THE WORTHING SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER
AUTUMN/WINTER 2022

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David Sawers	Advisor on Policy
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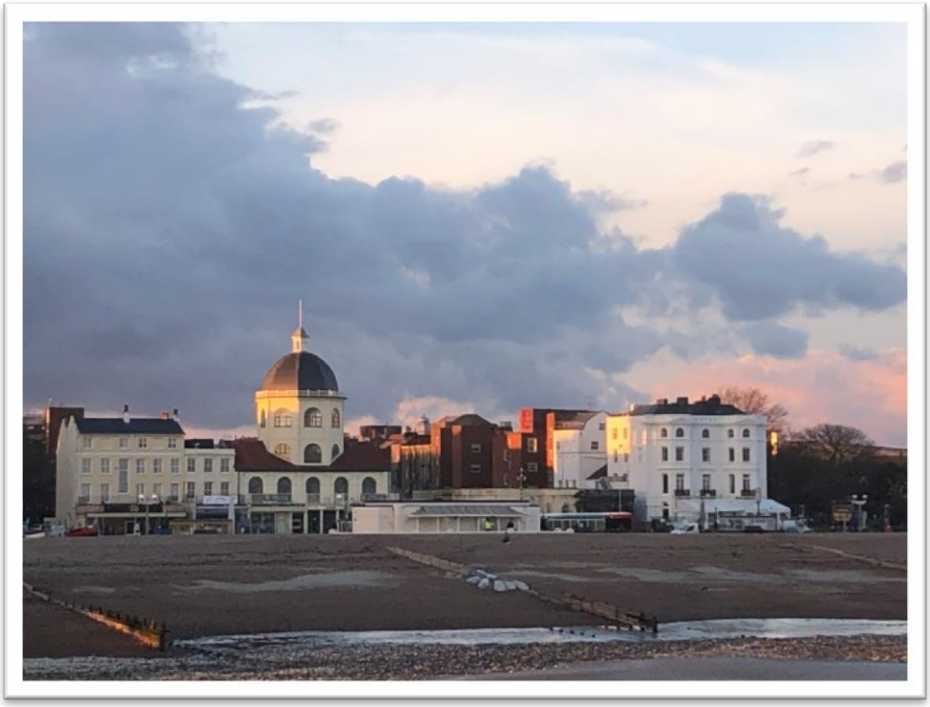
OUR 40th ANNIVERSARY EDITION



THE DOME, WORTHING

(SAVED BY THE WORTHING SOCIETY)

Please note that The Dome Function Room will be our venue for future Quarterly Members Meetings, commencing on Tuesday, 27th September 2022 at 7.30pm. Meetings will be held in the spacious first floor Function Room with beautiful views over the seafront. There is a small lift for use and there will be teas/coffees/cold drinks available, as usual.

We thank Mr Paul Jervis, owner of The Dome, and the Dome Management Team for accommodating us in this historic, Grade II* Listed building. It is a most appropriate venue for our Fortieth Anniversary Year.

Susan Belton

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

I would like to thank members for their ongoing loyal support during a difficult period. This means a very great deal to the Committee who are working hard.

Our membership renewals have gone very well and I am pleased to note that several new members have recently joined us. We also thank Mr Adrian and Mrs Susan Dawes for their generous donation to the Society.

If you know a friend or relative who is interested in protecting Worthing's heritage, please suggest they look at our website and consider becoming a member of the Society. By increasing our membership numbers we increase our presence in the town. This year we celebrate the Fortieth Anniversary of the Society which is a tremendous achievement.

I hope you will enjoy our forthcoming events which are shown on Page 8 of our Newsletter. We are delighted that our future Quarterly Members Meetings will be held at The Dome, and look forward to seeing you there for our next meeting on Thursday, 27 September, 2022 at 7.30pm (Doors open 7pm).

Brenda Whitmell

Membership Secretary

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – 40th ANNIVERSARY OF THE WORTHING SOCIETY

This year we celebrate the fortieth anniversary of The Worthing Society which is a considerable achievement. The role of the conservationist is both necessary and ever more challenging. It is time to reflect, I feel, on what has been already been achieved and how we can defend both our built heritage and green infrastructure for this and future generations.

I thought it would be helpful to give some background to the Society for our new members. The Worthing Society, originally the Worthing Civic Society, was founded in 1973 by the pioneer conservationist, Mrs Patricia Baring, known as the 'battle axe'!. At the time Mrs Baring retired to Worthing many buildings of historical and architectural interest had already been demolished. Her presence in Worthing marked the beginning of an organised conservation movement. Mrs Baring's most famous and significant campaign was the saving of the Grade II* Listed Beach House.

Following Mrs Barings death in 1982, the Worthing Society was formed and carried on her principles of conserving the town's unique heritage. Mrs Baring's legacy remains the inspiration for our work. This was exemplified by the Campaign to 'Save the Dome' led by Society members Rob Blann, John Head and Robin King wo raised a petition of 35,000 signatures during the late 1980's when the Council owned building was under threat of demolition. Due to their determined efforts, Grade ll* Listed status was awarded in 1989 giving the building statutory protection. The grading reflects both its architectural and historical interest.

Since its inception, the Society has been responsible for, or primarily instrumental in, gaining the protection of statutory listing for a number of significant buildings. These include The Burlington, Rustington Convalescent Home and Stanford's Cottage (Pizza Express). The Desert Quartet sculptures, by the late Dame Elizabeth Frink, were saved for the town following a Campaign led by the Society. Worthing would look very different today without the work and commitment of the Society to preserve these iconic buildings.

Planning issues and the quality of future large scale developments in the town such as Union Place, Teville Gate and the former Gas Works Site will be our future challenges. We believe that it is increasingly important to ensure, as far as possible, that good design should be a necessary requirement of planning approval. The Society has fostered good working relationships with Worthing Council and we are invited as a 'consultee' to comment on planning applications. Whenever the Society opposes a development, we make a point not simply to express opposition but to offer constructive suggestions. The aim is to balance change in the heritage environment.

Our Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Sub-Committee (LCAS) was created in 2015. The Case Workers regularly monitor weekly planning applications affecting our heritage buildings and conservation areas. LCAS Is the 'engine room' of the Society maintaining our core work and has proved particularly effective. The dedicated LCAS Team have developed an excellent level of expertise in planning matters. They have also contributed to Worthing's emerging Local Plan to highlight the importance our remaining built heritage and measures to protect green infrastructure.

Over the years, our conservation work has extended to the protection of the open green spaces which form part of our legacy to future generations. The Society has successfully led Campaigns to protect Titnore Lane and the ancient woodland and supported the establishment of the South Downs National Park (SDNP). Our colleague, David Sawers, represented us at the Hearings securing the inclusion of Grade I Listed Castle Goring, which adds to the historical character of the SDNP. Other colleagues were active in preserving the Goring Greensward, important to the coastal heritage and character of the area. The protection of our green infrastructure has become an increasingly urgent concern. This was highlighted by the planning application to build 475 dwellings at Chatsmore Farm, the 'green lung' between Goring and Ferring. I spoke at the Public Enquiry for the Chatsmore Farm Appeal by Persimmon. Although this was allowed, the Council took the case to the High Court and the decision was revoked on procedural grounds.

Although there is an undoubted need for new homes, the housing targets must, in future, be assessed on a fairer basis taking into account the geographical features of our area, basically a narrow coastal strip bordered by the South Downs National Park. On a national level, Worthing has one of the lowest ratios of open green space and it is irreplaceable!

Another of our current challenges is to represent the value of conservation work in a more visual and inclusive way which will encourage new members to join. To achieve this, the Society has played a key role in donating Blue Plaques, which commemorate notable people, buildings or events during the town's history. A heritage trail has been developed linking our historic buildings to the social history of Worthing. The dedication of the Lifeboat Memorial Garden honoured the heroism of Worthing's early lifeboat men. We also offer Heritage Talks to local groups and societies to engage with the local community and colleges.

Much has been achieved since 1982 but serious challenges still remain. I am confident that with the expertise of our President, Executive Committee and LCAS Heritage team, together with our loyal members, we are up to the challenge!

We are all 'guardians' of our heritage and the work of the conservationist has never been more needed.

We hope our recently upgraded website will be of interest, easy to navigate and that you will enjoy the new layout. I am grateful to Barry Richards for his expertise in developing our original website and the online Blue Plaque Heritage Trail which continues to extend. Our Website is there to keep you up to date and highlight the issues affecting our heritage.

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 (LCAS) is the "engine room" of the Society and was initiated in 2015 by our former Vice-Chairman, Ted Kennard. LCAS have continued to check and comment, where necessary, on planning applications submitted to Worthing Borough Council and our meetings are usually attended by the Council's Conservation Officer, Richard Small. The importance of LCAS has increased in the unfortunate absence of the Conservation Areas Advisory Committee, which ceased to

meet during the COVID pandemic and has not yet been re-instated.

Some of our more important and ongoing concerns are:

DEBENHAMS STORE, SOUTH STREET, WORTHING

The Worthing Society was invited by the owner of the former Debenhams store, Paul Craig, to give our views on his proposal for conversion of the building into flats, retaining retail on the ground and possibly first floors. He intends to extend the building by increasing the height of the main block fronting South Street and at the rear fronting Marine Place. Susan Belton, Natalie Cropper and I attended a meeting with Mr Craig at the site and we were shown over every inch of the building. We advised him of our views and suggested some alterations that we considered would improve the proposed design and also on what features of the existing building (mainly interior metalwork and a glass dome rooflight) should be retained. The proposals would retain the important art deco design of the building and we advised that we could broadly support them. There has not yet been a formal planning application.

HESLINGTON HOUSE, RICHMOND ROAD, WORTHING

This early Victorian villa (c.1845), which is Listed Grade II, has been vacant for a number of years. It has been the subject of various planning applications and has permission for conversion to provide 8 flats. There continue to be applications for approval of various details in connection with this, but no work has yet been started and we are concerned about the deterioration of the building. We are continuing to keep the situation under review and are in contact with the Council's Conservation Officer and Enforcement Officer.

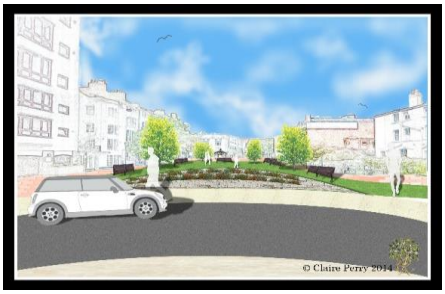
THE GOSPEL HALL, BEDFORD ROW, WORTHING

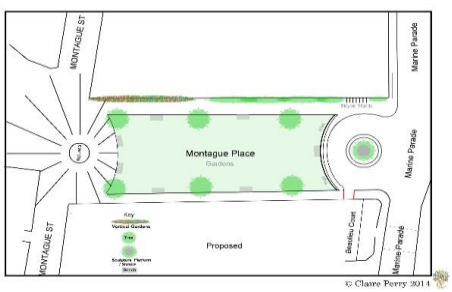
This former chapel, c1850, by Charles Hyde, is on the Local List of buildings of architectural or historic interest. It is next to Listed Buildings and close to the seafront, and its present, boarded up, condition has a negative impact on the surrounding Conservation Area. At one time the building was the first centre in Worthing for the YMCA. It has been vacant for many years and there have been applications to demolish and build flats, which have been refused. It is likely that the owner, who lives in Hove, is keeping the building vacant and waiting a chance for redevelopment. We are keeping an eye on its condition and have involved the Council's Enforcement Officer and Environmental Health team on a number of occasions, particularly when there has been fly tipping at the site. The building is small, which restricts future uses, but conversion to a single dwelling seems a possibility, or a small-scale commercial/office use.

THE LIDO, MARINE PARADE, WORTHING

The Lido is a Grade II Listed Building dating from 1925, by the architects Adshead & Ramsey, who also designed the Pier Pavilion, of similar date. Stanley Adshead was a prominent architect with classical training who was responsible, in 1904, for Albion Terrace (Nos 205-211) Brighton Road, also Listed Grade II. His design for The Lido has a steel sub-structure which now requires repair due to exposure to the effects of the sea (and possibly inadequate maintenance in the past). An original suggestion to infill underneath with solid concrete has been objected to by The Worthing Society and by Historic England as harming the architectural importance of the building and a better solution is being investigated by Historic England's consulting engineers and those instructed by the Council. The Conservation Officer is involved and we are monitoring the situation. Suggestions have been made to re-instate the open-air swimming pool but this would require some alteration to the frontage to Marine Parade.

MONTAGUE PLACE ALTERATIONS





The supposed temporary alterations made to Montague Place have been well publicised and seem to have met with almost universal criticism and bemusement. The squiggly lines (top right) have recently been covered by wooden planters and "parklet" benches, which add to the general confused appearance that has been created. The Worthing Society has always felt that this area should have soft landscaping, as a continuation of the Liverpool Terrace gardens towards the seafront and as a reinstatement of the gardens that would have originally served and acted as a setting for the early 19th century buildings on the west side. The illustrations show a scheme prepared by the Society some years ago, which is worthy of fresh consideration as part of the Council's proposed community involvement in the future of Montague Place. We have been promised a proper consultation before any "permanent" changes are made and will strive to make sure that this takes place. As part of our proposals we would also like to see the reinstatement of a rotunda and the removal of the unsightly "sails", modern street furniture and exposed concrete that have been installed at Holders Corner as part of the previous "improvement".

John Head BSc(Econ), DipTP, MRTPI(Retd)
Planning Consultant to the Society

A NOTE ON PUBLICITY

We are currently focused on updating the Town Centre Blue Plaque Heritage Trail. Over the past two years we have overseen blue plaques for Angela Barnwell, Ellen Chapman, Carl Seebold, Sgt Walter Harrold MM and Sir Frederick and Lady Stern, most of which should be part of the walking trail. A new leaflet is needed and an update to the website. We are also considering whether to set up a monthly guided walk along the trail for visitors and residents alike – more on this next time.

The launch of our new website has given us the opportunity to better publicise our heritage talks which are Buildings Lost and Saved, The History of Beach House, Jane Austen - The Worthing Connection and A walk along Worthing Seafront. Sue and I continue to take these out to community groups.

Finally, I am acutely aware that we need to boost our membership as we emerge from the restrictions imposed by Covid. The first step will be to explore options to make it easier to join and pay e.g. young people, in particular, like to use technology rather than paperwork. Some sort of campaign can then be launched.

David Clark

PUBLICITY OFFICER

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my thanks to our President and the Executive Committee for their unstinting support during the last two very difficult years. We also extend our appreciation to Sir Peter Bottomley, one of our life members, for his unstinting support during the Campaign to protect Chatsmore Farm.

Susan Belton

Chairman

PRESIDENT'S THOUGHTS

A TRIBUTE TO ESME EVANS
1943 – 2022

Esme was a valued, very loyal and helpful member of the Worthing Society; in fact she was a founder member and Secretary of the Society. Many of you, like me, may recall seeing her at Worthing Library where she worked for many years and even asking for her help when researching a particular subject. She took a great interest in our local heritage and conservation work and could always be found busily helping out and cheerily chatting to members at our meetings.

Tony Malone
President

It has already been a hard enough year for all of us, so I have chosen to look in the opposite direction at some of the good things that our Society have been involved in, or achieved (and are still achieving) in 2022. Here is just one example which made the news on television and on the radio. Our local press featured it repeatedly and highlighted the fact that the Worthing Society and Ferring Conservation Group, plus Sir Peter Bottomley MP and other worthies and local groups had all campaigned together to stop the Goring Gap housing development.

In the High Court, on the 1st August 2022, a High Court judge (Mrs Justice Lang) found in favour of Worthing Borough Council **against** the Government and the developer, Persimmon Homes.

Mrs Justice Lang quashed a previous decision by a public inquiry inspector to give the development scheme at Chatsmore Farm, Goring, the 'go ahead'. She ruled that the inspector had not given enough consideration to the impact that such a large scheme for 475 homes in the Goring Gap, an invaluable and rare green space, would have made on the setting of the South Downs National Park and the view from within it.

A delighted Worthing Borough Council Leader, Dr Beccy Cooper, was quoted as saying "I am pleased to see that the voices of the community have been heard in this appeal" and "we remain committed to protecting our green spaces".

A good news story and one that we can be proud of.

Tony Malone
President

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Please note that our new venue for meetings is:
The Function Room, Dome Cinema, Marine Parade, Worthing, BN11 3PT

2022

SEP - Tuesday, 27th at 7:30pm QUARTERLY MEETING in the Function Room at the Dome Cinema, Worthing.

Doors open at 7pm.
Coffee /Tea will be served – Cost £2.00 There will be a bar for cold drinks.

SPEAKER: Craig Daters, Lead Ranger, Central Downs Ranger Team of South Downs National Park.

NOV - Tuesday, 22nd at 7:30pm QUARTERLY MEETING in the Function Room at the Dome Cinema, Worthing.

Doors open at 7pm.
Coffee /Tea will be served – Cost £2.00 There will be a bar for cold drinks.

This is our 40th Anniversary Celebration when cake will be served (no mince pies this year!) A pre-Christmas raffle will take place – donations of raffle prizes will be very much appreciated.

SPEAKER: Andy Thomas on "Lewes and Bonfire Night".

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

2023

FEB - Tuesday, 28th at 7:30pm QUARTERLY MEETING in the Function Room at the Dome Cinema, Worthing.

Doors open at 7pm.
Coffee /Tea will be served – Cost £2.00 There will be a bar for cold drinks.

FILM SHOW: A Topical Film Show by Southdowns Film Makers

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 £3.00

Don't forget to look at our Website for the latest news
www.worthingsociety.org.uk

and if you want to email the Executive Committee, our email address is
worthingsociety@yahoo.co.uk

For membership enquiries please contact our Membership Secretary
Brenda Whitmell (Email: bcwhitmell@uwclub.net)