THE WORTHING SOCIETY

President: Anthony Malone

NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN/WINTER 2019

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

CHAIRMAN:
Susan Belton
1 Church Cottages
Selden Lane, Worthing
BN11 2BN Tel: 01903 203141
susanna@belton77.plus.com

VICE-CHAIRMAN:
Jessica Gill
Tel: 07957 187431
jess@jessicagill.net

HON.SECRETARY:
Gill Tucker
Tel: 01903 539655
gilltucker@ntlworld.com

HON.TREASURER & SOCIAL SECRETARY:
Mascha Richards
2 Beach House
Brighton Road, Worthing
BN11 2EJ Tel: 01903 214519
mascha.richards@btinternet.com

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY
Brenda Whitmell
12 Brook Way
Lancing, BN15 8DQ
Tel: 01903 905922

PUBLICITY OFFICER:
David Clark
Tel: 01903 504402
clarkhodson@btinternet.com

WEBSITE MANAGER:
Barry Richards
barry.richards@btinternet.com

SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERS (LCAS):
Listing & Conservation Areas:
Sue Belton David Clark
Natalie Cropper John Head
Tony Malone - by invitation

Publicity:
David Clark Jessica Gill
Barry Richards
Tony Malone - by invitation

NEWSLETTER COMPILER:
Sandra Malone

WORTHING SOCIETY BLUE PLAQUE IN HONOUR OF WW1 SOLDIER SERGEANT WALTER HARROLD MM 12 MONTAGUE PLACE, WORTHING

The plaque was unveiled by the Mayor Councillor Hazel Thorpe on 4 August 2019

The Blue Plaque Trail is important in highlighting the unique social history of Worthing and conserving our built heritage. This trail has become a fascinating look at the buildings and their former occupants helping to stimulate research and provide Worthing with a 'sense of place'.

MEMBERSHIP

Dear Members

Thank you to all our members who have renewed their membership, we really value your support and a big welcome to the new members who have joined this year. Do you know that one short road has six households who have joined? Can your road beat that?! By increasing our membership, we are able to increase our presence in the town.

We hope that members who have used our new BACS system have found it is a convenient way to pay to renew. Membership is still only £10.00 a year for a single person and £15.00 a year for a couple. This entitles you to four Quarterly Meetings with updates from our Chairman followed by an interesting talk. The website and our monthly column in the Worthing Journal are also excellent ways of keeping up with the latest news.

We look forward to seeing you at the next Quarterly Meeting on Tuesday, 24 September at 7.30pm in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre when Committee members will be available to discuss current issues.

Brenda Whitmell
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

An Appreciation to Ted Kennard

The Worthing Society Committee would like to express their sincere appreciation to our colleague Edward 'Ted' Kennard who, earlier this year, retired as our Vice-Chair and also from both our main Committee and Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Sub-Committee. Ted is a true conservationist who has been a valued Committee member since 2005 working tirelessly to protect Worthing's heritage. Ted was formerly a building surveyor in Hong Kong where he spent many years. The Society has been very fortunate to have had the benefit of his technical knowledge and expertise.

Ted's most important achievement was leading the Worthing Society Campaign to save the Desert Quartet, or 'Frink Heads', as these modern bronze sculptures are popularly known. These national and internationally important sculptures, by the late Dame Elizabeth Frink, were listed Grade II* after the successful 2007 campaign. That was not the end of the story: the owner sought to have the listing overturned. Ted was 'on the case' directly with the Society lobbying the Department of Culture, Media and Sport to retain the sculptures for the town. Following these representations, the request to withdraw the listing was refused. The Desert Quartet remains a local landmark for public artwork. Another significant contribution made by Ted has been the formation of our Sub-Committee dedicated to monitoring issues affecting our listed buildings and conservation areas.

As Chairman, I would also like to express my personal thanks to Ted for his unstinting support to me in his former role as Vice-Chairman. We are fortunate in that Ted is remaining as a Trustee of the Society, so we shall still be able to call on his knowledge and expertise.

Susan Belton

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Worthing Society Committee has been working extremely hard throughout this year to continue safeguarding and promoting the importance of Worthing's unique heritage. Whilst staying true to our core work of monitoring all planning applications relating to our listed buildings and conservation areas, we have pursued our initiative to interact with the community by giving our talk 'Buildings Lost and Saved' to local groups and societies. This is a most effective way of promoting our work and increasing our membership. Our presentation shows the loss of some architectural gems before the Worthing Society was formed and the significant buildings saved by the Society such as The Dome and Beach House.

This talk 'underscores' the need for an active conservation society. Our ongoing campaign to upgrade parts of the South Street Conservation Area shows considerable improvements, which is a tangible representation of our efforts to protect our heritage.

Conservation work is evolving and, in our view, needs to display in a more accessible, contemporary way. The Blue Plaque Trail is a very visual way of stimulating interest in our heritage buildings by unlocking their social history. We hope this will encourage research and illustrate the need to protect our historic built environment. Earlier this month we were honoured to dedicate a Blue Plaque in tribute to WW1 soldier, Sergeant Walter Harrold, Military Medal, at the former family home, a Grade II listed building at 12 Montague Place. Sergeant Harrold was only 18 years of age when he was killed at Richebourg on 16 September 1916. The plaque also commemorates all the fallen of Worthing in the Great War. We were delighted that the Mayor of Worthing, Councillor Hazel Thorpe, unveiled this important town centre plaque. We are most grateful to the present owner of the property, Miss Sarah Bedford and her agent, Mr J W Thornton for their generous donations.

Our next event on 15.9.19, detailed in the Publicity Officer's Note, will be the re-dedication of the Lifeboat Memorial Stone at Splash Point. We appreciate the very generous anonymous donation to fund the new Information Board and its installation, enabling us to create awareness about this important part of Worthing's maritime and social history. Another initiative was the successful launch by our Publicity Committee, (led by David Clark), of the new Heritage Town Trail Leaflet designed for residents and visitors alike. Our heritage is here to be enjoyed so please enjoy the walk and also check our excellent website, maintained for us by Barry Richards, for all current updates.

I hope these initiatives will ensure that The Worthing Society is seen to be making a very proactive contribution to showcasing the character of the town. We hope that, by protecting our built heritage and stimulating interest in Worthing's social history, this will have a positive effect on the local economy, perhaps creating ideas for exhibitions or arts festivals.

PLANNING MATTERS - A ROUND-UP

Worthing is at a crossroads, with several large development schemes being considered. We hope our monthly group email, 'Notes from the Chair', is helpful in updating you on topical planning issues. Here are some current cases the Committee is dealing with:

Station Square: ***Objection***. Redevelopment is desirable, but sadly the current proposal for this 'gateway' site shows poor quality design (Soviet style blocks!) and inadequate parking provision.

Union Place: A consultation and plans are still awaited for this large town centre site.

Street Art Figures: These have some merit but the Society considers that the 'artwork' is not suitable for listed buildings. The Planning Committee allowed figures to remain on two listed buildings without the normal consents. We are currently asking the Council for the legal basis of this decision.

Former NHS Building - 22 Lyndhurst Road: Roffey Homes have appealed against the decision to refuse the 30 unit block of flats. In our view, the size and design of the proposal would harm the Conservation Area. We shall stand by our objection in our comments to the Planning Inspectorate.

Beach Huts for East Beach and Goring: Residents have concerns about the effect on the coastal views and loss of amenity for the sites. We shall be making representations at the Planning Meeting.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Thanks to Mascha Richards, our Social Secretary and Barry Richards, our Webmaster, for hosting the well-attended Members Strawberry Tea at beautiful Beach House. Mascha is also our Hon.Treasurer and organises our interesting lectures and Quarterly Meetings.

ARTWORK FOR EVENTS

My thanks to Jessica Gill, our Vice-Chair and artist for designing the excellent Order of Service and invitations for the recent blue plaque unveiling, as well as the Information Board with the RNLI theme.

CONCLUSION

The challenge for the future, as Historic England state, "is how we manage change in the historic environment". Our heritage is an irreplaceable resource. Although we do not wish to 'mothball' the town, it is important to ensure that all new design initiatives and developments are of good quality to complement their 'heritage neighbours'.

My sincere appreciation to members of the Committee for their ongoing support and hard work. Each member has a particular area of expertise, which is invaluable. My personal thanks to our President, Tony Malone, for his guidance and advice and a big thank you to Sandra Malone for compiling the Newsletter - quite a task!

As always, the Committee extend their thanks to our loyal members for your ongoing support.

Susan Belton

CHAIRMAN

LISTING AND CONSERVATION AREAS SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

MEMBERS: Susan Belton (Chair), Natalie Cropper, David Clark and John Head
BY INVITATION: Tony Malone (Worthing Society President)

LCAS is the acronym used for the Sub-Committee in this report.

The LCAS Team have been working hard throughout the year to conserve and safeguard the unique heritage of Worthing's built environment. This work includes the regular monitoring of the Weekly Planning Lists to examine all applications or developments which could affect our listed buildings or conservation areas. Worthing has 212 statutorily listed buildings, over 750 buildings on the Local Interest List and 26 conservation areas. There are generally about 25-30 applications to consider and we generally comment on at least 1 case per week. This may be an objection, or an advisory statement where the overall project is to be welcomed but certain details need to be resolved to ensure the integrity of the building or conservation concerned. This was the case recently with the plans for the refurbishment of Grade II Listed Beechwood Hall where we submitted a detailed statement following a site visit.

In addition to this important work LCAS have been active in supporting our Campaign to upgrade the South Street Conservation Area and particularly Bedford Row. This Regency terrace, dating from 1805, had become very run down, with some heritage buildings becoming dilapidated. The overgrown trees also gave the area a very sombre appearance. LCAS have welcomed the support of the Planning Enforcement Team in liaising with owners to effect the much needed redecoration of these elegant town houses. The overgrown trees have now been trimmed by the Council giving the area a much lighter aspect. The Planning Officer has also been effective in ensuring both the redecoration and removal of graffiti from the magnificent Grade II Listed Bedford Hall. These before and after pictures show the considerable improvements:

Bedford Hall with graffiti

Bedford Hall after graffiti removed

The Victorian Gospel Hall at the southern end of Bedford Row has also been redecorated.

Another neglected building, shrouded in netting and scaffolding for several years, is the early 1930's Commercial Bus Station which is included on the Local Interest List. We are delighted that the owners, Stagecoach, have removed the scaffolding, jet washed the façade and are currently redecorating the building in the livery of the former Southdown Bus Company which it once served:

Stagecoach scaffolding coming down

Conservation work is ever challenging but I feel the results we have achieved in Bedford Row and parts of Montague Street are very rewarding. These significant improvements provide a visual representation of what the Campaign has achieved. In conclusion, it has been a busy time for LCAS and the pressure is unlikely to ease as there are several new developments in the pipeline.

My grateful thanks to the dedicated support I have received from the Sub-Committee.

Susan Belton

LCAS CHAIRMAN

A NOTE ON PUBLICITY

The last 6 months has seen a continuation of our strategy to be more visible in the community with our work on Planning, the South Street Conservation Area Campaign, Blue Plaques and Group Talks.

Sue Belton's comments at Planning Committee Meetings including those dealing with the Observation Wheel, Street Art on listed buildings and shortly the proposal for more Beach Huts at East Beach and West Worthing are normally well reported. Her monthly column in The Worthing Journal also continues to promote our work.

We have put together a PowerPoint presentation showcasing the results of the South Street Conservation Area campaign. This will be shown to Martin Randall, James Appleton and Judy Fox from Worthing Borough Council in September.

We had a launch event for our new Town Centre Heritage Trail on 1st April at the Museum. The Mayor did the honours! This was well publicised and the initial print run of 1000 has already been exhausted so it is proving popular with locals and visitors. Sue and I recently took a journalist from Sussex Life round the trail and their article was published in the August edition of Sussex Life. Some members may wish to buy a copy!

The new Lifeboat Memorial Stone Information Board will be unveiled on Sunday 15th September. This is turning into a significant event with the Mayor, representatives from the RNLI and Worthing Borough Council likely to attend. We are hoping that the offshore lifeboat will undertake some exercises off the beach at some stage during proceedings. There is even talk of a choir!

The recent unveiling of our Blue Plaque (Sergeant Walter Harrold, MM) formed, with the support of the Conservation Officer, an integral part of our South Street Area Campaign helping to create a sense of awareness and pride in our town's conservation areas.

We have given several more talks on 'Worthing Buildings Lost and Saved' and have bookings extending into next year.

All in all our profile continues to rise.

David Clark
PUBLICITY OFFICER

A THOUGHT FROM THE PRESIDENT

Can we achieve the protection of Worthing's Heritage Assets without being accused of standing in the way of the regeneration of Worthing? Sometimes it's very difficult, if not downright impossible.

The Society is no stranger to this accusation and yet any such accusers seem to find it convenient to forget that there is often collateral damage when, for instance, a tall development is built close to existing homes, with the consequent over-shadowing and potential loss of privacy. There is no satisfaction in being able to say 'I told you so' when a new development turns out to achieve some of the unwanted side effects that were predicted.

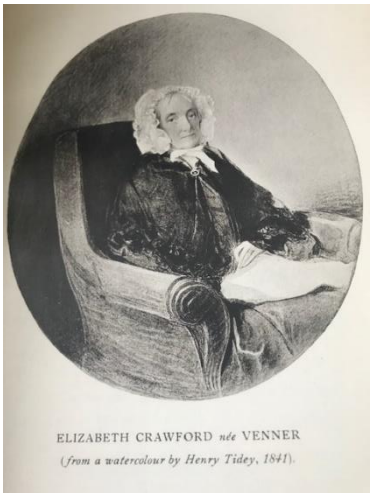
This dilemma is not new. People who have lived in Worthing for long enough will no doubt remember the demolition of historic or architecturally important buildings and the featureless concrete 'boxes' that quickly sprouted around Worthing during the 1950s onwards. All in the name of progress of course. We all know that you can't hang on to every fine building for ever, especially when they may have come to the end of their useful life and start to need money poured into them to keep them still standing but, in the past, the decision to bring in the bulldozers seems to have been made without looking at viable alternatives.

History has shown that it is possible to achieve results that are satisfactory to all parties when developers have worked hand in hand with planners and conservation societies but, sadly, a good outcome is probably becoming harder to achieve with the ever-increasing targets for building new homes.

Meanwhile, LCAS (our Listing and Conservation Area Sub-Committee) continue to monitor incoming planning applications making constructive comments where appropriate.

Tony Malone
PRESIDENT

A HOME IN AMBROSE PLACE



In the early 1800's, Worthing was said to be a "semi-fashionable" community with under 4,000 inhabitants, a stylish esplanade, bathing machines, two libraries and a theatre. So, finding herself in reduced circumstances following the death of her husband, this is where Mrs. Elizabeth Crawford and her three daughters Eleanor, Martha and Matilda Louise moved to in 1821, renting number 13 Ambrose Place for the sum of £55 per year. Originally known as Mount Pleasant, Ambrose Place was built westwards from St. Pauls the Chapel of Ease between 1814 and 1826 and named after the man who built it – Ambrose Cartwright. It has been said that Mr. Cartwright intended to build a matching terrace on the south side of Ambrose Place but ran out of funds, hence each house was given the land opposite as a garden and this remains so to this day.

Ambrose Place after the building of Christ Church, seen in the distance

The book "Ambrosiana" – Letters and Belongings of Certain Ladies of Ambrose Place, Worthing (published 1936 by Lee & Nightingale) gives a wonderful insight into life at that time. On moving to Worthing, Matilda was just 16: "she found delight in open-air exercise, scampering on horseback over the Downs without respect for any barriers infringing common rights". As Matilda grew up, entertaining was often. Refreshments were light; music abundant. Doctors' fees and chemists' bills were frequent forms of expense; so too were the drives afield before the coming of the railway (a chaise to Brighton and back, with turnpike toll and postboy, cost a guinea).

Martha wrote in a letter dated 1830 "Such great alterations continue to be made in this town by the addition of new buildings that, if we remain here many years longer, we shall be almost in the centre of the town; you may remember at your first visit to us turning your poney to graze in a field behind our house – in that field now stand two gentlemen's houses with stables and walled gardens and a third is soon to be erected; and sixteen or twenty houses are now building to the west of us in what we used to call the Heene fields".

By 1835, Elizabeth had received a legacy from her late brother-in-law and when 14 Ambrose Place became vacant she was in a position to purchase the freehold and move next door. Elizabeth contributed to the building of Christ Church but died in 1841 before it was completed and was laid to rest in Broadwater Church. The "girls" remained spinsters: Eleanor died in 1867 aged 77, Martha ten months later aged 69 and Matilda Louise died in 1886 aged 81. They are buried together in the grounds of Christ Church close to the street where they spent many happy years.

Over 50 years ago I used to walk along Ambrose Place with my grandmother, never dreaming that one day I would be fortunate enough to live in one of these elegant houses. Now our home is number 13 and the history of the house can be felt in the very walls. There is an aura of peace, femininity maybe, that family and friends also comment on when they visit. The old stone steps up to the front door are worn with the footsteps of the past. Sitting in a conservation area and listed, Ambrose Place will still be here in another 200 years – a jewel in the crown of Worthing - and as residents we are but guardians for a short while. In 1905 number 13 was also called "Moulmein" (now Mawlamyine, the fourth largest city in Myanmar). I have yet to discover who gave the house that unusual name and why. Through the decades many families have lived at number 13; many characters have been part of the history of Ambrose Place. The Crawford ladies will always be remembered and I am sure Elizabeth and her three daughters would be delighted to know that the current occupants of number 13 love the house and the street as much as they did.

Hilary Leeves
Worthing Society Member

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday 24th September at 7:30pm - **QUARTERLY MEETING** in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre. Doors open at 7pm

Speaker : Roger Amerena on 'Commemorative Plaques in the City of Brighton & Hove 1923 – 2019'

***PLEASE NOTE*: The Worthing Library will be closing in November and will not re-open until the summer of 2020. Please note that until further notice all our meetings will be held at the Ardington Hotel, The Steyne, Worthing.**

Tuesday 26th November at 7:30pm - **QUARTERLY MEETING** at the **Ardington Hotel, The Steyne, Worthing.** Doors open at 7pm.

Speaker : James Sainsbury, Archaeologist, Worthing Museum on 'Saxon Worthing & The Kingdom of The South Saxons'

At this meeting mince pies and coffee / tea will be served - Cost £1.50. Also a pre-Christmas raffle will take place. Donations of raffle prizes will be very much appreciated on the night.

Tuesday 25th February 2020 at 7:30pm - **QUARTERLY MEETING** at the **Ardington Hotel, The Steyne, Worthing.** Doors open at 7pm.

South Downs Film Makers will show their film 'The Shoreham Lifeboat', a Ferring Documentary, and a selection of their short comedies.

Coffee/tea and biscuits will be served - **Cost £1.50**

** It is with very grateful thanks to Simon Margaroli of The Ardington Hotel for accommodating us **

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

For membership enquiries please contact our Membership Secretary
Brenda Whitmell (tel: 01903 905922)