



THE WORTHING SOCIETY

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

NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2012

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ST. PAUL'S 1812 – 2012

The official unveiling of a blue plaque on St.Paul's will take place on Thursday, 27 September 2012 at 11 am, attended by the Mayor, Councillor Charles James and the Mayoress, Mrs Pauline James. The Worthing Society has commissioned the plaque to celebrate the bicentenary of this landmark in the town's centre.

Originally consecrated in 1812 as a Chapel-of-Ease to St.Mary's, Broadwater, the building designed by John Biagio Rebecca, gave its name to Chapel Road. Extended westwards by the addition of a Chancel designed by Edward Hyde, the building was created a Parish Church dedicated to St.Paul in 1893 and continued as a place of Anglican worship until 1995 when parts of the building were declared unsafe. Redundancy followed. It now serves as a community centre supervised by Trustees who are conscious of the building's religious past while fund-raising to continue restoration works.

MEMBERSHIP

Thank you to all of our members who have renewed your subscription. We have enclosed a copy of our Renewal Form for those of you who have not yet renewed and may have misplaced their form. We look forward to hearing from you.

We take this opportunity to thank Mr & Mrs Marks and Mrs Field for their very generous donations, and also Mr & Mrs Harrison, Ms Sullivan & Mr.Gorman and Mr Ripley. Thank you so much, it is greatly appreciated.

Susan Miller

Membership Secretary

OBITUARY

Our President, Philip Snow, OBE; JP; FRSA; FRAI; died on 5 June 2012 aged 96. Born on 7 August 1915, he was appointed a colonial administrator in Fiji in 1938. In 1946 he co-founded the Fiji Cricket Association, the first multi-racial organisation for the colony. Snow arranged a tour of New Zealand during which he played in five first class matches. Returning home, he became Bursar of Rugby School before retiring to Angmering. He was an author of several books one being a memoir of his brother, the novelist and physicist C.P.Snow.

Philip played a significant role when the Worthing Society was constituted in 1982 and served as a member of the Executive Committee, then as Vice-Chairman, Chairman of the Steering Committee and, latterly, as our President. We were fortunate to have his valued support for thirty years.

As an enthusiastic cricketer, he would have been disappointed to have missed his century.

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D. Robert Elleray, ALA; FRSA; FLS has accepted the invitation to become our new President. Robert has been Vice-President for seven years and is not only a founding member of the Society but has served as Vice Chairman and for many years Chairman. He still takes an active interest in the business of the Society and sometimes attends Committee meetings. He is a distinguished author of important books on local history and his out-of-print earlier works fetch a hefty premium. Robert gave many talks and his guided walks are still enthusiastically remembered by members.

DAS

An appreciation – Edward T Kennard

At the AGM in April, I announced that Ted Kennard, our Vice Chairman, was standing down as an Officer and Member of the Executive Committee after 7 years because of continuing ill-health. The meeting passed a vote of thanks for his contribution to the work of the Society. As Vice Chairman and as Chairman of the Listing and Conservation Sub-Committee, which he set up, Ted played a vital role in formalising our business and was never afraid of asking the awkward question. He headed up the Frink Heads campaign which resulted in the Listing of these sculptures and the portico, so that Worthing retains this important world famous artwork.

We came together in 2005 and I miss his support and wise counsel and hope that we continue to hear better news of his wellbeing.

DAS

Bill Geddes resigned from the Committee before the AGM because he is spending so much time travelling abroad on a 70th Birthday Bonanza. Lucky devil!



WORTHING HERITAGE ALLIANCE GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

The Worthing Society is a prominent member of this project to promote the history of the town; create guided walks around Worthing; train guides and produce leaflets with maps and illustrations. The Worthing Heritage Trails project received a grant of £47,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and Chris Hare, a member of our Committee, is Project Manager. Barry Richards is on the Steering Group and has designed the website.

To find out more, visit the website www.worthingheritagealliance.org.uk and come to the open meeting at **Worthing Library Lecture Theatre on Saturday, 22 September 2012 11am – 12.30pm** and see if you would like to be involved.

A SUITABLE MEMORIAL FOR THE LIFEBOAT CREWS

The new Beach Garden to the east of Splash Point was officially dedicated to the memory of Worthing's lifeboat crews and fishermen, and to the RNLI, on Monday, 7 May 2012 by Sir Peter Bottomley MP and Peter Huxtable MBE, Coxswain of the Shoreham Lifeboat from 1991-2011 for the RNLI. The Worthing Society proposed that the Garden be created to remember the bravery and dedication of Worthing's lifeboat crews between 1850 and 1931 and dedicated a slate memorial in the garden. The Garden was designed by Len Sephton and created by WBC's Technical Services Department. As the rain started to fall and the wind blew, the great and the good and the curious withdrew to Coast Café for coffee, tea and marvellous cakes.

VISIT TO THE ROYAL PAVILION PLUS ONE OR TWO OF THE NEARBY BRIGHTON MUSEUMS BY LOCAL BUS:

Members of the Worthing Society will enjoy a full day's outing in Brighton and Hove on October 15, 2012. Visits will include some 2 hours at the Royal Pavilion followed by a light lunch around 13.30pm.

The plan is for participating members to board their Brighton bus just after 9.30 am and meet up with the Group at a soon-to-be advised, designated café by approximately 10.35 am. From there, we will continue to the foyer of the Royal Pavilion for our main visit of the day. Entrance fee to the Royal Pavilion will be £7.20 per head provided there are at least 15 paying members. Lunch will be taken here.

At 14.30 pm, we will move on to the Museums adjacent to the Royal Pavilion and for those who wish to, there is also a choice of the free Brighton/Hove Museums based in Hove and Dyke Road, Brighton.

The Hove Museum & Art Gallery is housed in an impressive Victorian villa where a contemporary craft collection – considered to be the most important of its kind in the South of England – will be on view.

Please book with our Social Secretary, Christine Roberts on 01903 700325 or by e-mail at:

travel_editor@btinternet.com (Note: To avoid confusion, there is an underscore (_) when typing travel_editor)

Final details will be given at a later date. Would all those applying to participate in this outing please send a stamped self-addressed envelope to Christine Roberts at 24 Marine Crescent, Goring-by-Sea, Worthing BN12 4JF.

Christine Roberts
SOCIAL SECRETARY

LISTING AND CONSERVATION SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT FROM TONY MALONE (WHO ALSO HEADS THIS SUB-COMMITTEE)

Overview

Our workload remains consistently heavy, but we have been frustrated in our efforts, as our main contacts when trying to get issues addressed is (of course) Worthing Borough Council (WBC), whose workload has increased with their merger with Adur Council, mainly without additional resources. The situation is best illustrated by the fact that our prime contact, the Design and Conservation Architect for WBC Planning Office, now also has to cover Adur, as well as Worthing, without any additional staff. The result, almost inevitably, is that our regular meetings with him to address a whole range of issues regarding conservation; listed buildings and buildings of local interest are frequently just being 'noted for future action' by WBC and put on their 'back burner'. We sympathise with their plight, but it doesn't go far to resolve our concerns.

If necessary, I fall back on making contact with the Assistant Director of that Department or even the Council Leader, Paul Yallop.

Listing issues

English Heritage (EH) have indicated that they are in a similar position to WBC (and probably most other organisations in the UK) – they are very stretched. Nonetheless it is very frustrating that, after so much hard work went into our submissions and so much time has passed, they are still unable to give us a decision regarding our bid to List:-

- **The Connaught Theatre** – 'Designation Decision' awaited from EH though they advise that we can expect their Interim Recommendation fairly soon.
- **The Spiritualist Church in Grafton Road** – EH are pressing for more information about the building (which I will attempt to obtain from West Sussex Record Office) and more internal pictures of the church (difficult, as it is seldom open except for prayer or services).

Listing bids that were turned down :-

- **Assembly Hall** – this bid to upgrade the Listing was turned down on Appeal.
- **Alexandra Tavern** – turned down because of extensive internal alterations, although EH mentioned the architectural quality of the exterior and said that the building (one of the oldest public houses in Worthing) is of significant local interest.

Local Interest Buildings List

Buildings that have been given unofficial approval by WBC for inclusion on this List :-

- St George's Vicarage, Selden Road;
- 'Guitar Junction', High Street ;
- The Half Brick, Brighton Road ;
- The Gospel Hall, Bedford Row ;
- (New Parade, off Brighton Road will be a future submission).

'Buildings At Risk' Register

We continue to maintain a 'Buildings At Risk' Register and keep a watchful eye on our local Listed Buildings; Local Interest Buildings and Conservation Areas for candidates for the List. Currently we have :-

Listed Buildings:

- Grade I Listed Building Castle Goring
- Grade II Listed REPS studios (planning application was turned down so, as far as we are concerned, the building is also still very much at risk. Anyone walking past it in Portland Road can see how fast it is deteriorating.)
- Grade II Listed Mayfair Hotel
- Grade II Bedford Row and Gardens
- Grade II Listed No 25 West Buildings

Local Interest List building:

- The Gospel Hall, Bedford Row

Conservation Area:

- Library Place
- Grade II Listed building The Hollies, Little High Street (currently for sale).

Library Place

At a Public Inquiry, the Dept. of Transport granted a stopping-up order on this ancient right of way. The processes that led to this closure are long and far from satisfactory. I have written to the WBC Council Leader for his view on the matter and await his response.

Worthing Theatres

We were co-opted onto the Working Party for Worthing Theatres and Gill Tucker, Worthing Society Executive Committee member, attended the July meeting as our representative.

I must admit that the announcement in the press and on the WBC website dated 23rd July 2012 that 'The Worthing Theatre business plan looks set to go places!' surprised me!

Although the Council's public comments were very upbeat, a new Business Plan which was approved by outside consultants (with comments) certainly did not appear to have met with whole-hearted approval from within the Working Party. One member of which had a number of important criticisms of the Plan.

You may be interested to get the gist of the WBC announcement by reading it on their website www.worthing.gov.uk .

Annual exhibition at the Library

I hope that some of you found time to view our efforts for this year's exhibition. We were pleased with the content of the exhibition (**'30 years of The Worthing Society – Buildings Lost; Saved and at Risk'**) that was on display for the two weeks ending 4th August 2012 but were disappointed in the restricted size and layout of the Library display screens that we had to use.

Funding received for a Worthing Society camera

We made a successful second bid to The Community Chest for funding to purchase a good quality digital camera for use by The Worthing Society. I'm pleased to say that, at the second submission, we were successful.

The prime use of the camera will be to photograph Buildings At Risk; Listed Buildings and Local interest Buildings.

Tony Malone

Vice Chairman

CHAIRMAN GETS HIS FEET WET

QUOTE from Phillip Johnson, the top American architect in 1955 *"The automobile is the greatest catastrophe in the history of City architecture"*.

I motored into Worthing in a foul mood, peevish, crotchety, and feeling to the right of Genghis Khan. What happened to the town to dash my ill-founded optimism of 60 years ago? In those days, Caffyns looked after over two dozen Rolls Royces and we had a thriving theatre; summer shows; four cinemas; a Municipal Orchestra; a Parks Department; a social scene with dances to dress up for and a shopping centre to supply all your needs not to mention good pubs!

What happened was comprehensive redevelopment that never came off, road schemes and car parks that knocked the stuffing out of the town. The changes chased the benefactors and money out of the town and in came chains and supermarkets and property investors. When Pat Baring pushed me towards conservation, it was not because I was a fogey. I support brilliant new architecture and design but we never got anything that justified the sweeping away of historic buildings. No mixing good new with good old. We had a Borough Architects Department headed by Frank Morris and he loved concrete. In his time, we saw the arrival of the Aquarena; the Library; the Law Courts; the Guildbourne Centre; Teville Gate; Car Parks and the seafront villas were replaced with assorted blocks of flats. He saw to it that the Old Town Hall was demolished, so robbing the street scene northwards from the Pier of its focal point. He had the grace to tell me years later that it was his biggest mistake. So not all bad then! So many planning decisions have unintended consequences.

The Montague Centre, which gave us the Frink Heads, was conceived to attract quality retailers but after consultants produced surveys noting the changing demography of Worthing, they declined.

As the Council struggles to make its theatres justify the subsidy, it looks anxiously at Teville Gate to guess what effect a multiscreen cinema would have. We have had over a decade of grandiose schemes offered at Teville Gate and an effect of the current proposal would be to create the mother of all traffic jams. It seems to me to be no more viable than previous schemes. This would-be developer has a finger on the open site to the south of Union Place.

I drove past the downtown boozier which the Planning Committee think will "enliven and contribute to the vibrancy of this part of the town centre and seafront and accords with the Council's aspirations of supporting tourism and promoting economic development". You could not make that up! While guarding against being prissy, do they realise what the CAAC and Conservation Areas are?

On past Library Place where Stagecoach are permanently stopping up the Twitten and right of way from Warwick Street to the seafront. At the Public Inquiry they bamboozled a pedantic Inspector to allow them to enhance the planning permission given by WBC to stop up the access at night for security reasons, by playing the health and safety card while insisting they had no plans to move their depot. In a blink, it was reported that Stagecoach had registered an interest in moving the depot to land coming available off Dominion Way. The present depot, bordered by Bedford Row, Warwick Street and the Steyne, is a wonderful site in a Conservation Area. If it is redeveloped, the Council will have to be very firm when they

put down their conditions. However, the Council are only enablers and not developers.

Parked at Splash Point, and I walked to look at the churned up mud-bath where the new Aquarena's heating system is being installed. Permission to site the ground source heating system in the ground of Beach House was only asked for earlier this year, which seemed an afterthought. The demolishing of part of the raised walkway has led to needless expense – somebody's unnecessary dream of a view.

The sun was shining, and the tide at low water, so, impulsively, I walked across the sand, took my shoes off and paddled in the sea. Among those I spoke to was a businessman from Norwich staying at the Chatsworth with his wife and granddaughter. He said retailing in Norwich was difficult because it is a depressed area for employment. He was surprised there were not more people on the beach at holiday time. When the sea lapped the bottom of my shorts, I moved on, viewing the seafront in brilliant sunshine. From there it looked good - the scale of the buildings in harmony with each other but, further west, the view from the water's edge could not quite disguise the visual failure of the disparate group of flats between Heene and Grand Avenue. This heterogeneous group could be anywhere.



The local paper carries letters from disgruntled residents who will motor miles to save a parking fee and who would prefer Eastbourne and blame the Council for various ills. Their sense of entitlement is very à la mode, Worthing is bigger, poorer and shabbier than of old. But we live in a demand, not a command, economy and the shopping centre and town reflect the demographic make-up of the town at present. Hop on a train, bus or drive to sample the world-class Chichester Festival Theatre or Pallant Gallery and Chichester shops, or the hot spots of Brighton, or a quick train journey takes you to London and all it has to offer. We need change, but this will be slow while the economy is depressed. However, Worthing remains a nice place to live and the old tourist brochure slogan "twixt sea and Downs" reminds us that we still enjoy these priceless assets. When I occasionally hack a golf ball on the courses above the town and look at the view, or stand with the sea lapping my shorts, I have a feeling of wellbeing.

Take my advice – paddle your troubles away.

David Sumner

CHAIRMAN

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday 25th September at 7:30pm - **QUARTERLY MEETING** in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre when Mark Perry-Nash, the great-great-great-grandson of John Nash, will be speaking about - 'To Build a Dream: John Nash & the Royal Pavilion'.

Thursday, 27th September at 11am at St.Paul's Church - The unveiling of a blue plaque to mark St.Paul's Bi-Centenary to be attended by The Mayor and Mayoress – Councillor Charles James and Mrs Pauline James.

Monday 15th October - **OUTING TO BRIGHTON** to visit the Royal Pavilion and other optional museum visits. For further details contact Social Secretary, Christine Roberts on 01903 700325

Tuesday 27th November at 7:30pm - **QUARTERLY MEETING** in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre when Martin Hayes will be speaking about- 'The Walter Gardiner Photographic Collection'. Martin will comment on one of Worthing's important archives.

At this meeting mince pies and mulled fruit punch or coffee will be served. Cost £1.00 per person. Also, a pre-Christmas raffle will take place. Donations of raffle prizes will be very much appreciated on the night.

Tuesday 26th February 2013 at 7:30pm - **QUARTERLY MEETING** in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre when Dr. Geoffrey Godden FRSA will be speaking about- 'A Diary of a Nobody'. Our local celebrated, world-famous, expert on china and porcelain will recount anecdotes from his career.

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 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