THE WORTHING SOCIETY

President : Anthony P Malone

NEWSLETTER

SPRING / SUMMER 2017

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Listing & Conservation Areas: (LCAS):

Ted Kennard		Natalie Cropper
Sue Belton		David Clark
Tony Malone	-	by invitation

Publicity:

David Clark	Jessica Gill
Barry Richards	Sue Miller

NEWSLETTER COMPILER:
Sandra Malone

FORTHCOMING ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 25 APRIL 2017

Notice is hereby given that the 35th Annual General Meeting of The Worthing Society will take place on Tuesday, 25 April 2017 at 7pm in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre.

Nominations are invited for the following posts:-

- Chairman
- Vice-Chairman
- Honorary Secretary
- Honorary Treasurer
- Honorary Membership Secretary
- Honorary Social 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 7 April 2017, to the Chairman.

At the conclusion of the AGM there will be a coffee break followed by a talk on "Polands - Family Furnishers Since 1883" by David Poland.

WORTHING PIER MEMORIAL WINDOW

MESSAGE FROM YOUR MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Yes, it is that time of the year again dear members and despite rising prices elsewhere, our membership fee remains the same. We are sure you will all agree that £10 for a single member and £15 for a couple, which entitles you to two newsletters plus free entry to four talks a year, is great value for money.

The Society must again thank Mrs Phillips and Mrs Melloy for their donations and whilst mentioning donations, may we take this opportunity to thank all of you who have very generously donated to the Memorial Window; there are far too many names to list here, but we were overwhelmed by our members support for this Window. This will be a welcome addition to the enhancement of the art on the pier as well as a permanent link to the Society.

We are pleased to say that we have greatly increased our membership this year and hope that all the new members will be as supportive to the Society as our existing ones have been over the years. Thank you Mrs J Beeson for your help at the two quarterly meetings, it is nice that we have you to call on.

We now have a database set up and, for those of you who have computer access, we are able to inform you of any campaigns or news very quickly. However, we know that many of you do not have a computer at home, myself included. I am not sure if you are aware that if you did want to join the "Computer Age" the library service has free access for its members. I, myself, use the computers there. No worries about buying equipment and paying broadband charges. All branches have volunteer computer "buddies" who are happy to assist you in setting up emails and "surfing the web". If you did want to give this a try, please enquire at your local library.

Please find enclosed your renewal forms and, as always, you can return them to me or bring them along to the AGM in April, where we look forward to welcoming our new and, of course, our existing members.

As always, thank you everyone for your continued support.

Susan Miller

CHAIRMAN'S GENERAL REPORT

I am very pleased to report that the Worthing Society Memorial Window has now been installed on the Pier in the Glass Window Gallery. The theme is 'Guardians of Our Heritage, Past, Present and Future'. The window commemorates our founder Patricia Baring, our past Presidents, Robert Elleray and Geoffrey Godden and David Sumner our late Chairman. The memorial window is, I feel, a very fitting tribute to our late friends and colleagues, who contributed so much in their different ways towards the development of the Worthing Society and the conservation of the town's valuable heritage.

I am grateful to our Membership Secretary, Susan Miller, for suggesting the original idea. I would also like to give a personal thank-you to all those who contributed so generously to the window and to our artist, Naomi Frances, for producing such a fitting, colourful design. My thanks also, to artist and Committee Member Jessica Gill, for introducing us to Naomi. I am sure the Glass Window Gallery will serve to highlight the work of the Worthing Society in a very appealing and positive way in the years ahead. In addition we sincerely hope that the Memorial Window will offer some degree of comfort to the families of our late colleagues. We are planning an event to dedicate the window later in March but, due to restrictions on numbers by the Pier management, this will be by invitation only.

This year is, in fact, our 35th anniversary and I feel this is a considerable achievement. Much has been achieved during this time to protect Worthing from inappropriate development. However, we need to be ever vigilant if we are to avoid a repetition of the planning mistakes of the past. Worthing is facing the redevelopment of several large sites, so 2017 will be an important crossroads for the town. The Society will

work to ensure the new designs complement the character of the town. There is also considerable pressure from the government to meet increasing housing requirements and, in consequence, the preservation of our green spaces is now coming under scrutiny. I am indebted to a very hard working Committee who have built up a considerable degree of expertise and regularly monitor all new planning applications. We will continue to act as watchdogs to protect the heritage environment.

On a lighter note we shall be continuing to develop our Blue Plaque Trail and leaflets. Susan Miller has researched our latest detailed leaflet about the life of William Hudson, founder member of the RSPB, who lived at 8 Bedford Row. Great work and an interesting addition to our heritage trail! We are also hoping to dedicate a Blue Plaque to the historical figure Dr Frederick Dixon (1799-1849), an archaeologist and founder of the first infirmary in Worthing, who lived at the Grade II Listed, Elm Lawn House, Union Place. I feel it is important to link architecture to the important social history of the town. We are also planning to build on last year's successful membership drive by giving a series of talks about the Worthing Society and the Blue Plaque Trail to local groups, colleges and societies.

As always, many thanks indeed for your invaluable support. We look forward to seeing you at our Quarterly Meetings and other events during the year.

Susan Belton

CHAIRMAN

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTARY – UPDATE ON CURRENT ISSUES

AQUARENA

The last few months have been particularly challenging for the Committee. I refer, of course, to the "Aquarena Campaign" and our objection to the over-development of this landmark site with the inclusion of the bulky 15 storey tower block. We responded strongly with a media campaign both on TV and radio. I made my TV debut on a wet and very windy beach south of the present Aquarena! A Petition was organised which achieved 2,318 signatures from members of the public with a further 115 names recorded online. As a result of our "Petition Signing Events" over 700 letters of objection were submitted. During our Campaign, we became affiliated with the Save Our Seafront Group, (SOS), introduced to us by our Committee Member David Clark, who had worked with SOS during the successful campaign for the Grand Avenue/West Parade development.

I appreciate the support shown by the Committee, our members and friends from SOS, who braved the cold days in December at the Petition signing events. The vast majority of the public were very supportive and our Petition was later presented to Worthing Borough Council. I am also grateful to David Sawers who prepared our detailed letter of objection and represented us so positively in speaking at the Planning Meeting.

The plans received approval at the meeting on 19 January. This was not unexpected and there was an "air of pre-determination" during the meeting as to the outcome. Economic concerns seemed to override the resulting harm to the surrounding heritage environment and the much-loved traditional seaside views, which give Worthing its unique character.

Inaccurate statements were made about the Worthing Society by the Managing Director of Roffey Homes, Ben Cheal, alleging that the Society always objected to Roffey's development plans. This is not the case - our records show that we had supported the Roffey developments of both the Eardley and Warnes apartments, acknowledging their good design. Certain social media forums also implied that the Society is "always against redevelopment".

My 'Open Letter' to Worthing residents, published in the Herald, sought to re-assure people that we are not against regeneration and are keen to see the town move forward providing new design that enhances the built heritage of Worthing. Our objections to the Aquarena plans were genuine and we were also standing up for local residents who would be adversely affected. The MP, Sir Peter Bottomley, is supporting an application for the approval of the Aquarena Planning Application to be called in, by the Secretary of State, for review. At the time of writing, we are awaiting the decision on the call-in request. Whatever the outcome, we have done everything possible to resist this inappropriate development.

LOCAL PLAN

This significant policy document, which covers all aspects of planning policy, is being prepared by Worthing Borough Council and will aim to identify potential development sites. We took part in the Issues and Options Consultation in 2016 and emphasised the importance of protecting our heritage assets and open green spaces. The Draft Local Plan is expected in Autumn 2017.

GORING GAP

The northern section of Goring Gap/Chatsmore Farm is vulnerable to development by owners Persimmon Homes wanting to build over 470 homes. Protecting this important green space, opposite the South Downs National Park, could become our next campaign. A planning application is awaited but it's only a matter of time. David Sawers and I were invited by the Goring Gap Action Group to attend a meeting with senior Planning Officers at Worthing Borough Council. A Landscape Study Update, on behalf of Worthing Borough Council, is due in March 2017 and will form part of the draft Local Plan. It is likely there will be more protection for the southern part of the Gap. The previous Landscape Study noted, in relation to both the north and south sections of the Gap that "Development would have a significant and detrimental effect on the character of the landscape". We await the outcome of the updated Landscape Study but will be ready to offer our support to the Goring Gap Residents Association. Pressure of housing targets will be an issue here.

TEVILLE GATE

New owners, Mosaic Investments Ltd, have stated they wish to deliver a high quality residential scheme with some ground floor commercial and leisure use. Unfortunately, the owners will not be holding the promised public consultation due this month. The date has now slipped back to Spring. Hopes for a planning application for this landmark, but derelict, site again seem some way off. Sadly, the wait to redevelop Teville Gate goes on.

UNION PLACE

The Council entered into a joint marketing campaign with the Police Commissioning Council, who has now accepted a bid for the site. The Council is negotiating with the new owners to progress a mixed use development for residential/restaurant/leisure use and possibly a multiplex cinema. A planning application is expected later this year for this important town centre area.

GRAND AVENUE/WEST PARADE.

Following the unsuccessful appeal against refusal of the initial application, Roffey submitted a revised design in November 2016. The redesign is much improved. We feel some changes are still needed to make it acceptable. Our comments mainly noted that the proposed building projects too far forward of the building line and the rear three storey section will overwhelm the adjacent property. The application has yet to come before the Planning Committee.

LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERATION AREAS SUB-COMMITTEE(LCAS):

I appreciate the hard technical work undertaken by LCAS, who monitor the condition of our Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas plus reviewing weekly planning applications. I am proud of their commitment and expertise.

DISTINCTION IN BUILDING AWARDS (DIBA).

Our President, Tony Malone, represented us on the "Distinction on Buildings Award"panel with local councillors, council officers and the Conservation Areas Advisory Committee, in November 2016. These awards have been given by the Council since 1992 to encourage high standards. The results of the DIBA Awards can be viewed on our website.

NEW PUBLICITY OFFICER

I am very pleased that David Clark has agreed to become our new Publicity Officer following Tony Malone's election as President. David will head up a small Sub-Committee (Jessica Gill, Susan Miller and Barry Richards) ensuring the Society is well represented in the media and the local community.

COMMUNITY CHEST GRANT

We are thrilled to have received a grant for a tablet plus portable projector to use during our programme of talks and the development of our On-line Archive.

WEBSITE AND ARCHIVE

Our thanks to Barry Richards for maintaining and updating our informative website. Barry is also developing the Worthing Society's On-line Archive with the able assistance of Brenda Whitmell, one of our long-standing members.

APPRECIATIONS

I would like thank Tony Malone, our new President, for his much appreciated advice and expertise. Thanks also to Tony's wife Sandra for her hard work in producing our Newsletters.

A special thank you to Mascha Richards for also covering the dual roles of Treasurer and Social Secretary and arranging our events and Speakers.

FASTEN YOUR SEATBELTS!

We have another very challenging year ahead, particularly in the current economic climate and with the considerable pressure from the Government on the need for new housing. I am confident I have a Committee fully capable of meeting these challenges! I am personally indebted to the team for their unflagging support and enthusiasm. The continued support of our members is, as always, invaluable.

With my thanks and belated good wishes for 2017.

Susan Belton

CHAIRMAN

LISTING AND CONSERVATION AREAS (LCAS) SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

(Our 'watchdog' for anything affecting Worthing's Listed/Local Interest Buildings and Conservation Areas)

Members: Ted Kennard (Chair), Susan Belton, Natalie Cropper, David Clark. Tony Malone our President by invitation.

LCAS: This acronym seems to have been accepted by all concerned.

Our objectives: To preserve the heritage of our built environment, particularly in the Conservation Areas and to critically examine all development proposals to seek out infringements of current planning law and to comment on design.

Richard Small, Design and Conservation Architect, WBC. LCAS has held three meetings with Richard Small on 12th September, 27th October2016 and12th January 2017, since the last Newsletter. We exchanged views on a number of topics with which the Society was concerned including the Montague Street Enhancement Project, the redevelopment of the Bunce's site at the corner of Chapel Road and Lennox Road, the Lifeboat House and of course the Aquarena site.

CURRENT ISSUES

The Gospel Hall in Bedford Row

This building, which was built in the 1850s, was refused listing by English Heritage in September 2009 but nevertheless it contributes to the social and ecclesiastical history of Worthing and is considered by Historic England (formerly English Heritage) and the Worthing Council to be a "a Local Interest Building". As it is in a Conservation Area it cannot be demolished without the consent of the Planning Department of the Borough. The freehold of the site was sold in July 2016 for £210,000 and we are trying to find out the owner's intentions. There is always the risk of it being demolished without the required legal consent. This is a recent photo of the Gospel Hall; lettering may have been done by the owner or his agent.

The Lifeboat House, 107 Marine Parade. This freehold property, which has considerable heritage value to the town, was purchased in 2016 for £425,000. We have written to the new owner to try to learn her intentions, pointing out to her that the building is on the "Local Interest List" and within a Conservation Area. We have advised her to get in touch with the Conservation Officer before embarking on repairs or alterations.

The Montague Centre.

We note that boreholes, probably to investigate the subsoil, have been carried out around the sycamore trees at the north end. The Environmental Section of the WBC has been approached in regard to the dirty state of the glazed roof and light fittings, to see if they can deal with this hygiene problem but nothing has been done to date. We will pursue. As far as we are aware, Patisserie Valerie, to whom the owners NewRiver want to rent the 'kiosk', have not signed any lease. The kiosk is a key requirement of the owners: the fate of the trees is still problematic.

Regeneration of the axis of Montague Street and Montague Place

Correspondence between Louise Goldsmith, Leader of the WSCC and our chairman has taken place regarding the inappropriate design, unsuitable materials and impact on this Conservation Area. We are waiting for a formal response to our last letter in which we have requested a meeting to discuss the improvements we consider are essential.

15 Bedford Row

The application in December 2015 to demolish the two-storey restaurant on this site and replace it with a 5-storey apartment block was **refused** in May last year. We objected to the proposals as it adjoins a row of Listed Buildings (Bedford Row) and consider that the degree of harm which would be caused to the overall setting of the listed buildings and conservation area would be unacceptable and contrary to statutory provisions. The owner has appealed against the refusal and we understand that the appeal will be determined by means of written representations. We will review the situation and possibly make further representations to the Inspectorate in Bristol before the determination.

Lifeboat Memorial Stone.

The WBC have agreed to inlay the incised wording on the stone with silver coloured paint and provide it with 400mm (15 inches) high steel railings suitably rust-proofed to surround the stone, to protect it from skateboarders, etc. The area will also be spruced up. LCAS has worked hard over the last eighteen months to achieve this agreement; we consider the Stone to be an important memorial as it is a record of an aspect of Worthing's social history.

Heritage at Risk List

LCAS has recently reviewed the List and determined that 83-85 Portland Road is no longer at risk as repairs have now been carried out. This List is reviewed on a regular basis.

IN CONCLUSION

LCAS meets regularly and its members are dedicated to the task of vetting all new proposals, dealing with considerable correspondence and generally watching over the town and its historic buildings. The coming six months are likely to continue to be very busy as a number of large building applications appear to be in the pipeline.

Ted Kennard

CHAIRMAN OF LCAS

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

This Newsletter has given me the first proper opportunity to say thank you to those members who voted for me to be your President. I feel privileged to have been elected.

As well as representing the Society at events such as the dedication of the memorial window on the pier, our Chairman asked me if I would consider also having a more hands-on role by acting as Consultant to her and also to the Listing and Conservation Areas sub-committee Chaired by Ted Kennard. I was pleased to accept, as it has enabled me to provide practical support rather than just being a figurehead for the Society.

Since the previous Newsletter, the Officers of the Society and the Members of our Executive Committee have once again had a heavy workload and have responded magnificently. The year ahead will, I'm sure, be equally challenging, but I am confident that they will rise to that challenge.

If you feel that you, or any of your friends or family, would like to be active in helping the Society in any of its many roles, please contact our email address shown on our website and one of us will respond.

Tony Malone

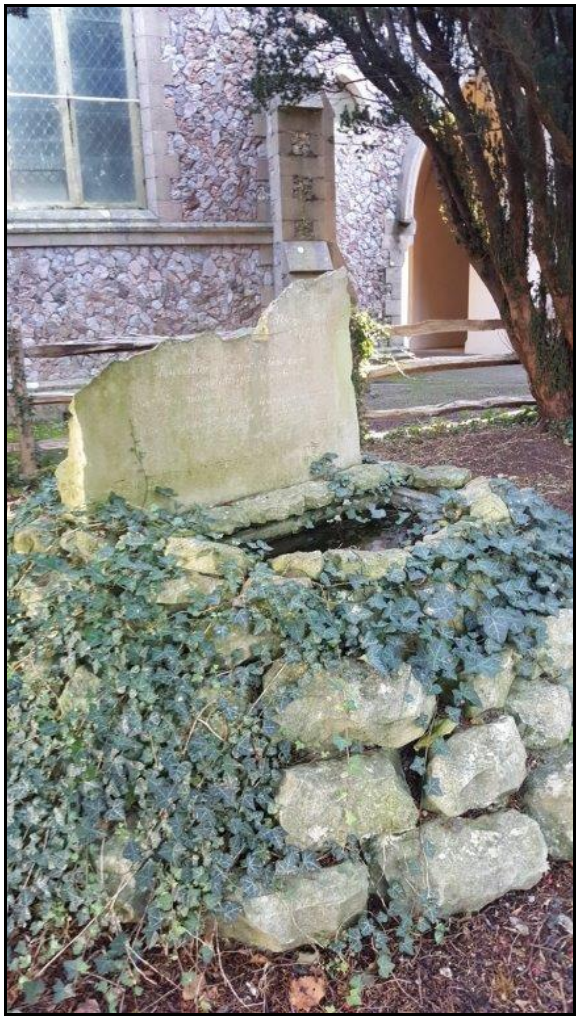
W.H. Hudson Leaflet

We are pleased to inform you that we now have a leaflet dedicated to William Hudson; this brings our leaflets based on our Blue Plaques to seven.

Whilst doing research for this leaflet, I found that Worthing Library were a great help in the information that they keep on all things that go on in West Sussex. To those of you who, like me when I started my research, are not aware of William Hudson, he was a great naturalist and was one of the founding members of the RSPB, to which he left the bulk of his money. He also wrote many books and loved our wonderful South Downs. In the reference library, I found a newspaper cutting of a memorial to Hudson and a fellow naturalist Richard Jefferies. It was a large stone bird bath. This impressive memorial had eluded me on my visits to the cemetery, so I went along and asked about it. I was pleased to see it was still there, although in need of a bit of tidying up. It was a shame that it was overshadowed by so many trees. We may look into helping to clean this up in the future and bring it back into use for our wildlife.

Next time you visit the Cemetery look out for it.

Sue Miller



Hudson Memorial
Worthing Cemetery, South Farm Road, Worthing

THE TOWN'S PRIDE

By Rob Blann

Without doubt, one of the greatest achievements in the history of Worthing lifeboat station took place 125 years ago. Synchronised rescues of crews from two ships, miles apart, in a single day. No mean feat, considering it was all done by oar and sail; motorisation was still some way off.

Time line 11th November 1891. With great stamina our brave lifeboatmen rescued the crews of the two vessels consecutively. One to the east, the other to the west:

At 9.30 a.m. in a howling gale with rain bucketing down, the drama unfolded. Coxswain Lee spotted two large ships in trouble. He fired the lifeboat gun to call out his men. On its iron carriage, the weighty lifeboat was pulled along Marine Parade by horses and launched alongside the pier with its 13 crew in their cork lifejackets heaving on the oars. Sail hoisted, the buoyant craft headed eastwards towards the 230 ton schooner Kong Karl.

Meanwhile, heavy seas were breaking over the 505 ton barque Capella off West Worthing, flying a distress signal. With the lifeboat gone in the other direction, bold fishermen mounted their own rescue, and set about launching the ferry boat. Some 41 years earlier, the open ferry boat had attempted a rescue from the storm-stricken barque Lalla Rookh, and disastrously capsized drowning its crew of 11 fishermen. Yet despite that loss of life, and without a thought for their own safety, the plucky band of 14 rowed towards the stricken German Capella and tried their hardest to get all the crew off. Each man gave of his best, until they were completely exhausted, and forced to abandon further attempts. Two were the hardy Blann brothers William (Bill) and Harry (Rob Blann's great-grandfather), and even they were beat.

Over to the east, the lifeboat reached the ailing wooden three-masted Kong Karl, by now forced by the frenzied waves as far as Lancing. Throwing grapnels with lines attached the lifeboat was hauled alongside. While the two vessels reciprocated dangerously, all the Norwegian schooner's seven crew managed to jump into the lifeboat, and were landed safely ashore.

No time to lose, the determined lifeboatmen winched their craft onto the waiting carriage, drawn along from Worthing by horses, and sped back again. By now the gale had increased to a hurricane, hampering the efforts of the many helpers battling against the angry sea, to re-launch the lifeboat for the three-masted Capella. Foundering at West Worthing, the remaining seven crew from the 505 ton iron-built barque were rescued and landed ashore. The German vessel was in danger of drifting eastwards in the direction of the pier.

The staggering amount of stalwart human resources and horse power required for this co-ordinated double rescue mission was the highest recorded on any one day: 13 brave lifeboat crew; 30 to help launch and haul up the three ton lifeboat for the Kong Karl rescue; and even more, 50, for the Capella rescue, as the tide was out and the lifeboat had to be hauled in from the low water mark. That makes a total of 93 strong men of good stamina.

Add to this, the 14 who dared to take out the ferry boat in such dreadful conditions, and all those who dragged it from the pier as far as Heene Road, exact number unknown but probably another 50, that's a grand total of 143. And, without six horses both times, pulling lifeboat on carriage to each launching position, the order of events would have been severely hampered and the outcome quite different.

Gallant coxswain Charles Lee was awarded the Silver Medal by the RNLI for his courage. The lifeboat crew chalked up another two rescues showing 14 lives saved in one day. A truly remarkable feat, for they not only went out twice, they also went out a third time, to anchor the mighty iron-built Capella, drifting nearer to the pier and threatening the structure.

I firmly believe that the stamina and courage displayed by our fishermen and boatmen in the face of this gale, a gale so strong that none of them had experienced one stronger in their lifetime, was much greater than is the expected norm today. The town showed its pride by entertaining them to 'an excellent and substantial dinner', after which 'clay pipes and a liberal allowance of tobacco were distributed to the men'.

Now, we are to commemorate our Worthing lifeboatmen, true men of valour who saved many a life for more than 75 years, by installing an appropriately designed window on the pier. Costing £500, your generous donations are needed to get this appeal under way.

Please send cheques payable to Rob Blann, Monkey Puzzle Cottage, 64 Rose Walk, Goring by sea, Worthing, BN12 4AT or use direct bank transfer: Sort code: 09 06 40 account no: 10321832.

For more on the social history of our lifeboat town go to www.rob-blann.com/books.php

THE WORTHING SOCIETY EVENTS FOR 2017

FEB **Tuesday 28th at 7.30pm QUARTERLY MEETING in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre**
Speaker: Mark Perry Nash on "Life in Dickens England"

APR **Tuesday 25th at 7.00 p.m. A.G.M. in the Worthing Library Theatre followed by lecture at 7.30pm**
Speaker: David Poland on "Polands - Family Furnishers Since 1883"

JUN **Sunday 18th from 3:00-4:30pm - A midsummer afternoon 'STRAWBERRIES & CREAM TEA' in the Ayrton Suite at Beach House** **Ticket: £5.00**

AUG **Tuesday 15th 10:30-12:30 - A VISIT to historic EDES HOUSE, CHICHESTER**
A private guided tour of the 17th century house **Ticket: £10.00**

SEP **Tuesday 26th at 7:30pm. QUARTERLY MEETING in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre.**
Speakers: Jessica Gill on "Sculptural Lighting" and Naomi Frances on "Stained & Fused Glass" - Two of our local artists – not to be missed!

NOV **Tuesday 28th at 7:30pm. QUARTERLY MEETING in the Worthing Library Lecture Theatre.**
Speaker : Martin Hayes, WSCC Local Studies Librarian on "William Penn and West Sussex"

DEC **Wednesday 6th - A COACH OUTING to the Royal Albert Hall for John Rutter's CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION CONCERT with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.** **Cost: TBA**

Tickets for the two events will be on sale at the A.G.M. on Tuesday 25th April or
please send a cheque made payable to 'The Worthing Society' enclosing an S.A.E.
to:
Mrs. Richards, 2 Beach House, Brighton Road, Worthing, W. Sx., 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

For membership enquiries please contact our Membership Secretary
Mrs. Susan Miller on 01903 219884