



THE WORTHING SOCIETY

President : D.Robert Elleray, ALA, FRSA, FLS

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2013

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

CHAIRMAN:

David Sumner
18 Mill Road
BN16 4HT
Tel: 01903 783925

VICE-CHAIRMAN/ PUBLICITY OFFICER:

Tony Malone
3 Windermere Crescent
BN12 6JY
Tel: 01903 246486
goringmalones@yahoo.co.uk

HON.SECRETARY:

Gill Tucker
11 Hastings Court
BN11 5DD
Tel: 01903 539655
gilltucker@ntlworld.com

HON.TREASURER:

Mascha Richards
2 Beach House
BN11 2EJ
Tel: 01903 214519
mascha.richards@btinternet.com

HON.MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY:

Susan Miller
92 Lyndhurst Road
BN11 2DW
Tel: 01903 219884
sjmiller49@fsmail.net

HON.SOCIAL SECRETARY:

Christine Roberts
24 Marine Crescent
BN12 4JF
Tel: 01903 700325
travel_editor@btinternet.com

FORTHCOMING ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 23 APRIL 2013

Notice is hereby given that the 31st Annual General Meeting of The Worthing Society will take place on Tuesday, 23 April 2013 at 7pm in the Lobby of the 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 Tuesday, 9 April 2013, to the Secretary, Gill Tucker.

At the conclusion of the AGM there will be a coffee break followed by an entertaining talk at 7:30p.m. Speakers: John & Jeanette Simpson on 'Lords of Bramber – daily life in a Norman Castle'.

MESSAGE FROM YOUR MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Thank you everyone who embraced our new method of renewal by filling in the form that we sent you last year. I am sure that those of you who joined at the AGM will agree that it speeded up the process of renewal. We will continue with this method this year.

We are enclosing forms for our LIFE MEMBERS to ensure that we have all your up to date details and that you still want to receive the Newsletters from us.

We must thank you all for your continued support and hope to see many of you at the AGM.

Susan Miller

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2012 - 2013

NEW PRESIDENT

After the death of our President, Philip Snow OBE in July 2012, Robert Elleray ALA FRSA FLS accepted our invitation to become our new President. Robert is a founding member of the Worthing Society, a past Chairman and was Vice President for 7 years. He maintains a keen and critical interest in the Society's work.

PLANNING

In common with most civic societies, planning issues dominate much of our time. The impact of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on town and countryside is debated at national and local level, since it affects new development proposals, the use of space, conservation of heritage assets and the attitude of the Planning Inspectorate. The Society has lobbied on the issue and supports the scepticism of the CPRE, the 20th Century Society and the National Trust among others.

Montague Place is a major concern as the Council considers yet another proposal to stop up the road and build shops and flats against the eastern boundary. Similar applications have been lodged in the past and were twice dismissed at appeal. The grounds for refusal remain relevant.

Meanwhile, we maintain an overview of Union Place; the Stagecoach site in Library Place; West Durrington and fresh proposals for Lower Northbrook and we wonder if the long-awaited, re-development of Teville Gate is viable.

LISTING AND CONSERVATION SUB-COMMITTEE

The report by Tony Malone highlights the important work done by this valued committee. Listing criteria is tighter than ever before and buildings need to be of national importance for acceptance. English Heritage have advised us that, if an application for Listing fails, the most effective protection will be to seek its inclusion on the Local Interest List (which has now grown in importance). Similarly, if a building lies within a Conservation Area, that fact will carry more weight in future.

WORTHING HERITAGE ALLIANCE

The work to produce Heritage Trails and guided walks to promote interest in the town's history and environment has progressed with the help of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The first trails covering the town centre should be ready by May 2013. The Worthing Society is a member of the Alliance.

AQUARENA

Conceived as a landmark building, this leisure facility nears completion. The design, and the offer, continue to divide opinion and I look forward to hearing members' views. It needs to be a success to justify the investment and the ambition of the Council. We must wish it well.

SPLASHPOINT MEMORIAL FOR LIFEBOAT CREWS

The Worthing Society proposed that the Beach Garden at Splash Point be dedicated to the town's brave lifeboat crews and fishermen serving between 1850 and 1931. They are remembered on a slate memorial and on May 7, 2012, the garden was dedicated by Sir Peter Bottomley MP. Peter Huxtable MBE, Coxswain of the Shoreham Lifeboat from 1991 – 2011 replied on behalf of the RNLI.

WORTHING THEATRES

We still have four venues! At the unveiling of the blue plaque to Gladys Morgan, many of those from out of town spoke in awe that Worthing still had any! The Pier Pavilion is one of Ken Dodd's favourite buildings. Your Chairman is a member of the Worthing Theatres Advisory and Support Group (while it exists). I hope members will take the opportunity to meet Amanda O'Reilly, the new General Manager, when she talks at our meeting on Tuesday, 24 September (*see Events List*). She will have had time to

consider her policy to fulfil the brief – reduce the subsidy! Good luck to her.

EXHIBITION

Our exhibition at the Library for two weeks starting 21 July 2012 was restricted because we had to use unsuitable display boards. The excellent material did not have the impact that Tony Malone's work deserved. The Committee took the decision not to exhibit at the venue in 2013.

DISTINCTION IN BUILDING AWARDS 2012

Tony Malone represented the Society on the panel of judges who chose twelve buildings for an Award (*see Tony Malone's report*). My favourite is a gem of a house off Sea Lane. Mulberry House is a rarity – a well-designed modern property.

BLUE PLAQUES

The Society erected two plaques this year and both events, attended by the Mayor, Cllr. Charles James and the Mayoress, Mrs Pauline James, were a success.

Gladys Morgan 1898 – 1983

The Comedienne and star of Variety, radio and TV lived at 30 Salisbury Road, Worthing from 1958 until she died in 1983. She was celebrated with a blue plaque on December 11th 2012 unveiled by her showbiz daughter Joan Laurie, who still lives in the family flat. Over 60 people gathered outside for the ceremony organised by the British Music Hall Society, whose Geoff Bowden sponsored the plaque, together with the Worthing Society. The speeches by your Chairman; the Mayor and even Geoff Bowden were warm-ups for the performances of Wyn Calvin and Roy Hudd who, after leading a singsong, entertained us with memories of Gladys Morgan. After the unveiling, when the laughter, applause and cheers died down, the large gathering walked to the St. Paul's Centre where sandwiches, biscuits, tea and coffee were waiting for them.





St. Paul's 1812 – 2012

The plaque celebrated the bicentenary of this landmark building and was unveiled by the Mayor on the 27 September 2012. Your Chairman spoke about the building's historical context; the choice of site and traced the growth of Worthing from a small Georgian resort in the parish of Broadwater until it achieved Borough status. The Mayor praised the work of the Society and gave his personal support to the conservation cause. Nearly 40 supporters enjoyed coffee, tea and biscuits in St. Paul's, which is now a community centre

EVENTS

While the Library Lecture Theatre is closed, because of a flood, and we wait for renovations and repairs to be completed (perhaps later 2013), Quarterly Meetings have been held in the Lobby of the Library Lecture Theatre laid out with the help of Library staff. The problem overcome, the talks have been well supported.

The 'Legal London' outing was an outstanding success, largely thanks to the superb guide, despite the foul weather. Excursions to Walmer Castle and Stoner were enjoyed. The 'Wine and Cheese' chez Richards, Beach House, was the usual social success.

WEBSITE

Under the guiding hand of Barry Richards, this has become increasingly important. I have no doubt it is the future tool to raise our profile and encourage new support. When your analogue Chairman is succeeded by a digital whizz, our website will flower to its potential. Over 2200 'hits' have been recorded on the site due, in no small part, to Webmaster Barry's web design and maintenance.

LINKS WITH OTHER BODIES

The Society is affiliated to the Victorian Society; the South Downs Society and the Campaign to Protect Rural England. We are also members of The Federation of Sussex Amenity Societies and Worthing Arts Council, and are taking part in the Adur and Worthing Cultural Strategy.

APPRECIATION

I would find it impossible to carry out the role of Chairman without the support and work of the Officers and members of the Executive Committee who give so much of their free time dedicated to the aims of the Worthing Society, and I humbly thank them. On their behalf, I thank all members of the Society for their encouragement, comments, interest and support.

David Sumner

CHAIRMAN

LISTINGS AND CONSERVATION SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

Chairman - Tony Malone
Committee - Natalie Cropper
- Susan Belton

OVERVIEW FROM SUB-COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TONY MALONE

Worthing Borough Council's overstretched manpower resources continue to have an impact on the Sub-Committee's progress. We are heavily dependent on the action that the Borough Council are able to take regarding problems affecting Conservation Areas or Listed buildings and Buildings of Local Interest currently at risk through dilapidation or under threat of inappropriate development. The Council's manpower crisis also continues to prevent the Conservation Area Review and the formalisation of the process for us (and others) to submit candidates for the Local Interest List. Nevertheless, thanks to a recent meeting with the Council's representative, we do have some progress to report.

FROM OUR BUILDINGS AT RISK REGISTER:-

REPs building (the old Christ Church School) in Portland Road. Grade II Listed.

The developer's architects are producing a full, updated report of their proposals for the development. In accord with our comments on the original application these plans are expected to be less intrusive. We have urged prompt action, given the rate at which the vegetation is growing in front of the property and the rapid deterioration of the building. Paul Holden's comment in the latest edition of The Worthing Journal also 'rang alarm bells' regarding the deterioration inside the building.

Castle Goring. Grade I Listed.

The fact that the South Downs National Park authorities are now taking the lead on this case gives me hope. English Heritage continues to be very concerned at its state and they are preparing a full report on the condition of the building. Meanwhile valuable time ticks by. The state of the castle is verging on critical and repairs need to be put into motion urgently before it is too late, although we were pleased to hear about the work to prop-up the collapsing ceilings in the East Wing.

STOP PRESS : *Castle Goring has just gone up for sale at £500,000 and although that sounds a paltry sum for a unique castle, the cost of repairs will be phenomenal. The Grade I Listed building is on English Heritage's 'At Risk' Register which means that any purchaser would have to undertake those repairs.*

The Mayfair Hotel, Heene Terrace. Grade II Listed.

The developer converting the old hotel into apartments has been faced with daunting challenges due to the extent of the essential repairs that have come to light during the redevelopment. Nevertheless, he and his workforce have risen to the challenges and he is pleased with the progress made. His track record of local developments is good and I am confident that the final results will be quality apartments with splendid sea views.

83 Marine Parade (south-west corner of Crescent Road). Grade II Listed.

The Council's Heritage and Conservation Architect, along with the Environmental Health Officer, gained entry a few months ago and found the walls and timbers saturated with a consequent danger of collapsing ceilings. This property has been empty, and on the market, for a long time. Major repairs are urgently needed. It is likely that a Repairs Notice will be issued (which is enforceable by law).

OTHER ISSUES TO REPORT

Library Place and the stopping-up order put in place by Stagecoach (with the consequent prevention of access to a public right of way that has been there for many years).

(See Chairman's full report on this issue)

We were very concerned at the way that this application was granted by the Council without giving The Worthing Society the opportunity to speak at the hearing. We were not even notified that it was taking place. I have had talks with the Council Leader, who is similarly displeased, as he too wanted a chance to speak but was not notified of the Hearing date. The order is now a fait accompli but we intend to raise this unacceptable state of affairs when a suitable opportunity arises. This is not the only case that has gone before the Planning Committee without our knowledge.

English Heritage and Listing

Mainly thanks to Sue Belton, we maintain regular contact with the English Heritage officers who deal with this area and, although apologetic, they still have our two outstanding Listing applications (the Connaught Theatre and the Spiritualist Church in Grafton Road) on the 'back burner' which is disappointing. Indeed, they have tightened up even further the criteria for listing. Again, this appears to be a consequence of their manpower being over-stretched.

Sue Belton's latest undertaking has been the production of an excellent draft for them on the 'Protect Our Place' research project to identify, and learn from, all the different types of community action taking place across England to protect and promote local heritage. This will feed into the National Heritage Plan, designed to help protect our heritage following the raft of new planning laws and the Localism Bill – almost a kind of "safety net". English Heritage is sponsoring this initiative.

Culture Strategy for Adur and Worthing

At the Borough Council's invitation, the Society submitted a considered response to the survey in preparation for compiling the Culture Strategy document for the joint Councils. David Sumner, Tony Malone and Sue Belton hope to attend the first meeting of this forum later this month.

Distinction In Buildings Awards 2012

I represented our Society in judging the contenders for these awards. As always, it was a very interesting exercise and for 2012 there were twelve winners in the various categories. They are as follows, and photographs of the winning buildings can be seen in 'Stop Press' on our website www.worthingsociety.org.uk.

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|--|--------------------------------------|
| ❖ 43 Wordsworth Road, Worthing | ❖ Lemo, North Street, Worthing |
| ❖ Aurora 1, 5 Eirene Avenue, Goring by Sea | ❖ Mulberry House, Sea Lane, Worthing |
| ❖ Eardley Hotel, Marine Parade, Worthing | ❖ Northbrook College, Broadwater |
| ❖ Elm Lawn House, Union Place, Worthing | ❖ Flats, Salvington Road, Worthing |
| ❖ Emmanuel United Reform Church | ❖ St. Barnabas Hospice, Titnore Lane |
| ❖ Hollybank, Links Road, Worthing | ❖ St. Matthews Church Hall, Worthing |

Worthing Arts Council

Our thanks to Sue Belton for representing the Society at the WAC. Networking of this type is always valuable and we thank Sue for undertaking this work.

Thanks

My sincere thanks to my Sub-Committee colleagues for their valued work and continued support.

Tony Malone

Vice Chairman

COMMENTS FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Montague Place Again, and Again and Again



“You don’t know what you’ve got ‘til it’s gone”

Last summer, an application for a development in Montague Place was not advertised – a legal requirement because it is in a Conservation Area. Though the omission was corrected and time for comments extended, there lingered a feeling of unease.

Our objection to the proposal to develop the east side of Montague Place with small shops and flats is absolute. The developer also seeks a Stopping Up Order enabling them, through ownership of the subsoil, to lay claim to two thirds of Montague Place, an important space at the heart of a Conservation Area. Indeed, the Council’s reasons for Montague Place to be included in a Conservation Area specifically stated the need to preserve this open space and the views. The implications of the scheme are covered in our letter, with others, on the Society and WBC websites. We fought similar proposals that were dismissed at appeal in 1985 and 1986.

The Society’s stance received support from now-retired planner, John Head (who was also a Planning Inspector) who knows Worthing well. To quote from a recent email from Mr Head on this subject:

“I do not know of any relevant change in the policy background applying to this site since the last proposal was defeated. There remains a requirement that development must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. Because of the resultant narrowing of Montague Place; the enclosure of the vista from Liverpool Terrace garden and its impact on the setting of the existing buildings, the proposal cannot meet this crucial requirement.

There remain other relevant issues, not least of which is the need for further retail floor space of the type proposed in the town centre at a time when there appear to be significant and probably increasing vacancy rates.

A landscaping scheme for the Montague Place open space was given planning permission by the Council some 25 years ago. It was partly implemented at the time of the construction of the rotunda and paving at the junction with Montague Street and it would be of great benefit to the attractiveness of this part of the town centre and seafront if it could be completed. That will never be possible if the proposed development goes ahead although, given the previous history of the site and the objections in principle to development, I cannot believe that this will happen."

Another idea, perhaps financed by the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy, for an alternative landscaping scheme would be a vertical garden on the eastern wall. They are good enough for Paris, Madrid and elsewhere, proven, and would really put Worthing on the map.

CAMPAIGN NOTE:

The Society has planned a public campaign against the project and part of our plan is to provide copies of our petition to be supplied by email or hard copy. You can also register your views now by going on-line to www.virginmedia.com and signing in as "montagueplace.com" (Password : alamein42).

STOP - NO WAY

This January we were dismayed to learn that a planning meeting, to discuss the removal of 'Conditions' affecting public access via the Twitten from Warwick Street to Library Place, took place in October 2012. Our objection was lodged in September 2012 but we did not receive notice of the hearing so were denied the opportunity to speak. The application was not resisted at that meeting.

At the Inquiry in April 2012, our Sue Belton was one of those who argued against a Stopping-Up Order for the historic pathway, recorded in 1790, linking Warwick Street to Marine Parade. In vain - it was granted on dubious health and safety grounds. Council Leader Paul Yallop attended and intended to support our cause but was gagged by the Inspector because he was not listed to speak. He, too, was unaware of the subsequent meeting.

Members of the Committee are viewing the Council with misgivings, suspecting discussions behind closed doors. An element of trust has been lost.

If the bus depot relocates and the site redeveloped, we will press for access from Marine Parade to the Twitten beside Stanford Square – a 'Jane Austen Way' – to be created.

"It's the economy stupid"

In February 2013, it was reported that laws protecting our enjoyment of light are under threat. You could be affected by a neighbour's extension or a building close by.

The new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) not only replaced the old Town and Country Planning Act but tore up 60 years of casework, inspired by H.M.Treasury's belief that the planning system hindered economic regeneration. Yet, a Parliamentary Committee could find no evidence to support the government view. Ministers now want to fast track infrastructure projects and increase the powers of the Planning Inspectorate at the expense of Councils. Localism – forget it! We have policy by whim and prejudice supported by specious argument. Little wonder faith in the hierarchy is dissolving. How does the Treasury arrive at policy decisions – shake old bones up in a sack, empty them on the carpet and have a witch doctor read the result?

Worthing bears the marks of mistaken planning decisions but do we want the chaos of no planning? Better planning – yes. A good planning system is no hindrance to economic regeneration.

Nationwide, there are over 400,000 sites with planning approval. Developers are waiting for the market to be receptive. The hold-up is money. See it at Teville Gate and West Durrington.

David Sumner

CHAIRMAN

THANK YOU

My grateful thanks to Sandra Malone for bringing together all the submissions for the Newsletter and then for her sterling work in editing and typing the whole thing.

David Sumner

STOP PRESS

The new English Heritage Adviser for this area is hoping to visit Worthing this month. We hope to show her 'Local Listed Buildings At Risk'; Montague Place and one or two of our iconic buildings.



Looking north from Montague Place – We will lose this view together with the parking spaces and occupants of Liverpool Terrace will lose the view through Montague Place to the sea.

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It appears we are not alone in having difficulty navigating round the confusing WBC website. On Page 10 of the March issue of The Worthing Journal, Paul Holden airs similar complaints!



THE WORTHING SOCIETY EVENTS FOR 2013

(Please check on our website to see if our Meetings/Talks have moved from the Lobby back into the Lecture Theatre)

- APR - Tuesday 23rd at **7:00 pm. A.G.M.** in the Lobby of the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre followed by an entertaining talk at 7:30pm by John and Jeanette Simpson on 'Lords of Bramber – daily life in a Norman Castle'.
- MAY - Tuesday 7th a **MINI COACH OUTING** to London. Morning visit to Sutton House, Hackney. Afternoon visit to Sir John Soane's Museum, Lincoln Fields. Cost £30 NT member £27.50. Tickets go on sale at the AGM on 23rd April.
- JUL - Sunday 28th a **'WINE & CHEESE OPEN HOUSE' at BEACH HOUSE** from 12-2 pm. Tickets £5. For tickets, **for this event**, please send an S.A.E and cheque made payable to the Worthing Society to: Mrs M Richards, 2 Beach House, Brighton Road, Worthing, BN11 2EJ.
- SEP - Tuesday 24th at 7:30pm. **QUARTERLY MEETING** in the Lobby of the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre. Speaker: Amanda O'Reilly, General Manager of Worthing Theatres on 'Which Way – What Way?'.
- OCT - Date to be confirmed. **COACH OUTING** to Jane Austen country. Morning visit to Jane Austen House Museum, Chawton. Afternoon visit to Steventon and Winchester. Final details will be in the September newsletter and on the web site.
- NOV - Tuesday 26th at 7:30pm. **QUARTERLY MEETING** in the Lobby of the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre. Speaker: Gerry Connolly, Curator of Historic Collections at Worthing Museum on 'The Costume Collection at Worthing Museum'.
- DEC - Thursday 12th a **COACH OUTING** to the Royal Albert Hall for John Rutter's **CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION CONCERT** with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Total cost £42. Tickets go on sale at the AGM on 23rd April or telephone Mascha Richards 01903-214519.

Please remember that prior to quarterly meetings Committee Members will be available from 7p.m. 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 website for the latest news

www.worthingsociety.org.uk

and if you wish to email the Executive Committee, our email address is
worthingsociety@yahoo.co.uk