening trotting down towards Churchill Square and seemingly oblivious to the hoards of shoppers around. He quickly retreated as I walked towards him and dived into the darkness and safety of The Square garden. Then early the other morning we saw a pair of very healthy looking individuals having their daily constitutional around the gardens. Both strolled unperturbed in a full circle before disappearing in the direction of Western Road ...intriguing.



ANI WATSON



TO TREE OR NOT TO TREE

We may have seen our last RSC Christmas Tree. It didn't start out to be a regular festive event but the lighting of our Christmas Tree has become a bit of a tradition. RSC members and local residents enjoying a special viewing trip, free courtesy of the generosity of the Brighton i360.

The tree itself, at some expense, has been paid for each year by our great supporters the Artist Residence. The amazing i360 team did the physical work of installing, dressing and connecting - in fact coming to the 11th hour rescue last December when the carpark power supply was found to have been disconnected! And with a children-led countdown and a touch of magic, a sparkle of warmth and symbol of community has shone each Christmas in the heart of Regency Square.

However, the hurdles and challenges involved have increased with time. Despite our securing everything as best possible and adding extra signage explaining everything is voluntary, each year there is vandalism and theft of the lights.

We have relied on the i360 team going more than the extra mile to resurrect, repair and replace, often in the staff's own time – not really a fair situation given how busy they already are. And the source of electricity has been a favour we cannot take for granted.

Coincident with all this, the Council started in 2023 to provide each ward in our city with a tree for the festive period, properly supported and maintained. *It may be time to defer to that offer?*



**WELCOME TO THE REGENCY SQUARES COMMUNITY
CHRISTMAS TREE**

WITH HUGE THANKS TO
Artist Residence
BRIGHTON

JOIN US


**Brighton
i360**
FOR MAKING IT POSSIBLE



MIKE DAVIES





LOCAL PLANNING MATTERS

Local Planning Matters (it really does). Planning matters because ... well, take these three examples of the unlawful.

1. Mr Fish and Chips

It's still there. Four years since RSC raised with the Council this unplanned, illegal and outrageous Preston Street development the owner Mr Salama continues to use every trick in the playbook to avoid taking action. He built without thinking to trouble the Council with a planning application. Planning Enforcement only came after RSC vigilance and a retrospective application was submitted.

In this Mr Salama got his pens out to crudely alter the official Land Registry plan to show an increased boundary area to the site. This in an attempt to lay claim to the pavement he has built on! So crudely that you can see his redrawn black and red lines that are completely different to those in the Land Registry plan itself. Also visible are the remnants of the true original dotted line he has tried to erase!

The Council refused permission for this retrospective application in 2022. It took another year for legal work to allow the Council to impose a Planning Enforcement order and demand the development is removed. The restaurant has been told to remove the tile cladding, handrails, glass balustrade, ramp, steps, raised platform, black and white floor tiles, planter tiles and to make good the render once they're gone. It's also required to remove an external flue on the side of the building that also has no planning permission. By November 2023

Mr Salama's response? He has appealed against the Council refusal decision. A complete waste of the Council's time and resources, never mind those we pay for at the office of the Secretary of State. Mr Fish and Chips has had nearly 4 years' profits already from this blight on Preston Street - his appeal is only in order to keep that going.



2. Unlawful Advertising?



OK, this application for Advertising Consent, quite rightly refused permission by the Council, is also now subject to Appeal; hence the question mark in the title. The developers of a boutique hotel at 123-126 Kings Road on the seafront are involved in much lengthier construction work than they had planned.

Owned by the three brothers who inherited and sold the substantial John Guest plumbing supplies empire for £687.5 million, initial intentions were to be operational at the hotel in 2023. Aspects of the build and refurbishment have not been straightforward.

Readers of our Newsletters will remember local residents and RSC objected as strongly as possible to the massive, unsightly, noise and traffic-generating effects this development will continue to have on once quiet residential backstreet Queensberry Mews. You may also recall the application was, by due process, supposed to be examined by the Council's Planning Committee: it was on the agenda but somehow overlooked, getting approved in absence of process! (How big was that inheritance again?)

Now, whilst all this is going on, the developer MyCo has put up not one but three massive adverts for the brothers' brand "Guest House" that have sat in the face of all passers-by on the seafront since 2022.

The Council demanded removal by 24th November 2023. By law, they are allowed a square metre of advert ... they have one hundred and twenty square metres!



As per Mr Fish and Chips above, the developer put in an Appeal - the day before the 'remove by' date. It is only to run the clock down: the adverts stay up for the duration of the Appeal and that could be to the end of their hotel construction work.

****Stop the press:** We are quoted on behalf of the Secretary of State Michael Gove at the Appeal:

""The advertisement's design would not ordinarily be acceptable with regard to the setting of the listed building and

the character and appearance of the conservation area.

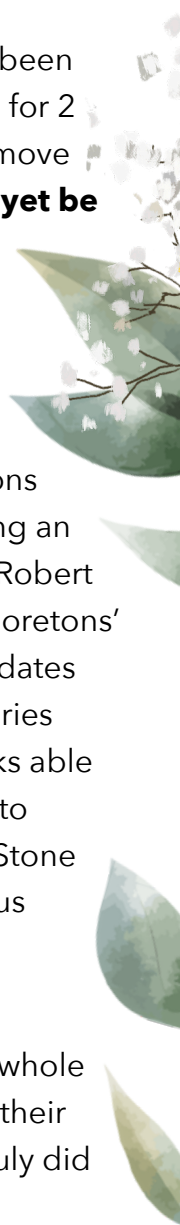
Accordingly, I agree with the Council and comments submitted by the Regency Squares Community group that the shroud by reason of its prominence, size and unsympathetic design does result in harm to the visual amenity of the area due to its impact on the aforementioned heritage assets."

The Appeal has run the clock down as we predicted, been heard and resulted in a very temporary stay of execution for 2 more months. The developer is now legally bound to remove the offending advertising before April 1st 2024 - **will we yet be April-fooled?**

3. Scaffolding Has An Impact... on Stone Street.

Mid October saw the completion of the latest Moretons Investments out-of-place property development, installing an extra storey higher than neighbouring buildings, above Robert Dyas and Superdrug at 74-76 Western Road Brighton. Moretons' accompanying Management Plan promised periodic updates on the work where there were none and materials deliveries every day for the 3 month duration by small flatbed trucks able to fit along the Stone and Castle Street one-way system, to ensure no dangerous large trucks reversing back along Stone Street. But deliveries *were only by large trucks*. Dangerous reversing ensued - daily.

The Moretons' Management Plan for the build had a whole section on "Protecting Highway Assets. However, one of their contractors became a serious risk to public safety and truly did not protect highway assets:





SCAFFOLDING PARTLY REMOVED – DAMAGED VEHICLE. SOME OF 30+ DENTS IN THE HIGHWAY.

We were alerted by a succession of loud sounds - something metal being repeatedly dropped? Sure enough contractors ACE Scaffolding had thought the best way to bring the scaffolding down was to send each scaffolding pole 3 storeys down a chute onto the highway.

The noise was those scaffolding poles, with all that height's kinetic energy, hitting the ground and bouncing anywhere - into the adjacent parked car, potentially into passersby, potentially into passing vehicles. 30+ IMPACT DENTS IN ROAD. So 30+ metal poles bouncing anywhere.

[if you recognise the car, please let us know as it was damaged - clearly we are not publishing the reg plate number but we do have it]

The man loading each pole onto his truck's only remark: "*why does someone always have to say something*", demonstrating that this way of working was common to him. They ceased and Moretons Investments acknowledged our message informing them of the damage ... but no mention of repair.



MIKE DAVIES





PINELLO RESTAURANT

Pinello has a couple of good reviews on Tripadvisor and looks like a pizza place at first due to the board at the front. Needing a quick lunch we went in on Sunday and the special was Sicilian Fish Stew so I thought I would give it a whirl.

The stew was fragrant with fresh thyme and plentiful. Chunky portions of salmon and hake? - I'm not sure, mussels, tiny clams, a little calamari - not too much, topped with a gigantic prawn - enough to feed a very hungry caterpillar. All beautifully just cooked, in a garlicky well seasoned tomato sauce and it went down a treat.

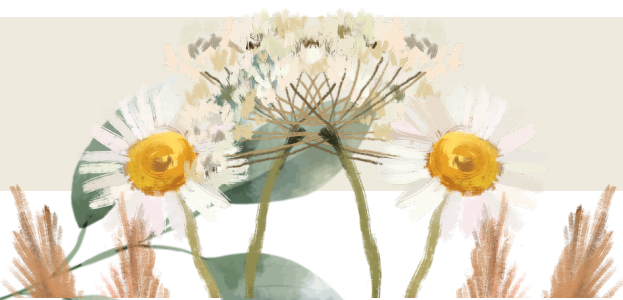
I would wholeheartedly recommend it and will be going back as it's right on my doorstep, a plus when the wind is howling across Regency Square.

Immaculately clean with comfy chairs and a pleasing décor, the welcome warm and friendly, Pinello certainly gives the next door Regency a run for their money. They certainly get my vote.

SICILIAN FISH STEW AT PINELLO



SUE DAWES



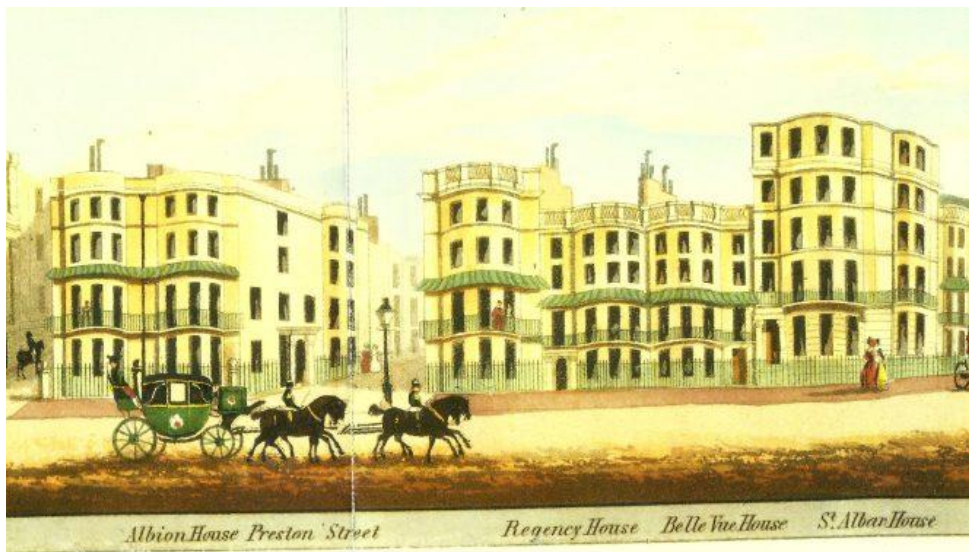


BELLE VUE HOUSE

Many of us still refer to the restaurant at 132 Kings Road street level as the Melrose; now renamed Pinello and next-door to the Regency Café. Regular readers will recall it is the oldest building on our part of the Seafront, predating Regency Square by several decades and marked on a 1790s map of Brighthelmstone as Belle Vue House.

Local historian and champion of our garden squares Gill Wales has written a splendid history of the building and its occupants for the RSC website, including its time as a cinema and indeed the first place in the country outside London the public could ever see a film. We borrow an illustration from 1833, attributed as “Detail from Panorama of Brighton by Amon Henry Wilds”.

The historic original form of Belle Vue House is instantly recognisable today, even if a 1920s poor intervention enclosed the first floor balcony in a ghastly set of windows. The point being, it has stood in this form for **two and a quarter centuries**. Except that the current owners of the building (not the owners of the Pinello restaurant business which belongs to Regency Café) have other ideas.



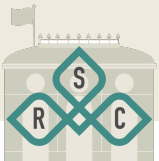
In 2021 they applied for permission to extend upwards by adding 4 more floors - the local reaction to those proposals was of horror, RSC campaigned, many objections were lodged by the community and our council rightly refused planning permission.

The owners have returned with a new plan, in current application BH2023/03417. It is far more modest in its ambition proposing the addition of just one more floor in the form of a set-back penthouse whilst improving access to the floors above the restaurant with a lift shaft to the rear. However, the application contains no images of what this penthouse would look like but does reveal its sea-facing elevation would be entirely of glass with grey aluminium framing. The applicant claims this use of glass will reflect the sky and render the penthouse invisible. Perhaps they think this is how they can assert it will have no adverse effect on the setting of Grade II* listed 131 Kings Road that adjoins?

The best guess of what this penthouse would look like, from the application documents give us is this:



What do you think? As always, you can have your say by sending an email to planning.applications@brighton-hove.gov.uk - quote BH2023/03417 and say why you SUPPORT or OBJECT.



MIKE DAVIES

NEW RSC EMAIL

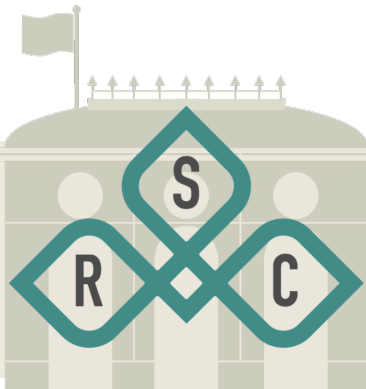
Announcing our new RSC Contact Email Address ...

RSC@REGENCYBRIGHTON.COM

Email addresses are not case sensitive, so rsc@regencybrighton.com gets to us too.

This new email address refers to the Regency Squares Community name and is more professional making use of our long established domain name 'regencybrighton', just as the WWW.REGENCYBRIGHTON.COM website does.

We are retiring the old contact email address "RSAScommunity@gmail.com" so be sure to let us know your questions or feedback on any local matters using the new RSC Contact Email Address.



JULIE WRIGHT

At the last AGM a request was made to introduce members of the Regency Squares Community's committee in the newsletter so we're kicking it off with wonderful Julie Wright, Chair of RSC.



Hi, I'm Julie Wright, Chair of RSC. Having retired from dental practice in Cheshire, 7 years ago myself and Mike headed south to start our retirement and chose to live in Brighton. We were lucky enough to find a newly converted Regency Fly stables on Stone Street which but for RSAS (now RSC) getting it Grade II listed was to be demolished and turned into flats! Of course I was soon co-opted onto the committee.

I worked my way through the ranks, as Planning Officer then Secretary to become Chair 3 years ago. Having fallen in love with the beautiful Regency 'fondant iced' buildings, I am also Treasurer for Brighton and Hove Heritage Commission.

Soon after arriving in Brighton Mike contracted meningitis and sepsis with life changing consequences. I now put my carer experience to good use doing some voluntary work with Meningitis Research Foundation and the Limbless Association.

I've forged strong links with our local councillors and the police to make sure our voice is heard. I want to develop a strong community here in the centre of the city and to ensure we preserve our fantastic Regency heritage. I am a strong advocate for positive change – Yes the simpler RSC name change was down to me and together with my committee we are working for you and our local environment.



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