



THE WORTHING SOCIETY

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

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2014

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SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Tony Malone
Natalie Cropper
Sue Belton

FORTHCOMING ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 22 APRIL 2014

Notice is hereby given that the 32nd Annual General Meeting of The Worthing Society will take place on Tuesday, 22 April 2014 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
- Honorary Social Secretary
- Honorary Visits Secretary
- 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, 8 April 2014, to the Secretary, Gill Tucker.

At the conclusion of the AGM there will be a coffee break followed by an entertaining and informative talk at 7.30pm by Janet Clarke on 'Jane Austen – The Worthing Connection' which will highlight the impact that Jane Austen has, and will have, on tourism in Worthing.

MESSAGE FROM YOUR MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Thank you to all our **LIFE** members who have given us their up to date details. This has been most helpful in keeping our records straight. We must thank Mrs Priest and especially Mrs Phillips for their very generous donations. Thank you so much ladies.

Another year has flown by, where does the time go, and membership renewals are due again on April 1st. Please find enclosed "Renewal Forms" for our annual members. You will note that due to increased costs, we have had to make a very small increase in the fees this year. This does, of course, entitle you to two Newsletters a year and free entry to our quarterly meetings. The fee is now £10 Single and £15 for a couple.

We thank you all for your continued support and look forward to seeing you at one of our meetings or trips.

Susan Miller

CHAIRMAN'S OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR 2013 – 2014

Notice of the AGM is included within this Newsletter and I hope members will attend the business part of the evening meeting to support the Officers and Members of the Executive Committee who carry out the work of the Society on your behalf.

We receive calls alerting us to an issue we will take an interest in, but some demand we take action and even tell us what we ought to do. Others wonder why we have not put a blue plaque up for an interest of theirs. Some ask us to research an item. The Society's only income is from subscriptions, donations and occasional small grants. The Society's work is done voluntarily, with enthusiasm and with no remuneration. Most callers are not members and I wish they would join and support our causes.

Planning

Planning issues dominate much of our time and principal concerns remain the protection of Conservation Areas and Heritage Assets, the promotion of Worthing and its environs, and new development proposals. The application to build on the east side of Montague Place is still a threat and a direct attack on the significant townscape within the South Street Conservation Area. If this application goes forward and is refused, the developer may well lodge an Appeal gambling on third time lucky though the grounds for refusal remain relevant as ever. Our file on this goes back 30 years.

Despite planning consent being granted, there is no sign of progress on the schemes for West Durrington or Teville Gate. There is a view within Government that planning is a brake on economic recovery. The brakes have been off these schemes for years and they still don't move. Are they viable?

The Aquarena site is being monitored and English Heritage is a consultee in the planning process.

Listing and Conservation Sub-Committee

The Committee has become a vital contributor and has established close links with the town's Conservation Architect and English Heritage. I thank Tony Malone, Sue Belton and Natalie Cropper for their diligence and commitment.

Blue Plaque Trail

We erected another plaque on 6 July 2013 to commemorate the work of successful writer Philip McCutchan who lived in Portland Road. We have produced a Blue Plaque Trail leaflet and are planning a series of leaflets to accompany each blue plaque. Two have been printed so far, and others are planned when funds allow. Take-up has been excellent by residents and visitors. Barry and Mascha Richards have overseen the project.

Events

Our Quarterly Meetings are now back in the refurbished Library Lecture Theatre with new seating, lighting and digital projector. Talks have been popular and have attracted visitors and some decided to join the Society.

Outings were a sell-out and received fulsome praise. The Society is indebted to Mascha Richards for organising these coach trips.

The Wine & Cheese Open House was well attended and, as usual, the sun shone.

Links

The Society remains affiliated to the Victorian Society, CPRE, The South Downs Society and the Federation of Sussex Amenity Societies. We are a member of the Worthing Heritage Alliance which has produced a series of Worthing Heritage Trails and guided walks. No doubt more will follow.

Appreciation

It would be impossible for me to fulfil the role of Chairman without the support and work of the Executive Committee who give so much time to the aims of the Society and this Newsletter would not come about without Sandra Malone putting all the copy into print form and somehow making sense of my handwriting. I thank them all and on their behalf thank members of the Society for their comments, encouragement and support.

David Sumner

CHAIRMAN

CHAIRMAN'S THOUGHTS.....

Re-vamp and Conservation

The re-vamp of Montague Street is to begin in October 2014 and will be undertaken in 3 or 4 phases to minimise inconvenience to shops and shoppers. Start will be at the west end. I attended a meeting called by the Town Centre Initiative who have spearheaded the campaign to fund the replacement of the neglected, badly repaired, dilapidated pavement and was startled by a vintage explosion of philistinism when the proposals by architects ECE were discussed. Despite vocal opposition from the architects, the County Engineer and many County Councillors, the proposal put forward by the Conservation Lobby (Councillor Joan Bradley, Chair of WBC Planning Committee; The Worthing Society with an input from English Heritage) backed by James Appleton, was accepted.

The meeting agreed the area at the top of Montague Place should include red brick pavers to emphasise the importance of the Montague Place/Liverpool Terrace axis to the Conservation Area.

I was surprised that the local architects saw no reason to consider the Conservation Area while some County Councillors thought Montague Place not important. One expressed the view that the scheme to build in front of "the wall" should happen.

Interestingly, some fashionable architects are designing buildings with large brick walls facing out!

A lid on the Lido

The lessee of the Lido is seeking planning permission to install a tensile semi-retractable roof to turn the inner space with the stage into an 'all weather' venue in the winter and wet weather. The additional structure would be barrel shaped, engineered to be secure in winds up to 90mph and could be removed if necessary. The Lido is a Listed seafront building built in 1925, designed by Adshead & Ramsey who were responsible for the Pier Pavilion. The Society is supporting the proposal which is an imaginative way to increase use of the building. Utilising Listed buildings to their potential is the best way to ensure conservation.

A Church in Peril

The Society was alerted to the proposed re-ordering of Christ Church, Grafton Road, which has been strongly opposed by those who fear the changes will wreck the lovely interior of the Listed building which can accommodate nearly 1,000 souls. The beautiful pews would be removed for a start. The Committee discussed the matter, paying particular note to those who are churchgoers.

Christ Church was opened in 1843 and made a parish church in 1855. The exterior is a good example of galleted flintwork with 'stone' dressing and was paid for by public subscription. It is a struggle to update facilities for the changing times with decreasing congregations and the evolution in style of worship and church use. Listing does not guarantee protection. We sympathise with those opposed to the alteration but took the view that they were necessary to ensure the building remained a place of worship. The established church is fighting for survival.

LISTING AND CONSERVATION SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

Chairman - Tony Malone
Committee - Natalie Cropper
- Susan Belton

Our contribution to mark the 100th anniversary of the start of World War One



2014 is, of course, the 100 year anniversary of the start of the First World War. It seems appropriate to mention the Worthing Society's own tribute to some local people who died in this terrible conflict.

A war memorial stands adjacent to the former St Paul's Church in Chapel Road. On this memorial are inscribed the names of nearly 100 servicemen of St Paul's parish who lost their lives in that war. When the Trustees of the church were organising a day of events at the Church to raise awareness of the memorial restoration project, Councillor David Chapman sought support from our Society and, on your behalf, I accepted. At that point we realised that we had to seek inspiration for an appropriate contribution! My idea was to do my best to find the story of as many of those servicemen as I could and document them, mainly in the hope that their ancestors would want to come along and read the stories for themselves. With high hopes and not a little nervousness, I embarked on the project.

I've been interested, and involved, in Family History research for my own family and for friends for quite a few years and that gave me a start in seeking out potential sources of information.....and so I set to.

As the 'open day' at the church grew nearer I had to draw a line under my research. I was out of time and so I documented, printed and bound all the material that I had found. To my relief, I had managed to uncover some facts on almost 90% of those on the war memorial. I printed these and made them into pamphlets in alphabetic order of surname for the public to browse. During the research, my wife Sandra came up with the idea of supplementing the research with as many entries as she could find on the pre-war (1911) census. For some, she also managed to unearth entries on the 1901 census. As we undertook this 'journey' the stories of those who had lost their lives unfolded and I became engrossed in the history of these people who walked the streets of Worthing a century ago and who died for their country.

One of the first things to strike me was that a significant number of them hailed from the same Worthing streets or roads. Ashdown Road had been home to 8 of the men; 6 came from Market Street and 6 from Newland Road. So almost 20% of the fallen came from just these three Streets or Roads. I wondered if they were pals who, in a patriotic moment, or over a pint, made a pact to 'join up'? We shall probably never know.

Reading on, I realised that, during this conflict, these local servicemen had died in so many different parts of the world including France, Belgium, India, Greece, Palestine, Turkey and even in British territory - at least one local sailor, George Lock of Broadwater Street West being killed when his ship, HMS Lynx, was sunk by enemy action in the Moray Firth. A wonderful character related to George Lock, came to the Open Day with a photograph and more information on his ancestor. It was a privilege to meet him and hear his stories.

Of course, many sad facts emerged, especially the number of brothers from Worthing who gave their lives. The Blaker brothers, Leonard & Henry, originally from 12 Richmond Road, were both killed on the same day (30th June 1916) on the Rue de Bois near Calais. Leonard is buried at St Vaast Post Military Cemetery, Richebourg-L'Avoue near Calais. Frank, sadly, has no known grave.

Brothers Albert and Victor John Brace's family lived at 44 Ashdown Rd. Albert died in India in 1919 but with no known grave. Victor is buried at Peronne Communal Cemetery at the Somme in France. Another pair of brothers, Charles & William Seall, originating from 88 Portland Rd, were both killed in action and are buried in two different cemeteries in France.

Possibly the saddest statistic of all is the death of three brothers from the Slaughter family (their surname is horribly ironic). The family home of these brothers was 15 Gordon Road in Worthing. Hubert Melville Slaughter (Royal Engineers) actually died at home on 25th August 1916, possibly as a result of war injuries or infection, and is buried in Broadwater Cemetery. His brother Leonard died in an unnamed military hospital in England on 7th July 1916. He, too, is buried in Broadwater Cemetery. Their brother Walter Harold Slaughter was killed in action at Suvla Bay 14 August 1915 and is buried in Gallipoli.

There is a more light-hearted touch in some of the material that I found. A couple of the lads being local footballers (maybe some 'senior' local ex-footballers will recognise the names?). One was Raymond Champ from 35 Newlands Road, Worthing, described as 'bricklayer & local footballer' and another was 'well known local footballer Bernard Leslie Osborne' whose family home was 70 Newland Road, Worthing.

My heart went out to the families of two men named on the memorial. Both left six children. What a tragedy that must have been. The first was Frederick Duffield of 28 Market Street who died of flu in Boulogne, in 1919 just after the end of the war. The second was Harry Poore of 46 London Street who was killed in action during the March Retreat in 1918.

A couple of names are almost certainly linked to well-known families who traded, or still trade, locally. One being Lionel Weller Sandell, killed in action near Ypres right at the end of the war. Even then the Sandell family were in the building trade, as is reflected on the census of the time. Another name that caught my attention was Archibald Leal who died in a military hospital in Epsom on 10th May 1916 and is buried in Broadwater Cemetery. His father was described in the military records as 'Dairyman of Newland Road, Worthing'. Both the 1901 and 1911 census back this up. I am pretty confident that this is the same Leal family who, in the 1960s when I was a teenager in Worthing, owned a well-known Delicatessen in Warwick Street. I realise, of course, that these observations are just scratching the surface of the life and death of these men who died for their country.

Copies of this research are available for viewing as they have been lodged with Martin Hayes of Worthing Reference Library and also with the Trustees of St Paul's Church.

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An update on the work of the Listing & Conservation Sub Committee

The Sub-Committee continues to be the Society's 'watchdog' for anything affecting our Listed/Local Interest buildings. In order to progress these issues, we rely heavily on dialogue with the appropriate Worthing Borough Council contact Richard Small, Conservation & Heritage Architect with whom we convene regular meetings in order to address these issues and to progress them. Equally valuable is the advice and guidance that we receive from our English Heritage contacts for this area.

Recent, and in some cases on-going, issues that have involved us have included a valuable meeting with The Town Centre Manager to discuss areas of common interest; commenting on the Montague Place development proposals; discussions on the Broadwater church extension proposals and meetings to progress our concerns regarding our local Listed/Local Interest Buildings At Risk Register. As the criteria for achieving Listed status for a building are getting ever more stringent, English Heritage have stressed that the Local Interest Buildings List will take on greater importance. This is where our members can play an important role. If you see a distinctive local building becoming run-down, or neglected, please contact anyone on the Sub-Committee. Our names should soon be made clear on the Society website.

Buildings on our 'At Risk' register that we have discussed include:-

- The Gospel Hall, Bedford Row - Broken into and vandalised.
- 83 Marine Parade – Much of the interior is now in poor condition especially after the roof/upper windows were left open to the elements over Christmas (and possibly longer). On the plus side, the staircase has been preserved in relatively good condition. Work in progress.
- Castle Goring - By the time this Newsletter is distributed there had been reason to believe that a new buyer would have come forward to undertake the extensive renovation work needed to save this precious and unique local building. This hasn't been confirmed at the time of going to press.



Southern aspect of Castle Goring

Tony Malone

**Vice-Chairman of Worthing Society
Chairman of Listing and Conservation Sub-Committee.**

Jane Austen and Worthing : A Word of Thanks

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the Worthing Society for all the support I have received over the past few years in making Jane Austen's link with our town more widely known. The Blue Plaque on Stanford Cottage has been particularly important in attracting interest in the town, and I am especially grateful to Mascha and Barry Richards for producing the excellent Blue Plaque leaflet and making it available on-line.

As you are probably aware, Jane Austen has an ever-growing number of fans around the world, eager to visit the places associated with her life and work. Many have started to seek out Worthing, including 60 members of the national Jane Austen Society, who spent the day here as part of their annual conference, last September. They were warmly received at St.Mary's Church, Broadwater, where Jane Austen worshipped in 1805, and enjoyed a visit to Stanford Cottage, followed by a guided walk and lunch at the Chatsworth Hotel. Members included highly distinguished Austen scholars and visitors from America and Japan.

It is my hope that Worthing will become part of the established Jane Austen trail in England, attracting numerous fans and tourists to our wonderful town.

My thanks again to David and all the Worthing Society.

Janet Clarke



THE WORTHING SOCIETY EVENTS FOR 2014

- FEB** - Tuesday 25th at 7.30pm **QUARTERLY MEETING** in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre.
Speaker: Bill Gage, West Sussex Record Office County Archivist on 'Going Off The Rails'- about how steam trains helped shape West Sussex at the beginning of the last century.
- APR** - Tuesday 22nd at **7.00 p.m. A.G.M.** in the Worthing Library Theatre followed by lecture at 7.30p.m. Speaker: Janet Clarke on 'Jane Austen – The Worthing Connection'.
- MAY** - Thursday 29th **VISIT to ARUNDEL** - optional lunch at the Black Rabbit – afternoon guided tour of the Museum followed by a guided walk of the town. **Tickets: £7.50**
- JUN** - Sunday 15th at 2:00pm a **BLUE PLAQUE TRAIL WALK** starting at Beach House and ending with a cream tea at Beach House. **Tickets: £5.00**
- JUL** - Sunday 20th a '**WINE & CHEESE OPEN HOUSE**' at **BEACH HOUSE** from 12.00 – 2.00 pm. **Tickets: £5.00**
- JUL** - Tuesday 29th – Connaught centenary of the opening of 'The Picturedome'.
- SEP** - Tuesday 23rd at 7:30pm. **QUARTERLY MEETING** in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre.
Speaker: Paul Holden on 'Worthing and the Great War'.
- OCT** - Tuesday 7th - **COACH OUTING to Nonsuch Mansion & Park** in the morning and an afternoon visit to **Whitehall and Lumley Chapel, Cheam** . (Incl. afternoon tea & cake) **Tickets: £27.50**
- NOV** - Tuesday 25th at 7:30pm. **QUARTERLY MEETING** in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre.
Speaker: Dr. Janet Pennington on 'Wiston House & Estate - A Thousand Years of History'
- DEC** - Thursday 11th - **COACH OUTING** to the Royal Albert Hall for John Rutter's CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION CONCERT with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. **Cost: £45.00**

TICKETS for these events will be on sale at the A.G.M. on Tuesday 22nd April or, alternatively, please send a **separate** cheque for **each** event made payable to 'The Worthing Society' enclosing a S.A.E. to: Mrs. Richards, 2 Beach House, Brighton Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN11 2EJ

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