



NEWSLETTER 222
March 2006

Annual General Meeting

The Society's 27th Annual General Meeting will be held at 7:30 pm on Thursday 30th March 2006 in the Norfolk Room at the Hilton Metropole Hotel.

Agenda

- 1 Minutes of the Previous AGM
- 2 Committee Report for the Year
- 3 Treasurer's Report & Annual Accounts
- 4 Subscription Rates for 2007
- 5 Election of Officers and Committee

After the formal agenda there will be a chance to discuss any issues that members want to raise.

Our guest speaker after the AGM will be Nick Franklin of BBC Southern Counties Radio. Refreshments will be available and there will be a raffle.

Society Contacts

Chairman: Roger Hinton ☎ 321794, email
hinton@clara.net

Secretary: John Gavin ☎ 749747

Treasurer: Andrew Walker ☎ 700340

Report on the Year

Hotels, Hostels and HMOs

The biggest issue facing the Society this past year has been the Council's decision to lease three houses in Regency Square for use as hostels for the homeless.

This raised questions about how the buildings gained permission to change from hotels, and why the Council, which claims to encourage tourism, should threaten the livelihood of local hotels by encouraging alcoholics and drug users into the area.

We organised a meeting with Council leader Ken Bodfish to get answers to these questions but it had to be cancelled when he resigned. We are still pursuing these issues: more details next month.

Licensing Madness

New licensing law meant that all licensed premises had to re-apply for their licenses during 2005. The Society opposed the requests for extended hours and music at some premises, largely without success.

We did succeed in getting some useful restrictions on the Pull and Pump license in Clarence Square. This probably reflected the number of neighbours who wrote to object, and attended the hearing. Congratulations to committee member Diana Dunn for organising the objectors.

Work and Play

In April, three energetic members devoted time and elbow grease to cleaning the Society's bench on Regency Square, with help from an electric sander.

Eleven members met in June for a tour of the Hippodrome in Middle Street, now a bingo hall, but once one of Brighton's top music halls.

In July and August we decided to have "a presence" in Regency Square each Thursday evening. Each week members met for a chat and a glass of wine.

In November we had a guided tour of Brighton Museum. Our annual New Year breakfast at the Regency Restaurant was well attended. Six members got together for a pleasant dinner at the Metropole, on an otherwise dreary January evening.

The West Pier

People often ask about the West Pier, so we decided that the Society should publish a clear policy statement. We believe that the time has come to give up hope of restoring the pier. The West Pier Trust should be wound up. The Council should take responsibility for clearing away the debris and smartening up the lower promenade. The West Pier Trust has other ideas; more details next month.

View From the Heights

As in previous years the Society's web site has kept its readers up to date with local events. In particular it continued to report on the peregrine falcons, which take up residence on Sussex Heights each year. Much to the surprise of the experts, the offspring who were born there a year ago returned. Web site editors, Brian and Andrew Smith joined a member of the Sussex Ornithological Society in a visit to the nest to put rings on two of the new chicks.

Boxes and Bins

Rubbish has been low on the agenda recently; the streets have been reasonably clean. A re-cycling box scheme was introduced during the year without too much bother. We have been assured that communal rubbish bins will not be placed in Regency Square. Meanwhile there is no sign yet of them appearing in other local streets and squares as threatened.

Development

This was the year that we lost number 128 Kings Road, one of the oldest houses in this part of Brighton. Demolition was inevitable because it was in such a poor condition as a result of years of neglect and vandalism. Both the Society and the Council were hoping to see a replica of the original façade, but thanks to a decision by the Deputy Prime Minister we will get a 21st century building instead.

The end of the year saw what we hope is a final decision about the unsightly CCTV cameras which have been illegally fixed to the front of two listed buildings in Regency Square. The Deputy Prime Minister turned down an appeal against the Council's order requiring that they be removed.

And finally...

... many thanks to everyone who has helped the Society during the year.

Your Committee

We are sad to report that Clive Buxton has decided not to stand for re-election to the committee this year. Clive joined the committee in 1986 and has worked actively for the Society over the years since then.

His biggest achievement was the Save Our Seafront Campaign (SOS). He was its secretary and played a key role in its success. SOS raised awareness about the plans for large, ugly buildings either side of the West Pier, which would have destroyed much valued sea views. Although the Council did give planning permission for the scheme, the SOS campaign helped create a climate of opinion that finally resulted in the withdrawal of funding.

Clive now lives outside our area (just) and has decided to step down from the committee. He will continue as a Society member. Many thanks to him for all he has done for the Society.

Elections

Two new members are standing for election to the committee: Lucho Zuidema of the Brighton House Hotel and Warden Swinfen who lives in Abbotts.

Existing members standing for re-election are:

Roger Hinton (Chairman)	Regency Square
Andrew Walker (Treasurer)	Chartwell Court
Ron Bakere	Sussex Heights
Ros Boulden	Abbotts
Margaret Brisley	Sussex Heights
Diana Dunn	Clarence Gardens
John Gavin	Queensbury Mews
Brian Smith	Regency Square
Traude Tappin	Preston Street

John Gavin has been our very active secretary since 2002. He is standing down from that role now because he expects to move away from the area during the coming year. We are pleased that he has offered to remain on the committee and continue to represent us at the Conservation Advisory Group.

More committee members will be welcome. If you want to know more about joining, or about becoming secretary, please contact Roger Hinton (☎ 321794).

Annual Accounts

2004/05 Income and Expenditure			
Income	£	Expenditure	£
Subscriptions	436	Printing etc.	399
General donations	336	Insurance	250
Functions	65	Functions expenses	37
Interest	36	Website expenses	176
Deficit for the year	154	Donations made	165
	<u>1,027</u>		<u>1,027</u>
Balance Sheet			
Funds 28/2/05	1,966	Cash & bank	2,120
Less Deficit	<u>154</u>		
Funds 28/2/06	1,812		
Advance subs.	168		
Advance donations	<u>140</u>		
	<u>2,120</u>		<u>2,120</u>

The Regency Square Improvement Fund has not been used during the year and now stands at £4,611.

Treasurer's Report

After a previous small surplus, we ran a deficit last year. We donated £100 to the Kemp Town Society towards their campaign against development on the Marina; public liability insurance cost £250 and sponsorship of the website did not cover its cost. On the other hand voluntary donations continued at a gratifyingly high level for which the Society is grateful.

Andrew Walker

Where's the membership form?

Yes, we do still want subscriptions!
If you haven't paid yet you'll find a form in the envelope with your newsletter.

If you get a form, please use it!

Re-launching the Station

Nick Franklin of BBC Southern Counties Radio will be the Society's guest speaker after the AGM.



7:30pm, Thursday 30 March 2006,
Norfolk Room, Hilton Metropole Hotel

Refreshments & a Raffle