THE WORTHING SOCIETY

President: Anthony Malone

NEWSLETTER

SPRING/SUMMER 2021

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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

CHAIRMAN'S NOTE

During these unprecedented times we have had to amend our programme of events:

- **The Quarterly Members Meeting planned for 23 February has been CANCELLED.**
- **Our Annual General Meeting due in April has been RE-SCHEDULED to 28 September 2021.**
- **Nominations for the election of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Officers and Committee Members at the AGM will be invited in the September Newsletter.**

HOWEVER, SOMETHING POSITIVE DID HAPPEN LATE LAST YEAR!

The Blue Plaque dedication in honour of
Sir Frederick and Lady Stern, creators of Highdown Gardens

MEMBERSHIP

Dear Members

The Committee extends sincere thanks to our members for your loyal support with a special thank you to members who have made very generous donations which are much appreciated at this difficult time.

May I also remind you that it is time to renew your membership to the Society from 1 April 2021. Please see the details in your enclosed renewal letter.

Stay safe and well.

Brenda Whitmell

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Due to these unprecedented times we have regrettably had to cancel the February Members Meeting. Your Committee has also taken the difficult decision to postpone our Annual General Meeting (AGM) until September. Hopefully it will then be possible for as many members as possible to safely join us for this important occasion. I am grateful to the hardworking Committee members who have supported me during these challenging times and who will remain 'in post' until the AGM.

Throughout the coming months our Publicity Officer will continue to give regular monthly updates to advise you of upcoming planning applications. Our website and Facebook 'Latest News' pages will also provide information on current issues affecting the town and I will continue our monthly articles in the Worthing Journal. By keeping in touch we hope you will feel more involved with proposed changes affecting your town.

Although this has been a challenging year our work has continued. In October we were able to add to our Blue Plaque Heritage Trail by dedicating a plaque at The Highdown in honour of Sir Frederick and Lady Stern, creators of Highdown Gardens. Due to Covid 19 protocol, guests had to be kept to a minimum. Nevertheless, it was still an important event to highlight the Society's work and was attended by the Mayor of Worthing, Councillor Lionel Harman and the Mayoress, Councillor Karen Harman.

Planning issues continue to dominate much of our time and are likely to further define this year. The Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Sub-Committee (LCAS) remains a vital contributor supporting our core values to safeguard our designated heritage assets. Principal concerns remain the protection of our conservation areas, heritage buildings and, increasingly, our open green spaces. Here are some of the most controversial applications and current concerns:

- **Goring Gap/Chatsmore Farm**: The Society has submitted a strong objection to Persimmon's plans to build 475 units on this historic green space. We are an active member of the Goring Gap Action Group (which includes Ferring Cons. Group, Goring Residents Association and the Ilex Group) in generating a large number of objections. Plans come to Committee in early March and I will be speaking in objection at the Planning Meeting. View our letter of objection on our website: www.worthingsociety.org.uk. It is still not too late to object! Send your comments by email to: planning@adur-worthing.gov.uk or by post to: Planning Services, Worthing Borough Council, 44 Richmond Road Worthing BN11 1HS, quoting reference number AWDM/1264/20.

- **Union Place**: Although this large development has been given outline consent our earlier representations brought about some improvements to the initial height and style by recessing upper storeys. Final designs are expected later this year and we will comment in due course.

- **The Wheatsheaf, Richmond Road (Circa 1835)**: Following objections by the Society and local residents, plans to demolish this historic building to develop flats were refused. Sadly, however, despite our robust representations, the Planning Inspector has allowed both appeals which will result in the demolition of this historic building.

- **Gas Works Site Lyndhurst Road**: Identified as a 'brownfield site' in the Draft Local Plan, proposals to redevelop this former industrial site for residential use are expected to be submitted in March. These will be closely scrutinised by the Committee. Scale, height, design and the number of units as well as the removal of contaminants will be important considerations to be scrutinized.

- **Beach House Park**: Following the sudden removal of established plants, without public consultation, our Committee member Leonia Crozier engaged with the 'Friends of Beach House Park' during 2019/20 to bring about the recent successful inclusion of this historic park on the Council's 'List of Community Assets'. Some partial replacement of the southern border has taken place and, when circumstances permit, Leonia will represent us at Focus Groups organised by the Council's Parks Team to discuss any future changes.

- **Planning White Paper**: Supported by our local MP's, we submitted an in depth response to the considered defects in the Planning White Paper.

MOVING FORWARD: In addition to monitoring planning matters, an integral part of our Constitution is to stimulate interest, education and research into Worthing's unique social and architectural history. When restrictions lift, we shall resume our heritage talks to local groups and colleges highlighting Worthing's unique heritage. The Committee has approved the reduced Youth Membership fee. I hope to engage younger members of the community to take an interest and become involved in heritage matters. We are continuing to collect local historical information for our 'Online Archive' and welcome members' own individual articles on local social history to broaden Worthing's heritage map.

CONCLUSION

This has been a challenging year for the Society, intensified by the Covid 19 situation. I would like to express my sincere thanks to our President, Tony Malone, for offering his much valued experience and ongoing support.

We hope you have enjoyed this rather different Newsletter, and are reassured that your Committee is still working hard to protect the character of our unique town. Fortunately, we can continue our representations via email and take part in Planning Meetings and other discussions using Zoom! When circumstances permit, hopefully later this year and through 2022, we hope to resume our Membership drive. By increasing our membership we can increase our presence and thereby our influence in the town.

With our sincere thanks to all our members for your support and with best wishes for 2021.

Susan Belton

Worthing Society Chairman

LISTING AND CONSERVATION AREAS SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

MEMBERS: Sue Belton (Chair), Natalie Cropper, David Clark, John Head and, by invitation,Tony Malone

The Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Sub-Committee is the 'engine room' of the Society, reviewing and commenting on planning applications which affect our heritage assets. This work is the core element of our Constitution. The Team regularly review the Weekly Planning Lists and comment on an average of two applications per week. Their work has continued throughout these difficult times. I am indebted to LCAS members for their dedication and necessary technical expertise throughout this difficult year. Their knowledge of the relevant planning legislation such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, are vital tools in protecting Worthing's heritage.

Representations have been made on several applications involving listed buildings or conservation areas. In some cases this may have been an objection, or possibly an advisory statement submitted to the Council's Case Officers to influence improved or revised designs.

LCAS have also contributed valuable comments on the larger applications affecting the character of the town including Union Place, the Worthing Integrated Health Centre (WICC) and Goring Gap. In addition, the Team has established a good rapport with the Council's Design and Conservation Architect and we hope to re-establish our valuable liaison meetings when circumstances permit.

During the lockdown, I have submitted an application to designate Marine Gardens and Environs to become the twenty-seventh Conservation Area for Worthing. The unique layout of the roads surrounding the historic gardens display interesting examples of architecture from both the Art Deco period and distinctive inter-war periods.

A further submission has been made to extend the eastern boundary of the Steyne Gardens Conservation Area to include Beach House Park, Beach House and Grounds, as well as the Lifeboat Memorial Garden at Splash Point. These proposals are being considered. The formal appraisal visits by the Council will hopefully take place later in the year when the easing of Covid 19 protocol permits. If approved, the new designation will afford an extra layer of protection and recognition to these important heritage assets which chart the development of the town.

LCAS have also submitted an application for an Art Deco style house called Winchelsea, opposite Marine Gardens, to be included on the Local Interest List. Not all buildings qualify for Statutory Listing, particularly if some changes have been made. Nevertheless, they remain important to the development of this town, and the Local List is an important tool in recording Worthing's unique heritage.

Throughout these challenging times, LCAS will continue to safeguard the character of the town, identify further heritage assets and continue to act as a watchdog for future developments.

Susan Belton

GETTING CASTLE GORING INTO THE NATIONAL PARK

The South Downs National Park has now existed for a decade, and the opposition to its establishment that was shown by West Sussex County Council and Arun District Council, among others, has become muted. Worthing Borough Council did not oppose its establishment.

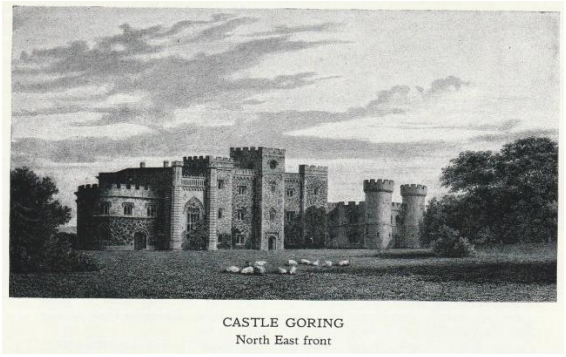
The Society strongly supported the Park's establishment. Its main concern was to get Castle Goring and its parkland included in the Park, because the boundary proposed in 2002 left them outside the Park.

When the Public Inquiry into the establishment of the Park started work in 2003, the Society, in conjunction with three other local amenity societies, therefore proposed that the boundary should be amended to include Castle Goring. Surprisingly, the Countryside Agency (now Natural England), which was presenting the case

for establishing the Park, opposed our proposal because it considered that the land around Castle Goring lacked “South Downs character”. The inspector who was conducting the Inquiry, Robert Parry, was not very impressed by this argument but accepted that the area could not pass the test of providing a good recreational experience because there was no public right of way across the land. He therefore recommended that Castle Goring should be left outside the Park in his report of March 2006.

The Inquiry was reconvened in February 2008. In the meantime, the legal basis for selecting land for inclusion in a Park had been changed by a judgment of the Court of Appeal and a revising act of 2006. Land that was not crossed by a right of way could now be included in a Park, and the quality of the landscape became more important than its character. The Inspector therefore recommended that Castle Goring and the adjoining parkland and woods should be incorporated in the Park. The owners of Castle Goring, the Somerset family, and the West Durrington Consortium objected to its inclusion, but the Inspector rejected their arguments after a final session of the Inquiry in August 2009. So we succeeded, after seven years’ work.

David Sawers



CASTLE GORING
North East front

CASTLE GORING
rear facade

A NOTE ON PUBLICITY

It has been a quiet few months on publicity. We have continued using the key tools in our kit bag for keeping us relevant to the wider community – monthly Worthing Journal articles and letters to The Herald. Jessica Gill wrote an excellent article for the Journal on the future of the Town Centre.

There continues to be a nagging worry that Worthing Borough Council are so keen to secure new development for the town that schemes are being approved where the bulk and mass will later prove to be unsightly – Teville Gate and Union Place being the obvious candidates. I suspect major campaigns to improve proposed developments are not far off. This will be easier post lockdown!

I hope we will manage at least one Blue Plaque in 2021, which will help raise our profile. We will also be supporting the Ellen Chapman plaque that the Mayor is planning for this year. Ellen Chapman was a suffragist and first Lady Mayor of Worthing. We hope to be getting out into the community with our talks later in 2021, when safety permits, and are also planning to take a stall at the Farmers Market on the Goring Road one Saturday to publicise our work and recruit new members.

David Clark
PUBLICITY OFFICER

A THOUGHT FROM THE PRESIDENT

I ended my article in the last (August 2020) Newsletter by reminding all of us what our main remit is; what tools we have in order to fulfil that remit and my belief that, especially at this time, we should focus on our main purpose and resist the temptations to divert our attention onto side issues. I try to put this into practice whenever I can in my Worthing Society work and I do find it helpful. I know only too well how easy it is to get side-tracked. By doing this, we may not cover so many issues but we can make a significant impact on where it really matters.

When I became President I was keen that the role should be an active one as I saw no satisfaction in just being the name on the official letter heading! I discussed this with our Chairman, Susan Belton, and we both came to the conclusion that it would be mutually beneficial for me to act as her adviser/consultant and we have continued to work this way ever since. I find that it gives me the opportunity to keep aware of our current 'portfolio' as well as giving me the opportunity to air my views on the topic in question. On the basis that two heads are (sometimes) better than one, I hope that the Chairman finds it helpful to have me to act as a 'sounding-board'.

For quite some time it has been evident to me, and I'm sure to the Officers and Members of our Executive Committee, that the Society's workload has been increasing year on year. The number of large, often controversial, proposals that now regularly land on our desks are a case in point. Substantial examples of just some of these during 2020 and in 2021 so far include: The Goring Gap/Chatsmore Farm plans; Union Place development; the Gas Works site, Lyndhurst Road redevelopment proposals and the Planning White Paper. These are all substantial and important issues and are just a sample of the kind of things which regularly cross our desks. I am sure that more will be said about these and other cases elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Tony Malone

President

WORTHING'S FISHING HERITAGE

We have received representations from Society members and local fishermen concerned that the traditional lockers may be removed from the beach. Through the grapevine it has been suggested that the traditional lockers are likely to be relocated and replaced by modern plastic units, although the Council say there are no such plans at the moment. The local fishing community applied to have the lockers listed as a Community Asset; however, the purpose of community assets is ultimately to give the community the right to buy if the Council decides to sell, which is not possible for a public beach, so it is unlikely that this will be approved. The Council, however, has confirmed that the lockers are an important part of our heritage and culture. Having said this, they also noted that sea defence work may necessitate relocation of the lockers. It is difficult to imagine where these lockers could be relocated and remain useful to the fishermen who still use them.

For centuries, fishing families in Worthing have contributed to and shaped our town. From the town's earliest Saxon settlements in the fifth century to the modern age, fishing has always been part of Worthing's ways to sustain its population. And, until recently, visitors to the shore would have welcomed the boats back some early mornings, with the fishermen pushing the boats up the shingle beach after spending hours out at sea catching bream, cod, huss or cuttlefish depending on the season.

However, this sight has become rarer over time. Fewer and fewer boats are seen going out to sea and our unique beach launch fishing fleet is quietly disappearing. The fishermen that remain now either fish from harbours along the coast such as Shoreham, Littlehampton and Brighton, or have stopped fishing altogether. These lockers are the last connection to our fishing past and we consider them as heritage assets. There is still a tradition of local fish being sold from these lockers and they contribute positively to the enjoyment of the 'public realm' and their presence is appreciated by residents and visitors alike.

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The East Beach area has recently been regenerated and the presence of local fishermen echoes the maritime history of Worthing, and connects to the recent dedication of the Lifeboat Memorial Garden at

Splashpoint. Many local families today can trace family members who, in acts of heroism, manned the early open lifeboats. These men were local fishermen who went to sea in open boats before the formation of the RNLI.

The last full-time fishermen stopped working on Worthing's beach in 2015, and their heritage along with their small scale fishing techniques and their traditions are disappearing fast. There has never been more urgency to preserve the fishing heritage in Worthing, and to record and share the memories and experiences of the town's long-time fishing families. Fortunately this has been done by The Food Pioneers through the digital hub called "The Last Fisherman Standing" (https://www.lastfishermanstanding.org.uk). An excellent film has also been made and can be viewed on YouTube: https://youtube/7TzVpd_BBt4.

These lockers are the last physical link to a valuable part of Worthing's unique social heritage and must be retained.

Jessica Gill

VICE CHAIRMAN

AN APPRECIATION - LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARD AND RECOGNITION OF LONG SERVICE

The Newsletter affords me the opportunity to express an appreciation for the dedication by long serving Committee members to the conservation work of the Society. Their commitment and expertise as conservationists over many years has been invaluable.

The Worthing Society President, Chairman and Committee have unanimously agreed to award a Life Membership to our former Trustee and Vice-Chair, Edward Kennard. Ted, as the Committee affectionately know him, has now retired from Society work and the role of Trustee. However, during his career he led the Society's 2007 Campaign to save The Desert Quartet sculptures for Worthing. Ted was then instrumental in founding the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Sub-Committee (LCAS) which underpins our core work. From 2016 until his retirement in 2018, Ted was the Chair of LCAS and the Vice-Chairman of the Society. We are delighted to award this well-deserved honour.

We also recognise the long service and achievements of our colleague and Trustee, Natalie Cropper, who is a much valued member of LCAS. A true conservationist, Natalie was a member of the pioneering Worthing Civic Society, working with Pat Baring on the major Campaign to save Beach House. Natalie then became a founder member of The Worthing Society in 1982, joining the Committee from its inception and previously held the roles of Secretary and Treasurer.

Conservation work is rewarding, yet demanding, requiring commitment and skill, qualities which both Natalie and Ted have in abundance.

The President joins me in thanking them both for all their years of dedicated service to the Society.

Susan Belton

Chairman

Highdown 1925
(looking north to Sterns and Highdown Ring)
(photo courtesy of Ferring Conservation Society)

Highdown 2020
(looking south to the proposed Chatsmore Farm/Goring Gap development)

THE WORTHING SOCIETY EVENTS FOR 2021

FEB - Tuesday 23rd - QUARTERLY MEETING - CANCELLED

APR - AGM - RESCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER

SEP - Tuesday 28th at 7:30pm. AGM at the Ardington Hotel, Steyne Gardens, Worthing, followed by Lecture.

Speaker: Sue Standing on 'A GLIMPSE OF HIDDEN HEENE'

Doors open at 7pm - if possible Coffee / Tea and Biscuits will be available ……Cost £1.50

NOV - Tuesday 23rd at 7:30pm. QUARTERLY MEETING at the Ardington Hotel, Steyne Gardens, Worthing, followed by Lecture.

Speaker: TBA

Doors open at 7pm - if possible Coffee / Tea and Mince Pies will be available……..Cost £1.50

DEC - CHRISTMAS LUNCH at the Arundel Restaurant , Northbrook College, Littlehampton Road, Worthing…….Date and Cost TBA

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.

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)