



SPRING INTO SUMMER NEWSLETTER - EASTER 2017

A final word from your Chairman



Paul Phillips

When Derek Grainger, our honorary Vice-President and my near neighbour, approached me nine years ago with his congenial smile, I knew something was up. It was just a simple question: "Would I consider taking over the KTS Chairmanship?". I don't think I had been a member for a year!

However, I had one essential qualification: I loved Kemp Town. From the entrancing variations of wind-driven waves to the mirror glassiness of the unfolding seascapes, matched only by the ever-changing sky, there is little need for an art gallery here. My photograph, above, shows the most glorious sunset I have ever seen anywhere. There are days, of course, when wind and spray are too much to battle, but they cannot spoil the allure of this coastal realm. About 180 years ago, Thomas Reid Kemp envisaged the Estate as a place where leading members of London society could remove themselves from the squalor and grime of the City and enjoy the quest for health and sea bathing, following the royal example. Most of us will have been similarly drawn.

My family replaced their seaside home in Seaford for a Chichester Terrace property in 1973. I became the 3rd generation to take up residence, which carries with it something of a sense of inherent responsibility. My mother's small contribution to the Estate was to assist with the plantings along Chichester Terrace. "Such an improvement on dog-soiled grass!" she exclaimed, adding: "Why don't they exercise their dogs with a proper walk!".

There has always been a sense of shared ownership of the whole Estate. Its fine architecture, wrapped around its beautiful garden, expresses elegance and style and defiance of compromise. It took

great wealth and vision to create it. We are lucky inheritors of such gifts; and the Society helps to ensure they remain as they are, drawing together the more civic-minded to resist change for change's sake.

When Derek approached me about the chairmanship, I knew he meant business, as he had just suffered the regrettable loss of the "Brunswick" battle against the "stacked" planning committee, pledged to approve the "Benidorm" of Brighton, as he put it, in the Marina. I did ask for some guidance and the files. None ever came my way except encouraging conversations!

Starting with a blank piece of paper, I found a declining membership and an all-but-empty bank account. The Council considered the Estate a place of "privilege" and was not kindly disposed to the Society. Some councillors still think that way. However, with diligence gains are made. My first "win" was keeping communal bins out of the Estate, with the help of Tom Chavasse of Brunswick Terrace.....a battle, sadly, to be resumed again.

The struggle against inappropriate alterations or neglect, by both residents and the Council, demands constant monitoring. The first improvement I wanted was a website, so that at least there was some degree of 'ongoing news'; the fact that it has developed rather slowly is, alas, due to my own shortcomings in this area!

Second, I have always sought to engage with national bodies to assist with the bigger issues. Walking round the Estate with officials from English Heritage (now Historic England) was of great value to them and us (though, sadly, less now). The relationship was tested when we found ourselves battling the building of 1,300 flats on the Asda site in the Marina.

The first round of this battle was settled by a public inquiry. Supported by our local councillors, we won. Submission of our evidence demanded a level of planning research for which I had no previous experience, and unforgiving amount of very technical reading. I once did 48 hours on the trot! We were also up against

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the top planning barrister in the country. But it was exciting to extract statements from Brighton's own planning documents and aim them directly at the other side's claims. The famed planning barrister, now Judge Lindblom, told me at the end of the 54 days of sitting that he was sure I had a legal background and, most flatteringly, said I had used all the arguments he would have done if he had acted for KTS. With that, he invited me to his chambers! (The documents of the case make good reading for what will undoubtedly be a return match over Black Rock.) The moral is that unless we are supported by a national body in our arguments, we have almost no material effect when a determined developer is involved. We have neither the money nor the manpower to seek justice on the scale required.

It is vital, too, to be fully aware of how both politicians and

councillors write their documents. Planning statements are like fishing nets: devised to catch the attention of their audience (the fish!), but with holes wide enough to allow almost anything to slip through, should political imperatives demand it. The political imperative now is housing. So although the Council "aims" to promote the city's heritage, that is a flexible pledge, and is not their priority these days.

Stepping down as Chairman after nine years is something of a wrench. I want to thank the Society for the privilege of holding the post for so long, and thank the Committee, who are the Society's backbone. Your new Chairman, Simon Smith, is a strong and solid pair of hands who will be known to many of you; I wish him the very best as he takes the helm.

Brighton Marina - a new judicial review by Professor Robert Powell

On the 17th August 2016 I went to the High Court in London to request a new judicial review with reference to the development in the Marina. I was represented by George Laurence QC, who successfully argued before Mr Justice Singh that a case could be made to halt the development as it interferes with public rights of navigation.

The judicial review was considered by the High Court on the 22nd/23rd March this year, where I was again represented by George Laurence QC and Richard Buxton, solicitor advocate.

In 2014 and 2015 I was the claimant in an earlier judicial review in the High Court that aimed to halt the building of towers in Brighton Marina. My attempt was unsuccessful, and Phase 1 has subsequently been completed.

In January 2016 I took up an appointment as Professor of Architecture at a university in Malaysia and on 17th February 2017 I returned to Brighton for a short vacation. I immediately noticed that the orange and green site cabins of BAM Nuttall, the main contractor on Phase 2 of the Brunswick project, had been removed from the Black Rock compound. So where had they gone?

The usual answer in these circumstances is that there is a contract dispute, and I surmised that BAM Nuttall had not been paid. In fact, this is not far from the truth. An employee of BAM Nuttall confirmed to me on March 6th that they had demobilized, though they return from time to time to observe work on some "storm damage".

A visit to the website of Midgard filled in a few gaps in the story. In February they confirmed that they, and not BAM Nuttall, are back on the job in "partnership" with Brunswick. That would suggest they now have a financial interest in the project. According to their website, "The construction of the coffer dam is due to commence ... w/c 06/02/17...Work on the coffer dam and dewatering is expected to be completed by 21/06/17."

So it appears that the project is now "back on track". This fills me with despair, for I believe that the tower will be as mundane and uninteresting as the two blocks on the West Quay that have already been completed. Why does Brighton and Hove City Council Planning Department permit such third-rate architecture, which does nothing for the image of the city? It bears only a passing resemblance to the images produced by the original architects, Wilkinson Eyre. And please don't argue that it is solving Brighton's housing problems.



Meanwhile on February 28th, using delegated powers, officers of Brighton and Hove City Council Planning Department permitted a planning application to construct a line of steel deflection piles in the harbour entrance. They will mark the northern limit of the dredged channel. In my opinion this line of deflection piles, which support floating booms, will be a hazard to yachts and interfere with the public rights of navigation.

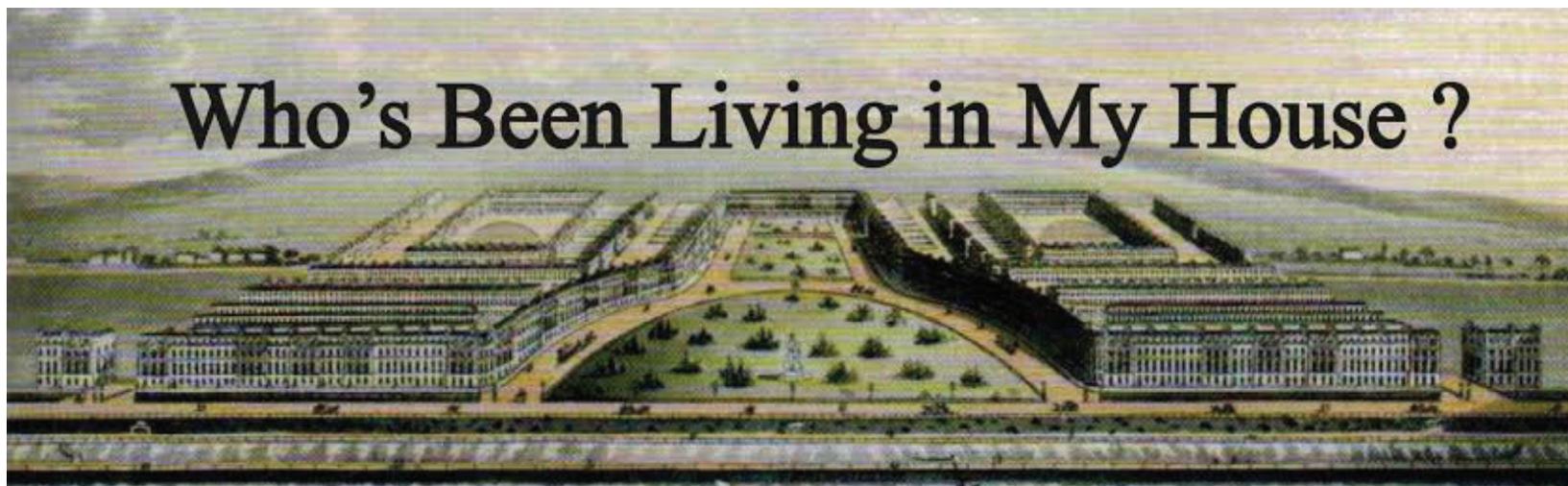
I have studied the drawings submitted to Brighton and Hove City Council by Hemsley Orrel Partnership. Though the drawing is conceptual, it is evident that the steel piles will be between 450mm and 600mm in diameter, and of sufficient height to project above the water level at high tide. They are in the approximate location of the present port (red) markers.

The floating booms have to move vertically some 7.5 metres with the tidal variation, but I believe the fixing detail is inadequate and will corrode over time in the marine environment. The line of steel piles also constitutes a hazard to vessels entering and leaving the harbour. Any vessel losing engine power could clash with them.

The predominant wind in the English Channel is from the south-west, and the narrowness of the navigable channel will make it extremely difficult for yachts to turn into the wind to lower their sails, as is common practice.

These points were argued in the High Court on the 22nd/23rd March 2017. As the newsletter went to press we were awaiting the ruling, but the judge seemed keenly interested in the case and asked many questions. Fingers crossed.

Who's Been Living in My House ?



Mitzi Solomon Cunliffe and Martin Battersby

These two fascinating artists both lived on the Estate at roughly the same time:



Mitzi Solomon Cunliffe lived at 8 Lewes Crescent with her husband Professor Marcus Cunliffe from 1966. She was an extremely successful sculptor; her large architectural pieces adorn many buildings, mainly in the Midlands. She is probably best known for her design of the BAFTA trophy.

Cunliffe originally modelled the mask in Plasticine, from which the casting moulds were made, and though based on the traditional concept of the theatrical tragicomic mask, it is more complex than its immediate facial appearance suggests. The hollow reverse of the mask bears an electronic symbol around one eye and a screen symbol around the other, linking dramatic production and television technology, and the full intention of Mitzi's original design included a revolving support to allow the mask to be turned and viewed easily from either side.

To read more go to www.kemptonestateshistories.com (Lewes Crescent/House Histories/8)

Martin Battersby (1914 - 1982), who lived in 36 Sussex Square, from 1964, was a distinguished and prolific artist in many different fields. As one of the leading exponents of the art of trompe l'oeil he received worldwide commissions. His many clients in America included the Carlyle Hotel in New York, for which he created the ballroom decor. Among his English patrons were Lady Diana Cooper and Evelyn Waugh, for both of whom Battersby composed commemorative screens containing memorabilia from their lives.



As prolific a writer as he was an artist, Battersby did much to foster interest in the decorative arts. His authoritative books on art deco, "The Decorative Twenties" and "The Decorative Thirties", also had a marked effect in popularising this particular style.

To read more go to www.kemptonestateshistories.com (Sussex Square/House Histories/36)

What's happening on Black Rock? Vaughan Rees of the KTS committee reports:

Simon Smith and I recently had a further meeting with Katherine Pearce, the relevant "Project Manager", to continue our conversation with city planners on the proposed development of the Black Rock site (aka the "Waterfront Project"). We were told that the Council is close to finalising a comprehensive agreement with Standard Life, who will be leading the development of both the Churchill Square and the Black Rock sites. The Council seems determined to construct a 10,000-seat conference/entertainment centre on an almost certainly enlarged Black Rock site, but currently this remains a "broad concept" and no more.

Later this year the Council intends to set up a Stakeholder Group (to include the KTS) for what would appear to be a lengthy consultation. Initially the Council will wish to discuss "key principles", and these will set the parameters for the planning of the development (possibly following an international competition). Both the Black Rock and Churchill

Square developments will then, in parallel, be subject to the usual planning consents. As you will have read, a government grant of £12m has recently been awarded for the Black Rock development. Apparently, this will meet the cost of "feasibility studies" and "enabling works", but on this Ms Pearce appeared somewhat vague.

In the medium-to-longer term Black Rock will undoubtedly be the most challenging issue to confront the KTS. Even at this early stage we must respond authoritatively and speedily to proposals as they come forward - and remain constantly vigilant!

Wind turbines: According to the latest Rampion newsletter, over this summer the turbines will be installed and begin operation. Turning sails should then become visible on the horizon out to sea. Not half as big an eyesore, though, as some that might be mentioned!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVENTS PAST....

Quiz Night and the Dinner-Concert

Two highly enjoyable events have been held in partnership with the Friends of St George's. On February 23rd, under the splendid and subtle questioning of Quizmaster Robert Snell, around 50 of us gave our brains a good workout, helped - or hindered - by delicious snacks and copious wine. The winning team, captained by Vaughan Rees (who was also in charge of the wine), featured several quizzers from the Camelford Arms and the editor of this Newsletter, but it was NOT a stitch-up. Definitely to be repeated!

On March 18th, on a grander note, we held a dinner-concert in beautifully decorated St George's, which put away its Lenten solemnity for the occasion. The Brighton Youth Orchestra played with verve and skill a widely varied programme, including music from Mexico and China alongside Handel and an especially lovely reading of Finzi's Clarinet Concerto by Mary Tyler. We then feasted on salmon tartlet and chicken Marengo prepared by Martin Auton Lloyd and his team. Thanks to everyone; and to Vanessa Minns and Sally Richardson for organising it!



... and EVENTS FORTHCOMING

The AGM of the Kemp Town Society will be held on Saturday May 6th at the English First School, 1-2 Sussex Square, from 10.30 to 12.30. See documents enclosed.

Future events at St George's

Thursday 8th June: 'In Search of Mozart' from Exhibition on Screen, introduced by Phil Grabsky, who will lead a short Q&A session after the film.

Tickets £12 (Concessions £10), including a light supper. Cash bar. Tickets available online from Eventbrite.

July 1st: The Garden Party!

As usual, volunteers are needed to help: not least because several of our stalwarts have moved away. Please come and help to set up on the FRIDAY afternoon, June 30th, and to take down on July 1st. On the day, please consider helping on a stall; it's great fun. If you can't spare so much time, please BAKE A CAKE, MAKE JAM, OR DONATE BOOKS AND CDS (And don't forget - bring a plate of finger food for the food stall!)

Especially needed this year is someone to RUN THE RAFFLE. We all enjoy it, but for years no one has provided prizes except the same half-dozen generous people; and no one has overseen it except the (somewhat overworked) general party organiser. Could you rustle up six or so real quality prizes, or even just one spectacular one that everyone will hope to win? You don't need to sit tediously on the stall, but could you and a friend sell tickets around the ground on the day? (A great way to meet your neighbours!) If no one comes forward, we shall do without it, but I think that would be a shame.

If you are able to do this, or to help on a stall, please let me know on annwroe@economist.com or 01273 624 011. I can take in any advance donations at 14 Lewes Crescent, or arrange to pick them up, if you give me a call. Thanks to all!

Ann Wroe

**COME TO THE
KEMP TOWN SOCIETY
GARDEN PARTY**

NORTH GARDEN

SATURDAY JULY 1ST 2017 12-4PM

ADMISSION £5 MEMBERS FREE

TEA & CAKES | SCARVES | BOOKS | BRIC A BRAC | JAZZ | RAFFLE
BRING-A-PLATE STALL | MAD HATTER BAR | CHILDREN'S GAMES

THEME: STRIPES!!

We want to make sure we keep in regular touch with our members – especially through our new e-mailing list – so please take a few minutes to complete and return our membership form which is included in this newsletter.

The form also allows you to boost your annual donations to KTS with a Gift Aid declaration which adds £2.50 to every £10 donation.

• If your e-mail address has changed in the past 2 years, please send your new one to Vanessa Minns at kemptownsociety@hotmail.com, headed "change of address", in order to get our alerts of events. Thank you!