



THE WORTHING SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER MARCH 2009

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FORTHCOMING ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice of Calling of Annual General Meeting of the Worthing Society on Tuesday 28th April 2009

Notice is hereby given that the 27th Annual General Meeting of the Worthing Society will take place on Tuesday 28th April 2009 at 7pm in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre.

Nominations are invited for the following posts:

- ◆ Chairman
- ◆ Vice-Chairman
- ◆ Honorary Secretary
- ◆ Honorary Treasurer
- ◆ Honorary Membership Secretary
- ◆ Honorary Social Secretary
- ◆ Honorary Publicity Officer
- ◆ Honorary Legal Consultant
- ◆ Six members of the Executive Committee

All nominations, supported by a seconder and with the approval of the nominee, should be sent, not later than the 14th April 2009, to

Mrs. N. Cropper
3 Ilex Way
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The business meeting at 7:00pm will be followed by coffee, before a talk by Adge Roberts on "The Shelley Family & Their Sussex Properties"

Subscriptions for the year 2009/10 (Single £7, Joint £10) are due on April 1st. These may be paid at the A.G.M. or send cheques made payable to The Worthing Society to Mrs. S. Miller, Membership Secretary, at 92 Lyndhurst Road, Worthing, BN11 2DW, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope please.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2008-2009

Frink Heads – The Desert Quartet



The 5th November 2008 was a notable day for The Worthing Society, The Twentieth Century Society, The Public Monuments & Sculpture Association (PMSA), the Town and nationally. Notice was received that the Secretary of State at the DCMS dismissed the appeal by Mr. Humphrey Avon against the Grade II* listing granted in May 2007 to the Frink Heads and supporting loggia. The original unprecedented decision was the first time a public sculpture less than 30 years old had received official recognition. The work was unveiled by Lord Palumbo when the Montague Shopping Centre was officially opened in 1990.

I became aware in August 2005 that Mr. Avon, who commissioned the Sculpture as part of the complex, wanted to remove the statues to an undisclosed location and intended to sponsor a competition to find a replacement. I made it clear that the Society would be opposed to such a proposal. A sub-committee was formed to lobby opinion and campaign for the retention of the Frink Heads. Ted Kennard, Natalie Cropper, Martin Mitchell and Chris Lowe worked hard and TV and press coverage spread the story, which from mid 2006 gathered some illustrious support. Eric Cockain and Robin King recalled vital information.

The campaign gained the attention of the PMSA and alerted the C20th Society and these national organisations gave massive support. Joseph Mirwitch, a Trustee of the C20th Society, spearheaded a bold bid to have the Heads listed and assembled expert opinion. We are indebted to him and others in these organisations for the achievement.

The Desert Quartet are now an important piece of the National Artistic Heritage. Worthing should be proud!

Titnore Lane – West Durrington

A new outline application has been submitted to WBC and the Society has presented initial objections. Our opposition to the development goes back a decade but is now part of the Local Plan. The Society's policy is to seek to modify the proposals. Members will recall that in early 2006 we launched a Fighting Fund to campaign against the intransigence of the West Sussex Highways Authority who wanted the realignment of Titnore Lane with the destruction of much ancient woodland and the felling of 210 mature trees. David Sawers used new government guidelines to provide a powerful counter argument on which we took legal advice and in July 2006 our solicitors wrote to WBC with a threat of a judicial review of the decision to approve the application. The delay is still with us. We are waiting for fresh proposals from the West Sussex Highways Authority who may have adopted a more enlightened policy and a new environmental statement from the consortium to enable us to submit further observations.

Social & Events

Quarterly meetings were well supported. Talks were by John Mills on "West Sussex Settlements Lost to the Sea", Tony Pratt on "The River Arun and It's History", Michael Rowan, ARIBA, the conservation architect to WSCC on "Planning & Listed Buildings" and Alan Readman of the WSCC Records Office with "Images from the Film Archives".

Christine Roberts organised enjoyable outings. The Horsham walk with Dr. Annabel Hughes and Chris Hare's tour of Arundel and Burpham were well supported. Other visits were to Cowdray and Finchcock's Musical Museum.

The sun came out again for the "Wine & Cheese" at Beach House in July and we thank Barry and Mascha Richards for hosting this popular event.

Plaques

The Society contributed towards the cost of a blue plaque to Private William Cooper of Cranmer Road, a survivor of Rorke's Drift. The unveiling event was organised by Paul Holden of the Sentinel.

We contributed to the commemorative plaque to celebrate the centenary of the Worthing Museum & Art Gallery. The Society was represented at the Civic Reception.

Exhibition

Our annual exhibition at the Library in October, mounted by Tony Malone, received great reviews and many thought it "the best ever". Tony manages to exceed himself each year.

Other Planning Matters

Planning remains a primary and critical issue for many residents. We joined well organised and successful campaigns to stop development in Bulkington Avenue and Hayling Rise. The appeal against the DCC refusal to allow the demolition of 118-128 Broadwater Street West to make way for 71 suites for the elderly was dismissed. A campaign failed to stop approval of the application to build apartments on the site of 28 and 30 Marine Drive. We have contested this policy change that will create a domino effect along the seafront.

The Society supported the campaign to preserve the integrity of the Greensward. Recent flooding in the area adds to the disquiet at the Sea Place development with underground car parking that makes it necessary to move the Yacht Club onto the Greensward.

The economic malaise has hampered plans for Teville Gate, Grafton, the Police Station in Union Place, Guildbourne, West Durrington, the Aquarena with its site and Masterplan dreams. Consultants have been appointed to design a brief for the Aquarena site but WBC have to sell off more of the family silver.

The Society continues to monitor The Dome, Castle Goring and Christchurch. Tony Malone represents us on the Planning User Group and the Design Panel for the Distinction of Building Awards. The Society is represented at Worthing Arts Council. We maintain an input and watch on the South Downs National Park proposals and the Local Development Plan thanks to David Sawers.

The Society remains concerned about the policies that make the demolition and conversion of older properties to multiple dwellings hard to resist. High density brings demographic changes in the town with social and financial implications. A review of Conservation Areas in Worthing is planned which we hope will enhance protection for sensitive areas and the Society will have an input. While attention is drawn to large development proposals "the nibblers" have an insidious effect. Hugh Casson observed it is not the buildings that matter but the spaces between them. This relationship is not considered much anymore.

My thanks to the Members of the Executive Committee who have always given freely of their time to ensure the Society's voice is heard and it's business carried out.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, I thank all Members of the Society for their support, encouragement and comments, which are always welcome. Your support is vital as we meet future challenges.

David Sumner, Chairman

An update from Tony Malone

This is my usual opportunity to keep you abreast of your Committee's activities since the last Newsletter.

May I remind all of you with internet access to keep an eye on the Worthing Borough Council website www.worthing.gov.uk. It contains not only updates on planning matters and major developments in particular but also has regular public consultations to which you may wish to contribute.

Your Committee is still very stretched and we would welcome any approach from you, our members, if you would like to help in any way. Although access to a computer and some familiarity with word-processing and the use of email would be a great asset it is not imperative. Willingness and reliability is probably just as important. Apart from needing a Minutes Secretary for our monthly meetings, additional help would, for example, make it possible for us to allocate 'portfolios' to individuals. These could relate to a specific development or initiative within Worthing (e.g. the Aquarena redevelopment; The Dome; The Connaught etc). Given enough 'hands to the pump' we might even run to the luxury of having someone maintain a file on Worthing Society press cuttings. Lots of jobs to do...there is something for everyone who is willing to lend a hand.

A number of planned developments have been deferred, probably because of the recession. Nonetheless I shall still include them below. It is just a list...but that seems to be the most efficient way to keep you 'up to speed' on things:-.

- Goring Greensward – our main objection to a playground on the Greensward has been that it could be 'the thin end of the wedge' for future development.
- West Durrington/Titnore Lane – WBC anticipate that the long-awaited planning application from the development consortium will be lodged in the next month or two.
- South Downs National Park – Committee member David Sawers has brought his expertise to bear in representing us in discussions on the National Park.
- The Desert Quartet – a great deal of hard work and determination from Committee members and interested bodies contributed to the successful listing of this important public art.
- Spells Building, Grafton Place – another part of old Worthing that developers have their hands on. At the time of writing we await a decision from English Heritage on 'spot-listing'.
- 48 Ann Street – unauthorised work on this old property in a Conservation Area has been brought to the attention of WBC.
- Castle Goring – we continue to highlight the urgency of essential repairs to this Grade I listed building.
- Lemo UK, North Street – we backed this forward-thinking company in their controversial design for new offices and workshops in North Street. The plans were passed. The town desperately needs the jobs that this company offer.
- Northbrook College – we are in favour of the ambitious new college bringing together satellite campuses at the Broadwater site.
- Our Library Exhibition – commences 26th September for 2 weeks. The tentative theme being 'Conservation Areas of Worthing'.

Please do keep us aware of your feelings on any Worthing Society matters of concern. The newsletter and our website (www.worthingsociety.org.uk) contain contact details.

Tony Malone
Vice Chairman/Publicity Officer

GORING GREENSWARD

At the WBC Cabinet meeting, on February 2nd the following decision, recorded in the official minutes, was agreed "that the Council does not pursue a play area on the Goring Greensward". Officers were instructed to investigate alternative sites within Goring.

Natalie Cropper, Secretary