



KEMP TOWN SOCIETY



SPRING INTO SUMMER NEWSLETTER

From the Chairman

It was very good to see such an enthusiastic turn-out of members and their guests at the Brighton Youth Orchestra Concert and Dinner at St George's on Saturday 10th March (for the record, 65 people and one dog, Pepita). We enjoyed a programme of mainly English string music from the orchestra's String Ensemble, framed by Purcell arrangements, impressively played from memory. The centerpiece was Gerald Finzi's lyrical and very English "Eclogue" for piano and strings, with Rachel Fryer as the sensitive soloist, who also played three solo pieces afterwards. A buoyant and exciting "Toccata for Strings" by John Ireland contrasted vividly with a beautifully poised "Theme and Variations" by the Russian Glazunov.

We value our association with this talented section of the BYO, along with their legendary director Andy Sherwood, and are delighted to support them through the Encore network. St George's has an acoustic that enhances their very polished sound, and is also a fitting and elegant venue for this format of music followed by dinner, which Vanessa Minns works tirelessly to co-ordinate.

I am very pleased to announce that we are to receive a legacy from the late Alexander Bruce, a long-time resident of Sussex Square and supporter of KTS, who died last November. He left £20,000 to the Kemp Town Society "for conservation purposes". We are naturally grateful to Alex for this act of generosity and I am anxious that it should be used for a project that is acceptable to as many members as possible. The committee has given some thought to what might be done as an appropriate legacy, bearing in mind that it is for the Society rather than the Enclosures, and has compiled a list of four possible projects, which are, in no particular order:



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Restoring the Temple at the east end of the Esplanade

This building, still retaining traces of elegance, was built as a shelter in 1835, as part of Thomas Kemp's original design for the Estate. It has fallen into disrepair in recent years and become favoured by rough sleepers and graffiti artists. Such a project would probably require supplementary funding and then security measures to ensure that, once restored, it is maintained as it should be.

Improving the street lighting on the Estate

The council has already undertaken to convert street lights in Kemp Town to LED, which has produced some startling illumination, not least on the one lamp-post that has so far been converted in Lewes Crescent. Many feel that the lamp-posts themselves, which are by no means a matching set, would benefit from restoration and repair. That might be a further possible project.

Signage

In order to highlight the architectural history of Kemp Town, one suggestion is to have 6 noticeboards at various points around the perimeter of the Enclosures with space to publicise forthcoming events (rather than have notices flapping on the gates). These

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Kemp Town Society

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would also help to give an outline of the scale and history of the conservation area.

Improving the safety and appearance of pavements

Many members are concerned about the unevenness of the paving stones around the Estate; they are also horrified by the jarring effect of the new paving along Chichester Terrace, which I fear we can do nothing to rectify. Although of course the state of the pavements is the remit of the council, we would be interested to explore what steps might be taken to improve the safety and appearance of the paving.

We would be very glad to hear members' views on the above and any other possible projects. Please respond in advance of the AGM on 12th May, so that we have some clear proposals to put to the meeting.

The Agenda for the AGM will be circulated in due course. We will also be joined for part of the meeting by Sarah Chamberlain, the new Director of the EF Language School, who is anxious to hear from members how we can best live harmoniously with our most populous neighbour!

Simon Smith



Artist's Corner

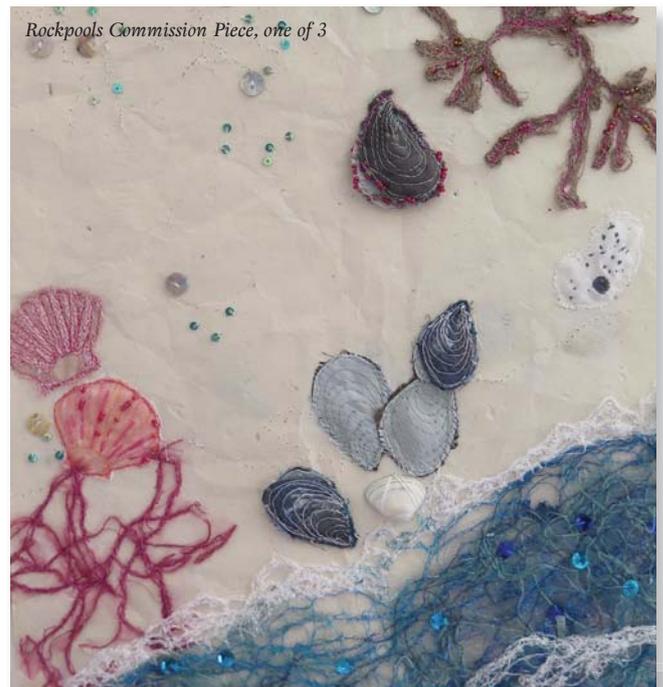
Kemp Town is full of wonderfully creative minds and hands. Just contact annwroe@economist.com to talk about your work, and display it, here.

Anna Liversidge, textile artist

"My fascination with art began at an early age. My happiest moments have always been when my hands are busy making. I was encouraged by lovely teachers to go to art college. I had visions of being a photographer or a ceramicist, but for a long time nothing clicked. Textiles were the last thing on my mind. Growing up surrounded by dressmakers, I had thought sewing was quite boring, and I had no aptitude for garment construction. But one day we had a visiting tutor who taught a machine embroidery workshop, and I was immediately captivated. The speed, possibilities, textures and sculptural elements were like magic.

"Twenty years later embroidery and textiles still fascinate me. I love to combine hand and machine embroidery to create texture. Working on the machine can be described like drawing with a needle: the darning foot is used and you can go in any direction. I enjoy working with water-soluble fabric which washes away completely, leaving only the stitched threads. I use this technique to create my lace vessels.

"I am drawn to subtle colours and small delicate details. Nature is my inspiration, and living in Lewes Crescent provides plenty, with the sea on the doorstep and the stunning gardens. I love the changing colours of the sky and watching the tides and what is left behind on the beach. My ideas and inspiration are plentiful; I only wish there were more hours in the day, as embroidery is something that takes its time. If you would like to see more of my work, I post daily on Instagram."



Who's Been Living in My House ?



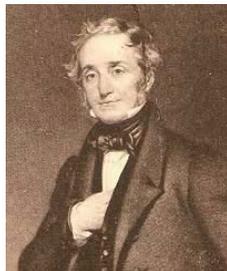
The website has recently been given a wonderful series of "Memories of Kemp Town" published in the Brighton Gazette in 1892. It has also received an extraordinary transcript of "Memoirs of Somers Clarke", Clerk of the Brighton Vestry (1830-1892) and a prominent solicitor in the town, painstakingly transcribed from the original by Andrew Doig, to whom we are extremely grateful.

If you enjoy these fascinating glimpses of some of the real lives of residents of Kemp Town in the early days, visit www.kemptonstatehistories.com or www.kempton-society.org.uk. There you will find many more among the articles on the Estate page. Or check out your House History; some of these folk may have lived in your house !

Three extracts from "Memories of Kemp Town"

Cubitt's bell goes to Pimlico

"A great many still living will remember Cubbitt's bell. It ceased to ring in 1860, being then transferred to the factory at Thames Bank, Pimlico, London. Only one man could ring this bell properly, namely, the foreman of the labourers, old James Dyer, he seemed almost to make it speak. No public clock was wanted in Kemp Town in those days. Servants attended to their duties by 'Cubbitt's bell' and many persons timed their watches by it. I have heard its sound on a fine summer's morning, when the wind was easterly, as far down as Grand Parade.



Thomas Cubitt

Kemp Town clergy

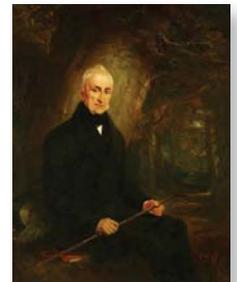
"The late Rev. H. N. Goulty of Union Chapel and Extra Mural Cemetery fame, after his migration from Western Road (at the corner of Regent Hill) lived in Kemp Town for many years. He had a most singular antipathy to Burns's little 'bonnie gem'. The sight of the daisy in the greensward of the Kemp Town Enclosures had the same effect on him that the sight of a Frenchman did upon Nelson. It gave him nervous twitchings. Many passages of arms did the rev. gentleman have with the burly old gardener upon the subject and finally the daisies had to quit.

[H N Goulty, 2 Sussex Square, 1859-1867]

The old Marquis

"Well, too, I remember the old Marquis of Bristol. I have seen old women waiting for him to come to the Eastern Road corner of the square, and then change their shawls, bonnets etc, run down the back way to Lewes Crescent, and get another dole there. It was amusing to see the old man joggling along on his pony, with his big black dog running after him. If he thought the dog tired, he would put out his stirrup foot and the dog would leap from the foot to the horse's back, and the old man would clutch him under his arm, and so, with his thin cheeks puffing, ride home with the great carcass."

[The 1st Marquis of Bristol, 19/20 Sussex Square, 1829-1844]



1st Marquis of Bristol

There is lots of space on Who's Been Living in My House--we still have about 20 houses with no Histories yet. Please send any contributions via the Contact Us facility.



Vanessa Minns
Editor, WBLMH

ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVENTS FORTHCOMING: SAVE THE DATES!

May 12th AGM of the Society at EF (the English School), 1-2 Sussex Square, at 10.30 am.

April 27th onwards Friday evening Get-togethers resume...

Alastair Hignell writes: If it's a Friday evening in summer, it must be...Actually, it mustn't be anything, except a chance to meet and chat with your neighbours. No rules, regulations or RSVPs. Just bring yourselves, your friends, your families, your visitors...come with a cuppa, a carafe or a quart... or nothing.. from 6 p.m... summer Fridays... North Gardens, Sussex Square... weather permitting.

June 14th Friends of St George's Church.

In St George's Church, St George's Road, Dr Sue Berry FSA will tell the remarkable story of **The Churches of Brighton c.1800-1914 - changing the old and building the new**. Doors open at 7 pm and the talk starts at 7.30. It will be followed by a light supper. Tickets £14 including supper, £7 for talk only. Cash bar available to all. Reserve seats by e-mailing friendsofstgeorgeschurch@gmail.com. From the last week in May, tickets will be available online through Eventbrite.co.uk



Saturday June 30th The Kemp Town Society's WHITE Garden Party!

In the North Garden, 12-4pm; admission free for members and children; £5 for non-members. All the usual enticements: bar, jazz band, raffle, bric a brac, history-and-heritage stall, Sue's scarves, children's games, food stall, tea & cake stall...

Wear white or cream, and please bring a plate of food for the Food Stall!

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS to help set up on **Friday June 29th from 2pm**, and clear up afterwards

- to make cakes, jam, etc, for the Cake Stall, and to donate second-hand books for the Book Stall (collection can be arranged, or bring on the day
- and especially to donate RAFFLE PRIZES! (Please let Rupert Bagilhole (rupertbagilhole@yahoo.co.uk) know about these well before June 30th. Collection can be arranged.)

Please send all other offers of help or questions about both the Garden Party and the Newsletter to annwroe@economist.com

Postscript: A Kemp Town Mystery

Our part of town is full of mysteries, from the disappearance of the Constable's bell in the tunnel, to the real day when recycling is meant to be collected, to the spine-tingling cries that rise from the Enclosures each night as dark falls. Here is another.

The half-a-postcard shown here turned up one evening on the front steps of 14 Lewes Crescent. There was no sign of the other half. The only writing on the back, upside down, is "1/- to pay". I reckon it has been on its way to me since the early 1920s.

Sleuth-friends tell me that the water damage along the tear shows it was torn up a long time ago. My presumption is that



someone was angry that this episode had been recorded: perhaps especially furious with the man who has also been torn in half, or with the tea-party itself.

True, it doesn't look a load of fun. The woman in the aggressively mannish costume, who has offended against etiquette by cradling her cup on her lap without the saucer, might even be Gertrude Jekyll. The contrast between her pork-pie hat, tie and glasses and the timid woman who is pouring, neat as a statue in her shiny stockings, is striking. Both are gazing with a distinct lack of enthusiasm at the cakes they are being offered---and indeed these are very small, even invisible. The waiter is so gaunt that he is in need of cake himself, and has probably devoured them on his way up from the Hammer-horror cave where he usually resides.

That's my interpretation. Does any reader know what was really going on, and who the people were, and where they were? Does anyone even have the other half? It would be interesting to hear!

Ann Wroe