



# THE WORTHING SOCIETY

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## NEWSLETTER MARCH 2012

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### FORTHCOMING ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 24 APRIL 2012

**Notice is hereby given that the 30th Annual General Meeting of The Worthing Society will take place on Tuesday 24 April 2012 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 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 10 April 2012, to the Secretary, Gill Tucker.

**At the conclusion of the business meeting there will be a coffee break followed by a not-to-be-missed talk by Trevor Sapey on The History of the Mary Rose – Past to Present**

### MEMBERSHIP

Changes to a town can happen so slowly we often do not notice them. The Worthing Society keeps a careful eye on unwelcome changes. Of course we are not opposed to new buildings when they add new interest and style to the townscape but sadly not every development delivers improvement. It is with some trepidation that we view the area around Beach House and the Aquarena replacement; will it detract from the setting of this beautiful Georgian building? The replacement for the Eardley Hotel thankfully presents a reasonable stab at replicating the previous building, but a major concern is what is to replace the three lost villas next to Marine Gardens. The Beach Hotel is currently shrouded in scaffolding ready for demolition. We do not have a clear picture of what will replace it and how quickly the empty site will be built on. No matter what the future holds for these and other buildings in town, members can be certain the Worthing Society will monitor progress on these and future developments. Changes may happen slowly but the cumulative effect can be fundamental. The town is marred by numerous post war eyesores so please continue to support us in the struggle to ensure no more concrete monstrosities are built.

### A MESSAGE FROM YOUR MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY, SUSAN MILLER

It is hard to believe, but another year has gone by and Membership Renewals are now due. We are changing our system this year and have enclosed a "Membership Form" for you to complete. This will ensure that we have your up to date details. We would request that you either send this to me, with your subscription, or bring it along, fully completed, to the AGM. We will be keeping this as our record. We can only do the good work we do with your support and value your membership. Thank you for your continued support.

## **CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2011- 2012**

The Newsletter containing notice of the forthcoming AGM gives the Chairman space to reflect on the main points of the year's business.

The Executive Committee meets every three weeks and I am ever thankful for their time, freely given, to further the aims and activities of the Society. We are often asked for help or to give an opinion by residents who, in many cases, do not realise we are funded only by membership subscriptions and that the Society relies on your support, encouragement and comments.

### **Website**

Development has progressed this year due to the work of Barry Richards and I have no doubt that this is the way forward, particularly when I am eventually replaced by a technocrat! At the time of writing, we have had nearly 1200 hits and the aim is to convert this interest into increased membership and influence.

### **West Durrington**

After more than a decade of opposition, the West Durrington Consortium's outline plan was approved at a fractious, ill-tempered and rowdy meeting of the Planning Committee on 20 October 2011. David Sawers, on whom we rely heavily for advice regarding this application, was one of those who spoke against, but we knew the game was up. The residential development of about 700 houses (no flats) became part of the WBC Core Strategy at the Examination in Public held by a Government Inspector in November 2010, when we again put the case against, but in vain.

The Social housing element was very persuasive. Some protesters have discussed a legal challenge, but our opinion is that there is little chance of success from such action. When the Society threatened the 2006 application with a Judicial Review, it included works to Titnore Lane and the destruction of much ancient woodland, with building on two areas close to the road. At that time we were on surer ground. We had a four-figure fighting fund raised from members, so could employ expert legal advice, and we had David Sawers, who knew his way round all the various PPS and PPG's to set up the argument. The potential for flooding remains, if not on the new estate, further down the line.

### **The NPPF Controversy**

The National Planning Policy Framework is being completely redrafted but it is not clear how far the Government will go to meet the near-universal chorus of criticism. The Society wrote to Worthing's two MPs and to the consulting team with views on the planning reforms. A Parliamentary Committee agreed with critics, pointing out that the draft was "unhelpfully vague", "ambiguous" and "inconsistent" and would cause chaos if implemented. They found no evidence that Planning Policy is a restraint on economic development. The pressure is on Eric Pickles' Department to get it right this time.

### **Housing Space Standards**

The Society welcomed WBC's initiative to introduce minimum standards for internal space and storage for housing. The Parker Morris standards adopted in 1967 have slowly been eroded and ignored, resulting in much of our new build housing providing buyers with the lowest standard in Western Europe. Parker Morris plus 10% should be the aim, as adopted by the Mayor of London.

### **Castle Goring**

Castle Goring is even more "at risk" following thieves stealing £50,000 worth of lead from its roof in January 2012. The owner, Mr Somerset, wants to sell Castle Goring off. The building's future looks bleak.

### **Worthing Heritage Alliance**

This Alliance, which we have supported since its inception, has now submitted a bid for HLF monies for projects to promote Worthing and its heritage. If successful, the Project Manager will be Chris Hare. The new Chairman is Richard Childs, late of West Sussex Records Office. Barry Richards has drafted a Website which met with members' approval.

### **The Aquarena**

Recent plans to site a ground source heat pump field in front of listed Beach House has caused us to issue cautionary notice to the Council – i.e. why decide to do this now, so late into the project? Has an engineer's report been prepared? We have asked for assurance that the work will not cause any damage to the fabric or foundations of the building.

### **Other Matters**

The Committee discusses and maintains an overview and acts on matters arising such as the future of Worthing's Theatres, Teville Gate, Splash Point, the Mayfair Hotel, the Warren, the Desert Quartet, Union Place, the twitten from Warwick Street to Library Place, the Dome and others.

### **The South Coast Conference**

This was held on the 18 June 2011 at St. Paul's and was attended by representatives of nearly 60 civic groups from as far away as Hunstanton and Torbay. The success was largely due to the efforts of Mascha Richards. Main topics were planning, localism and regeneration.

### **Exhibition**

Our exhibition held at the Library for two weeks starting 25 June 2011 was a review of the blue plaques erected in the town. Mounted by Tony Malone, it was successfully shown at other venues. Tony continues to act as Publicity Officer and represents us on the Planning User Group but much of his time is currently spent heading the Listing and Conservation Sub-Committee. (See his Report in this Newsletter).

### **Social Events and Quarterly Meetings**

Another successful year. Gatherings at the Library and Speakers received excellent support. Outings to Hughenden Manor; the Olympic Park; Hammerwood Park and the John Rutter Christmas Concert were sellouts. Thank you to Christine Roberts and Mascha Richards. The annual "Wine and Cheese" event at chez Richards, Beach House, was at capacity and the sun shone yet again.

The Society is affiliated with Civic Voice, the Victorian Society, the 20th Century Society, the South Downs Society and the Campaign to Protect Rural England.

I thank Members of the Society on behalf of the Executive Committee for their support and interest, and look forward to meeting you at gatherings.

My thanks also go to all Officers and Members of the Executive Committee which welcomed Gill Tucker as our new Hon. Secretary. Gill has proved a strength with the skills, enthusiasm and experience she has brought to meetings. And even more support for your technophobic Chairman.

*David Sumner*  
CHAIRMAN

### **FURTHER COMMENTS FROM OUR CHAIRMAN**

#### **THE RAPE OF ANGMERING LACK OF LOCAL PLAN GIVES DEVELOPERS A FEAST RUGBY PITCHES FOR WORTHING?**

The building of the Angmering-by-pass created the potential for development between it and Roundstone Lane. The Local Plan is out of date and, shamefully, Arun District Council's replacement is still in preparation and not due until late 2013. The Government's new National Planning Policy Framework is still in draft but the "presumption in favour of sustainable development" hangs in the air. Developers have quickly stepped into this planning void with plans to build on nurseries north of Worthing Rugby Club. Barratts have suggested a development of 300 dwellings near the Spotted Cow (and yes, they are all smaller than the old Parker Morris recommendations). This so-called "sustainable development" will swamp Angmering's infrastructure and is unwanted by residents as they prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, even if the 106 Agreement funds projects as a palliative. But, there are many other sites within Angmering which are vulnerable.

Worthing Rugby Club had eyes on expanding its playing area onto nursery land to the north but was outbid. Persimmon stepped forward with an offer to purchase the Club site, with a view to building another 200 houses if the Club could relocate to land north of Goring Station which Persimmon had acquired as a long-term speculation years ago. This land is within Worthing Borough Council's boundary, is covered by their Local Plan and any change of use would need to be approved by the Council.

This unsatisfactory situation can be blamed not just on the NPPF ramifications but on Arun District Council's tardiness in fulfilling its statutory duty. Angmering is threatened by massive housing projects, Worthing Rugby Club can only satisfy its ambition to expand if it moves, although they may end up a winner. A strategic gap on the A259 becomes home for new playing fields. What about the Rife and public footpaths? What do our members think?

### WILL THE RIFE BECOME A SEWER?

Many have concerns about the effect of the West Durrington development on the Rife, especially regarding its potential to flood, as it meanders through Goring and Ferring to the sea. Asda's planned new store on the A259 at Ferring is proposing to pump "secondary treated sewage effluent" into the Rife. This suggestion has caused public uproar. Asda's mercenary band of experts line up to say that there will be no adverse effect. It is not in their back garden! The public is rightly sceptical.

The continuing advance of the Superstores, who need expansion to keep their balance sheets acceptable, has reached the stage of diminishing returns for the community. The benefits are being outweighed by dis-benefits. Enough is enough.

Incidentally, more houses are planned on the nursery next door to Asda – all this on Arun District Council's patch.

*"WHENEVER THE PEOPLE ARE WELL-INFORMED,  
THEY CAN BE TRUSTED WITH THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT"* (Thomas Jefferson 1789)

Jefferson believed it required no very high degree of education for democracy to prosper. Is this true today? Does rhetoric or ideology win the day? Are decisions made by people strong on belief and ignorant of facts?

Does Government adopt policy for political reasons but in which it does not believe in and which bears little relationship to the facts? Imagine the silence if people only said what they know.

Your thoughts could find their way to our website!

**David Sumner** - Chairman

## **LISTINGS AND CONSERVATION SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT FROM VICE CHAIRMAN TONY MALONE**

### **Listing issues**

As I write this, our submissions for Listings regarding the Connaught Theatre and the Alexandra Tavern are still under review by English Heritage (EH). Two other Listing submissions (the shop that was known as 'Guitar Junction' in High Street and the Spiritualist Church in Grafton Road) are also still being considered as is our request for a review of the decision not to list Marine Gardens.

We still await a decision from EH regarding our Appeal to upgrade the listing category for The Assembly Hall from Grade 2 to Grade 2\* in order to give the Wurlitzer Organ greater protection.

When time permits we hope to submit a Listing application for WWI war memorial adjacent to St Paul's church. As EH emailed me on 13th January 2012 to advise that our submissions are still under consideration I felt that it would be counter-productive to 'press' them on these other issues as they are evidently working under pressure. Our bid to list 'Candia' (St John Ambulance HQ) was, unfortunately, unsuccessful.

I have received invaluable support from all members of the Sub Committee, I don't really want to single out individuals, as everyone has played their part, especially Susan Belton's hard work in preparing lengthy Listing submissions and her extensive liaison, on our behalf, with English Heritage. Bill Geddes has also done sterling work in photographing the interior (sometimes in very tricky circumstances!) and exterior of Listing candidates for submission to English Heritage.

### **Worthing Theatres**

Most of you will now know that Worthing Borough Council (WBC) decided not to accept any of the 'expressions of interest' to take-on the running of our theatres but, instead, decided to keep that responsibility in-house. Whether or not we agree with that decision is now irrelevant as it is now a fact, at least for the immediate future.

Because we decided that we should maintain close involvement with this major issue I have, with the backing of our Executive Committee, written to Paul Yallop, the Leader of WBC thanking him and his team for committing to keeping all our theatres open (albeit a relatively short-term commitment) and offered him our Society's support and help. My letter was copied to Jonathan Woodley who, with his team had been one of the interested 'bidders' and whose team has been asked to liaise with the WBC Working Party in this initiative. Both Jonathan Woodley and Paul Yallop have responded to me with a positive reply.

I have contacted the Theatres Trust (not to be confused with Jonathan Woodley's team) via the Department of Culture Media and Sport, to alert them to the situation vis-à-vis our local theatres. The Theatres Trust brief is predominantly orientated towards offering assistance and advice to help resolve this type of issue. Their response was encouraging, offering help and advice.

### **Annual Worthing Society Exhibition at Worthing Library**

The theme has not yet been set (there is plenty of time for that to be agreed and publicised and for an exhibition display to be assembled) but note your diary that we have been allocated the two weeks commencing 21<sup>st</sup> July 2012. Due to a change in Library policy we are restricted to displaying on their smaller screens on the west side of the foyer. We had no choice in this.

### **St. Paul's War Memorial**

Sufficient funds were raised at the fund-raising event to commence the renovation of St. Paul's WW1 war memorial and, as I write, that work is in progress. Paul Holden 'did our Society proud' in his write-up of the event and this resulted in a substantial amount of interest in the local WW1 servicemen who died in that conflict. I have fielded quite a number of those enquiries and it has been gratifying to be able to provide those families with information about where their ancestors lived in Worthing; which Regiment they joined; where they fell and the location of their final resting place.

As participants in the fund-raising event, Chris Hare and I are invited to the War Memorial re-dedication service on 29 April 2012. I'm sure that anyone else wishing to attend the 2:30 pm service would be welcome.

### **Blue Plaques talk to Worthing History Society**

Worthing Society Chairman David Sumner and I were invited to talk to The Worthing History Society about Worthing's blue plaques. We utilised the material from our 'blue plaque exhibition' that was held at Worthing Library last year to illustrate our talk. Our chat to them appeared to be favourably received.

### **Splash Point Regeneration**

Our Executive committee were very disappointed at the quality of (and the damage already sustained from skateboarding to) the inscription relating to Worthing's Lifeboats and their crews that was etched on the 'boulder' allocated to The Worthing Society in the Splash Point Regeneration Project.

James Appleton, WBC Executive Head of Planning, Regeneration and Wellbeing, agreed with our sentiments and the upshot is that remedial action is being taken. WBC is planning a public dedication of the Splash Point Garden to the memory of the Lifeboat men. We did lobby very hard for this so that is good news.

We are very grateful for Mr Appleton's support.

### **Plaque inventory for Worthing**

At the request of EH, I completed an inventory of plaques in Worthing (not exclusive to blue plaques or those placed by The Worthing Society).

### **Buildings at Risk – The Worthing Society Register**

Another of the buildings on our Register, The Mayfair Hotel, has had a planning application submitted for conversion to quality apartments. Our Executive Committee was invited by the architect to view the plans insitu. The interior condition was worse than we feared. Since then, I am pleased to say that remedial work has been underway for some time.

### **'Heritage Angels' competition**

Our entry for Castle Goring was mentioned in the last newsletter. Although we were unsuccessful, the comments that we received from EH were encouraging.

### **Conservation Area Review**

I am sorry to have to report that there is still no news regarding the Conservation Area Review that was proposed some time ago by WBC. At the time when this was first mentioned we canvassed our members to see who might be interested in assisting (possibly involving taking photographs of properties within existing, or proposed, Conservation Areas). At the time I believe that eight people expressed interest. Perhaps any of you (or your family and friends) who would still be interested in volunteering when (or if) the Review takes place would email the Society website at [worthingsociety@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:worthingsociety@yahoo.co.uk) giving your name, address and phone number. If you do not have access to email please phone me instead on 01903 246486 with the details. By doing so you would not be putting yourself under any obligation.

Tony Malone  
Vice Chairman

## THE WORTHING SOCIETY EVENTS FOR 2012

- FEB Tuesday 28th at 7:30pm QUARTERLY MEETING in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre. **Speaker:** Bill Avenell on Christ's Hospital – the origins and 500-year history of the school.
- APR Tuesday 24th at **7:00pm** AGM in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre followed by lecture at 7:30pm. **Speaker:** Trevor Sapey on The History of the Mary Rose – Past to Present.
- APR Wednesday 25th a COACH OUTING – Legal London Tour. The day includes morning coffee, a carvery lunch, the Blue Badge guide and transport. Total cost £39. **THIS EVENT IS NOW FULLY BOOKED**
- MAY Thursday 3rd an OUTING to WALMER CASTLE and GARDENS, Deal, Kent. A 21-seat bus has been hired – cost £17.50pp inclusive of driver's tip. Entrance fee for non-English Heritage members approx £6. To book telephone Social Secretary, Christine Roberts on 01903-700325
- JUN Wednesday 6th an OUTING to STONOR, Henley ([www.stonor.com/home.htm](http://www.stonor.com/home.htm)) - which is one of England's oldest mansions. A 21-seat bus has been hired – cost £18.50pp. Coffee and biscuits will be served on arrival. Entrance fee and guided tour £9pp. To book telephone Social Secretary, Christine Roberts on 01903-700325
- JUL Saturday 21st to Saturday 4th August an EXHIBITION in Worthing Library
- JUL Sunday 22nd a WINE and CHEESE OPEN HOUSE at BEACH HOUSE from 12-2pm Tickets £5. **For tickets for this event**, please send a sae and cheque made payable to the Worthing Society to: Mrs. Richards, 2 Beach House, Brighton Road, Worthing, BN11 2EJ.
- SEP Tuesday 25th at 7:30pm QUARTERLY MEETING in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre. **Speaker:** Mark Perry-Nash on 'To Build a Dream: John Nash and the Royal Pavilion'
- OCT Date to be advised – an outing to BRIGHTON - including a visit to The Royal Pavilion, an interesting historical walk and a visit to a further surprise building.
- NOV Tuesday 27th at 7:30pm QUARTERLY MEETING in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre. **Speaker:** Martin Hayes on The Walter Gardiner Photographic Collection.
- DEC Monday 3rd a COACH OUTING to the Royal Albert Hall for John Rutter's CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION CONCERT with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Total cost £39. To book telephone Mascha Richards 01903-214519

**Please remember that prior to quarterly meetings Committee Members will be available from 7pm to talk to members wishing to discuss matters of interest or concern.**

Visitors/Guests are welcome to attend the lectures – fee £3

**Don't forget to look at our new website for the latest news – [www.worthingsociety.org.uk](http://www.worthingsociety.org.uk)**

## **OUTINGS FOR THE WORTHING SOCIETY 2012**

### **3 MAY - WALMER CASTLE AND GARDENS**

**Departure time will be 8.20am starting off at the corner of George V Avenue and the seafront by the Tour Bus parking area, followed by subsequent boarding stops along the seafront.**

Our first outing will be to Walmer Castle and Gardens, an English Heritage property situated in Deal, Kent. Located on the coast south of Walmer, the castle was originally built during the reign of Henry VIII and over time evolved into the official, elegant residence of the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports in 1708.

Successive Lords Warden included the Duke of Wellington, William Pitt and W H Smith, a member of the famous stationer's family. Subsequently, Sir Robert Menzies (former Australian Prime Minister) and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother made regular visits to the castle. The current Lord Warden is Admiral the Lord Boyce.

We will be able to view the rooms used by the Queen Mother to entertain her visitors and to relax in the special garden created for Her Majesty's 95th birthday.

It will be essential for us to pre-book lunch or teas in the Lord Warden's tearoom. The Entrance fee for non-English Heritage members will be £5.61 for concessions and £6.21 for adults – this is a 15% discount. **[PLEASE NOTE THE 15% DISCOUNT IS DEPENDENT OF THERE BEING 11 PAYING VISITORS IN OUR GROUP. ENGLISH HERITAGE MEMBERS MUST PRESENT THEIR CARDS]** We are hiring a 21-seater coach for the journey and the cost for this is £17.50 each, including the driver's tip.

After lunch we can visit nearby attractions of Deal, which could be the Maritime Museum, Deal Castle, Richborough Roman Fort or St Augustine's Abbey, at your leisure. Departure for home will be around 4.30pm.

### **6 JUNE – STONOR** ([www.stonor.com/visit](http://www.stonor.com/visit))

**Departure time will be 8.30am meeting at the corner of George V Avenue and the seafront by the Tour Bus parking bays. There will be a comfort stop en route.**

Stonor is one of England's oldest manor houses situated in one of the most beautiful settings, owned by the same family of the same faith for 850 years. The house contains a remarkable collection of family portraits, beautiful stained glass, old Master drawings, European bronzes, an early 19th century wallpaper of Paris as well as contemporary ceramics from England, Denmark, Korea and Japan. The fine collection of Japanese contemporary ceramics has never been displayed before. Lord Camoys has collected these over 22 years and has met many of the artists in person on his travels to the Far East and Denmark.

Stonor Park has its own herd of fallow deer, and is renowned for its magnificent red kites, one of Britain's rarest and most beautiful birds – an amber list species because of its historical decline. It is also home to several different species of owl, which enjoy the undisturbed peace and tranquillity in the ancient park. There is an old hall tearoom and gift shop, with stunning views guaranteed of both the house, surrounding countryside and lovely gardens.

Entrance to Stonor is £9 including a guided tour. The cost of tea or coffee and biscuits on arrival is £2 and the cost of the 21-seater coach is £18.50 including driver's tip. Return home around 4.00 to 4.30pm.

For further details and early booking for the hired bus please contact:

CHRISTINE ROBERTS, SOCIAL SECRETARY at : [travel\\_editor@btinternet.com](mailto:travel_editor@btinternet.com) or 01903 700 325 (answering machine attached).

## STOP PRESS

1. The Department of Transport have decided to hold a Public Inquiry into the proposed order to stop up the twitten which runs through Library Place from Marine Parade to Warwick Street. This passageway is an ancient route through the old part of the town. For some time the Stagecoach Bus Company has been pressing for its closure. The Worthing Society is much opposed to this proposal and will present a case against the closure at the Inquiry. This will commence at 10.00am on Wednesday April 25th at the Chatsworth Hotel on The Steyne. We urge our members to attend and give support for the retention of this small but important piece of Worthing's history.

2. In the last few days it has been announced that the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) will be funding the Worthing Heritage Trails Project, which has been put forward by the Worthing Heritage Alliance (WHA). This project will identify and establish Heritage Trails across the town over the next 2 years. Trails will take the form of illustrated pamphlets, which walkers can use to guide themselves. The project will also provide training for guides to lead walkers along the trails. The Worthing Society has been a keen player in the WHA since its inception and is likely to be in the forefront of developing a number of Heritage Trails. This will include routes which highlight townscape, landscape (The Downs) and the coast. Once the funds have been released by HLF and a Project Officer appointed, publicity about the project and how to become a volunteer guide will be made available.

3. The Society has had sight of a letter sent to English Heritage and Worthing Borough Council regarding the on-going roof works at the Pier Pavilion. The letter was written on behalf of a company which specialises in decorative metal roofing. In their letter they allege that the current work is of "poor quality" and is "not consistent with the original style and workmanship". The letter goes on to suggest that work is being carried out "to make a profit at the expense of skills and craftsmanship...I fear this grand piece of architecture will be devalued...I strongly urge you to investigate this travesty before completion." If true, these allegations present an alarming situation. The Society has written to Worthing Borough Council seeking their views on the matter. We also await the response of English Heritage (EH). The Pavilion is a listed building and as such, EH has a responsibility to ensure that any work carried out does not detract from the buildings architectural standing.