



NEWSLETTER 253 August 2010

Backstage at the Theatre Royal

How would you like a chance to visit the bits that you don't normally get to see at the Theatre Royal in New Road?

We've organised a guided tour. It will be at 11am on Saturday 4 September (meet in the foyer). The cost is £5 per head including tea or coffee. It will last about 45 minutes.

We need to confirm numbers with the theatre very soon, so if you would like to come please book now. Send your money, together with your name and telephone number, to Margaret Brisley, 8C Sussex Heights, St Margaret's Place, Brighton BN1 2FQ.

Skateboarding good, shouting bad

Did you hear the noise from the skateboarding event on the lower promenade by the West Pier a few days ago? If you didn't, count yourself lucky!

There was a very loud public address system. A commentator was shouting into the microphone throughout almost the whole event. His ranting was audible as far away as Clarence Square.

We had already spoken to an environmental health officer earlier in the day who was present on site during the sound

checks before the event started. He seemed to be most concerned about the level of the live band which played for a while in the evening. As it turned out this was less of a problem than the shouting.

We have contacted the Council's events team who were responsible for organising the event. We've asked them how often they expect to use this location for events of this kind in the future. We've encouraged them to try to keep the noise down. The crowds that were down there would have been able to hear perfectly well at half the volume!

Committee changes

Society member Michel Boucher was elected to the committee at the AGM in March but has not been able to attend any meetings because of other commitments. So he has decided to stand down.

This means we could do with one or two more members. If you might be interested and would like to have a chat about what is involved, please call the Chairman, Roger Hinton (☎ 01273 321794).

Or perhaps you know someone else who might make a good committee member and is just waiting to be asked.

Wrestling in the early hours

Wrestling is one of the many types of event that the Holiday Inn Hotel would like to extend their licensing hours for. They want a license until two in the morning.

The problem is that people attending late night events at the hotel already disturb residents nearby, particularly those in Bedford Towers immediately above.

The main causes for complaint are people who use the hotel terrace as a place to smoke and people leaving at the end of the events. Sound travels at night and you only need a few people enjoying a few jokes together to wake the neighbours.

The residents of Bedford Towers have objected to the license application and the Society has also made an objection.

Let's hope the licensing authority understands the problem!

Web Site Changes

The Society web site was set up in 2000 by Society member, Brian Smith and his son Andrew, who have continued to maintain it since then.

It has proved very popular, not just locally but around the world. We have recruited a member in the USA thanks to it and, of course, the coverage of the peregrine falcons on Sussex Heights has achieved wide recognition amongst bird lovers.

Brian and Andrew have decided to step down and take a well-deserved rest from the job of running the site. All members will no doubt want to join the committee in thanking them warmly for the wonderful work they have done for the Society.

Other members of the committee will now take over the running of the site and there will, no doubt, be some changes over the next few months. If you have any ideas about what could be added or changed please contact Roger Hinton (✉ hinton@clara.net ☎ 01273 321794).

Society Contacts:

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Fork Lift Twittering

Everyone is twittering these days it seems, even the fork lift trucks that move deliveries around Churchill Square. They do it whenever they're in reverse gear. Well "beeping" might be a better word, but whatever the correct description, it's not much fun for those who live within earshot.

Society member, John Clinton of St Margaret's Place has written to the Churchill Square management to ask if the beep can be turned off; the answer will probably be that it's required for health and safety reasons - always a good way to silence a complaint! But not John; he has also suggested that they could limit their operation to two hours a day and try to avoid going backwards as much as possible.

A Nice Shade of BS 10C31

What is 10C31? It's the official British Standard name for the colour that houses in Regency Square need to be painted to comply with the uniform painting scheme.

A number of properties in the square are being painted at present including Topps Hotel. We noticed that they were painting the building itself the right colour but the wooden window frames were being done in white.

So one of our committee members mentioned this to the manager and it turned out he hadn't realised that the painting scheme applied to woodwork as well.

Now it's all the right colour.

The Regency Tavern - officially re-opened

Located in the twitten between Russell and Regency Squares the Regency Tavern could be said to be at the very heart of our area. So it's good to see it open again, with new upholstery, carpets and decoration, and of course the grand piano, which was a star feature at the very enjoyable re-opening party at the end of last month.

More bad news for the West Pier

The arches that support the pavement in front of the root end of the West Pier have deteriorated significantly according to Council officials who inspected them recently.

So when we asked the West Pier Trust if they could tidy up or even remove some of the railings that are making the area look such a mess, the answer was that the existing railing will now have to be moved north a few metres to keep the public off the weak area of pavement. This will make the promenade even narrower.

There is one little bit of good news: the weeds will be easier to remove.

And when will the i360 be started, you ask. As soon as Marks Barfield, the developers, can secure the final section of funding, which they've been trying to do for many months now.

The Trust officers admit to being frustrated by this ongoing delay, but they are "still confident that the scheme will go ahead."

When is a hotel not a hotel?

A few years ago two properties on the west side of Regency Square were granted change of use from hotels to houses in multiple occupation. They are now leased by the Council and used as hostels.

The change of use was granted without any opportunity for local people to comment or object because it was claimed that the properties had already been operating as hostels for several years without any formal complaint. There was understandable anger when people learnt how this change of use was achieved.

More recently concerns have been expressed about a property on the east side of the square, which looks like a hotel but neighbours feared was operating as a hostel.

We asked the Council to investigate and the enforcement officer who visited the premises has confirmed that it is still operating as a hotel.

So there is no chance at the moment of another change of use slipping through without proper process. We will continue to monitor the situation.

Rowdyism on the increase?

Crime figures from the police for June and July in our area are pretty low generally but "Inconsiderate Rowdy Nuisance" has gone up from none in June to five in July - perhaps it's the warm weather.

Rebecca in Clarence Gardens

Our next trip to the Little Theatre will be to see Daphne du Maurier's classic, Rebecca on Thursday 30th September. The show starts at 7:45 and tickets cost £7.50. If you'd like to come please send your money with your name and telephone number to Ros Boulden, 8 Abbots, 129 Kings Road, Brighton BN1 2FA by 13th September at the latest.

Visit Bodiam Castle and Batemans

M and M tours are running this coach tour on Saturday 4th September, which unfortunately clashes with our visit to the theatre Royal.

Bodiam Castle was built in 1385. It has a moat, spiral staircases and wonderful views of the Rother valley. Batemans is a Jacobean house at Burwash that was the home of Rudyard Kipling from 1902 to 1936.

The cost is £37.20, reduced to £25.50 for members of the National Trust who can use their membership card for entry to both properties. Full details and an application form are available from Roger Hinton (✉ hinton@clara.net ☎ 01273 321794).