

THE WORTHING SOCIETY

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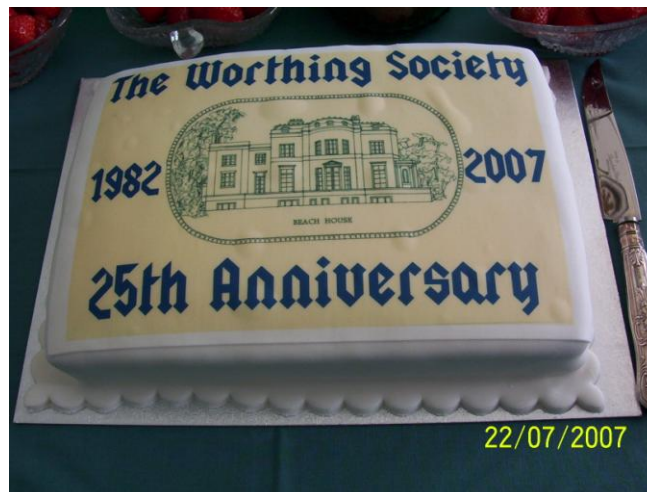
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NEWSLETTER

September 2007

The Worthing Society's 25th Anniversary 1982 – 2007



This was celebrated in July with a Strawberries and Cream Tea at Beach House and the cake cutting ceremony was performed by our chairman.

A Letter from your Chairman

We attended two of the recent Public Inquiries seeking to overturn local DCC decisions on major sites. One was adjourned until October but McCarthy & Stone succeeded in obtaining permission to build a home for the frail and elderly on the Art College site in Union Place. They may be emboldened to amend their scheme to a less acceptable design. Councillors expressed disquiet at this use of the site but none were passionate enough to put in a token appearance to support their officers. We made written representation to the Broadwater inquiry and anxious residents wait for the inspectors ruling which could, if won by the appellant, begin a series of changes to the street scene and character of the area.

A year has passed since we served notice on WBC to apply to a judicial review over the plans for Titnore Lane. Our position was set out in our February newsletter and we wait to examine a new application from the West Durrington consortium. A revised environmental study is being prepared. The recent flooding in the country has increased concerns for the effect that concreting over 125 acres of fields will have on Durrington, Goring Green and Ferring. The Rife was near capacity in recent rains. The proposed system of balancing pools fails to convince. That 'soggy plain' could be nearer than Spain!

The Sea Place development plans rely on local Authority defences being in place to combat the threatened rise in sea levels caused by global warming. As well as selling off some more of the 'family silver' WBC wants to pinch a piece of the public greensward for a new Yacht Club. Covenants exist and we plus others are challenging this action.

Question. What is the Council going to do with the monies from all the sell offs? Perhaps it is a secret. They say Teville Gate is coming. The proposed structure will satisfy those who see tall buildings as a prestigious addition to the town. Words used are 'landmark' and 'gateway'. But the swimming pool may not be part of it.

Committee members attended two stakeholder meetings for the Town Centre Master Plan to discuss EDAW presentations and strategy and development briefs. A public consultation will take place during September. EDAW are realists and if aspirations are to be met compulsory purchase powers and massive private funds will be needed for site assembly. A majority present favoured a new swimming pool on or near the present site as part of the Seafront regeneration. The pool has become a political football so we cannot be sure sense will prevail!

The Frink Heads campaign continues with Humphrey Avon seeking to overturn our successful application to have the installation listed. (Ted Kennard reports elsewhere) We do not believe that Mr. Avon is an altruist! Northbrook College plan to consolidate the campus at Broadwater and sell the Durrington site off to developers. A new modern building is proposed for the old High School site in Broadwater. The Committee will discuss the scheme when a planning application is submitted. Meanwhile, what do members think of the idea?

The Dome cinema reopened quietly. We wish it well, but members are concerned that the business plan for the niche cinema lacks entrepreneurial flair.

David Brock, the Regional Director of English Heritage, gave a briefing to the committee about Castle Goring, one of only two Grade I listed buildings in Worthing. The house designed by Rebecca is giving serious concern. The condition of this almost unknown house is now so perilous it is considered to be at risk. Many members attended the afternoon tea and lunch party we held there in the last two years, and enjoyed a look at this unique house, its setting and views. As part of our campaign to save and raise awareness, David Brock will give an illustrated talk at the Quarterly Meeting next February.

The Society Web Site has been revamped and we hope it will prove easier to maintain and extend. Let Barry Richards know what you think. You can tell me too, but I do not have a computer so may not know what you are talking about!

The Society has commissioned a blue plaque for Provident House in Grafton Road and I will announce a date for the unveiling at our next Quarterly Meeting in September. The ever popular, Chris Hare, will be our main speaker. Please come and support our Annual Exhibition at the Library in October, when we hope to inform and enrol. Worthing's heritage is important!

I thank you for your comments and opinions and the Committee as ever for their time, efforts and enthusiasm.

David Sumner, Chairman

Publicity and contacts

It is gratifying to receive feedback from the media and Worthing Borough Council indicating that our Society is generally respected as a leading local amenity group. We need to continue to earn that respect if we are to influence future developments. This is why we place great importance on maintaining and fostering good working relationships with such organisations.

Over recent months the Worthing Herald and West Sussex Gazette in particular have featured many articles and letters about The Society's activities including the Dome; Titnore Lane and The Desert Quartet (see elsewhere in the newsletter for more news on these campaigns).

Splash FM Radio have continued their support and recently invited me to talk on their Sunday morning programme about planning developments in Worthing. I have also been contacted by the new television reporter appointed to cover this area of West Sussex on behalf of BBC South. He is keen to be kept informed about our activities.

I have continued to represent us on WBC's Planning User Group where planners, surveyors, architects and amenity societies such as ours discuss wider planning issues and keep abreast of major local projects.

The weekly Planning Lists

Over recent years we have, of necessity, focussed on the many major issues arising that will shape the future of Worthing. We have, nonetheless, continued to monitor the weekly list of planning applications and, where appropriate, we have submitted objections or observations. As development land becomes scarce an ever-increasing number of these applications have been for 'back-garden' developments. You may have heard on the news that moves are afoot to change the planning laws. Not all such change will be for the best. There is, for instance, disturbing talk of 're-defining' green-field sites.

Major issues

A whole host of important issues have demanded our attention and involvement this year including the Masterplan; Union Place; Teville Gate; Northbrook college campus consolidation; Titnore Lane; Sea Place/Eirene Road; the Dome and the Desert Quartet. The Chairman and Committee Members will do doubt elaborate on some of these.

We also felt it right to write on behalf of the Society in support of the KWASH campaign. Both Worthing MPs thanked the society for their support and congratulated us on the content of our letter which was placed on the campaign website.

Quarterly talks at the library lecture theatre

There have been full houses for our most recent speakers. This is pleasing on three counts – members and non-members alike are taking the trouble to come along; the entrance fees are a much-needed boost for our finances and it is a good opportunity to increase our visibility and attract new members. The last talk was so well-attended that, unfortunately some people could not get in. It is never pleasing to have to turn people away but we simply do not have the resources to operate an advance ticket system and so, inevitably, entry is on a first-come first-served basis. **Capacity is limited to 80** by the strict health and safety regulations at the library. But please do not be deterred from coming along – just arrive early rather than later to be sure of your seat!

The public

As with so many aspects of life today, trying to get the public to take any kind of interest in local matters that will affect our town continues to be an uphill struggle. Sadly, there appears to be widespread apathy – all part of the "am I bothered?" attitude. We must not let that deter us from seeking the best for Worthing.

I urge you all to try and get friends, family and colleagues 'on board' regarding the future of the town and its inhabitants. If you can encourage them to become Worthing Society members so much the better!

Tony Malone, Publicity Officer

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK

Last chance to get Castle Goring included

The report of the Inspector, Robert Parry, on the proposed South Downs National Park was published in July. The good feature of his report is that he recommends that the Park should be established; the bad feature is that he recommends that the Park should be smaller than the Countryside Agency had proposed. He recommends that Castle Goring and its parkland should not be added to the Park; and that the woods east of Titnore Lane, which were within the boundary proposed by the Countryside Agency, should be excluded. He also recommends that the whole of the Low Weald should be excluded.

The Inspector's decision about Castle Goring and the woods east of Titnore Lane shows some misperceptions about the character of the area and internal contradictions within his report. The criteria for selecting land for a National Park are that it possesses natural beauty and provides markedly superior opportunities for open air recreation. The main reason the Inspector gives for excluding the woods east of Titnore Lane and Castle Goring is that there are no rights of way across this land. But he also argues, in another part of his report, that in such situations access might be improved if the land was included in a National Park, so that it could provide the desired opportunities for open air recreation. He does not, however, apply this argument to the land east of Titnore Lane, where there are paths that could become rights of way.

The Inspector also argues that there are few views into the land east of Titnore Lane and Castle Goring or visual links to the Downs; and that this land, unlike that west of the lane, does not have downland characteristics. In fact there is little difference between the character of the woods on either side of the lane, and the area can be seen from many places where public access is permitted, on the Downs and on Highdown.

The Society will be writing, with other societies that had argued for the inclusion of Castle Goring at the Inquiry, to urge Ministers to reject the Inspector's advice. **If any members would like to write themselves they would strengthen our case by doing so. Letters should be addressed to Jonathan Shaw MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Minister for the South East, Defra, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR. Letters must reach him by September 24th.**

David Sawers (Committee Member)



The Desert Quartet sculpted by Dame Elisabeth Frink

The Worthing Society was alerted in the middle of last year that Mr. Humphrey Avon the developer of the Montague Centre was holding a competition for a sculpture to replace the Desert Quartet in Alexander Terrace at Liverpool Gardens.

This proposal was completely unacceptable to the Worthing Society and a campaign was launched to prevent the removal of these bronze busts. The Twentieth Century Society and the Public

Monuments and Sculpture Association were informed and representations made to the Secretary of State of the Department of Culture Media and Sport earlier this year. As a result the Desert Quartet and its supporting loggia was listed in the category List II* on the 11th May 2007, which provides considerable protection against the removal of the sculptures. On 28th April a petition was launched by the Society to retain the Desert Quartet in its present position. Two petitions were handed to the Mayor and the full Council on 26th June, one containing 840 signatures and the other 415 online signatures.

It was hoped that this was the end of the matter but Mr. Avon has now applied to the Secretary of State to have the listing reviewed. The Worthing Society has made urgent representations to the Secretary of State to keep the listing and is currently urging the Worthing Borough Council to do likewise.

The Desert Quartet is a much loved local landmark and a public art work of national importance and indeed international importance; every effort will continue to be made by this Society and the Twentieth Century Society to permanently retain the sculptures in their present position.

Ted Kennard (Committee Member)

An Update on Past and Future Events

In June we had our summer outing to Hastings – with a guided walk of the Old Town. Our guide was a very knowledgeable and amusing local historian. We were very lucky with the weather, as it was one of the few dry and sunny days that we have had this summer and the day was enjoyed by all.

In July we celebrated the Worthing Society's 25th anniversary, with a 'strawberries and cream' tea at Beach House. Thanks to everyone that attended and a profit of £65 was raised for the Society's funds.

The next Quarterly Meeting will be on Tuesday, 26th September at 7:30pm in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre when Chris Hare will be speaking about 'Scandals of Victorian and Edwardian Worthing'

Our publicity officer, Tony Malone, will be mounting **an exhibition in Worthing Library from Saturday 13th to Saturday 27th October**. Please encourage as many friends and non-members as you can to visit this exhibition.

The last Quarterly Meeting of this year will be on Tuesday, 27th November at 7:30pm in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre. Andrew Barlow, Keeper of the Royal Pavilion, Brighton will be talking about 'The Royal Pavilion – Overview of Architecture & Design'. As this is the last meeting of the year, mince pies and mulled fruit punch or coffee will be served. Cost £1 pp. Also a pre-Christmas raffle will take place. Donations of raffle prizes will be very much appreciated on the night!

Several members have said that they would like an event to take place in December, so this year I have arranged a special outing. **On Monday 10th December we have a visit to the Royal Albert Hall** for John Rutter's Christmas Celebration Concert (matinee) with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Cost £30.



Tickets are now on sale until 10th October. For tickets please send a cheque made payable to The Worthing Society with an enclosed SAE to Mrs. Richards, 2 Beach House, Brighton Road, Worthing, BN11 2EJ – or alternatively tickets can be purchased at the September meeting.

Our first meeting next year will be on Tuesday, 26th February at 7:30pm in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre when David Brock the Regional Director of English Heritage will be speaking about Castle Goring.

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.

Guests/Visitors are very welcome to attend the quarterly lectures for a fee of £2.

Once again, looking forward to meeting many of you at the above events.

Mascha Richards, Social Secretary

P.S. The *Leaning Tower of Pisa* is a 'listed building'!

A Reminder from your Membership Secretary

May I take this opportunity to remind members, who may not yet have renewed their **annual** subscription, that it is £7 single and £10 couple to be sent to Susan Miller.