

AUTUMN 2019 NEWSLETTER

A drone flies in Kemp Town

Many readers will know – and some lucky ones may even possess! – early 19th century engravings of the developers' dreams for Kemp Town. We now have a chance to see how closely reality continues to resemble those dreams, despite the famous troubles of Thomas Kemp, the vagaries of builders and the laxness of 20th-century city planners. The pictures on page 2, taken by Jon Purchase with his drone, show that the semicircular symmetry of Lewes Crescent and the angular beauty of Sussex Square are still wonderfully striking from the air, in sunshine or in snow.

Jon, who lives in Lewes Crescent, discovered drones five and a half years ago. He was already a photographer, and was getting more and more interested in how to carry cameras in the air. Planes can't fly lower than 500 feet, and static objects were too restricting. With his brother Adam, he began to buy bits and pieces "to make contraptions with cameras underneath". But they would not stay still enough. The beauty of a drone is that it is controlled gyroscopically, like the compass chip in a mobile phone; no matter how buffeting the Brighton breeze, the camera stays still, and video too can be completely smooth, even at speeds of up to 50 miles an hour.

In just a few years, drones have improved enormously. Only three years ago, Jon says, "they were so bulky that they

weren't much fun, really; they looked like a flying saucer and sounded like a swarm of bees." He would go out with a whole van of equipment, whereas now he simply takes a backpack: his drone, 322mm by 84mm, fits into his hand. "I can climb a mountain and take a picture," he says with delight – though for TV or film he uses a bigger drone, a metre square, which has to be controlled by him and his partner Bec together. Back at the beginning, he couldn't monitor the pictures he had taken without landing the drone; now, it sends a link down through an app on his phone, allowing him to see in real time what the camera is seeing and to "mess about" with settings and exposures. Back then, the maximum flight time was five minutes; now it is half an hour.

To take the photos of the Kemp Town Estate, he was down on the beach, roughly at the midpoint of the Esplanade, at the edge of the water. Regulations require him to be at least 50 feet from people "not under my control", as the drone has spinning blades. The rules are strict; he and Bec, as licensed drone-flyers, must submit a lot of paperwork before they deploy one, including detailed flight plans. But then drones are their business; in 2013 they founded a video-production company, Doublexair, and they work to commissions, including trips to film coffee plantations in Guatemala and to cover 400-kilometre cycle races in India. Jon has also been shortlisted for the National Geographic Photographer of the Year award.

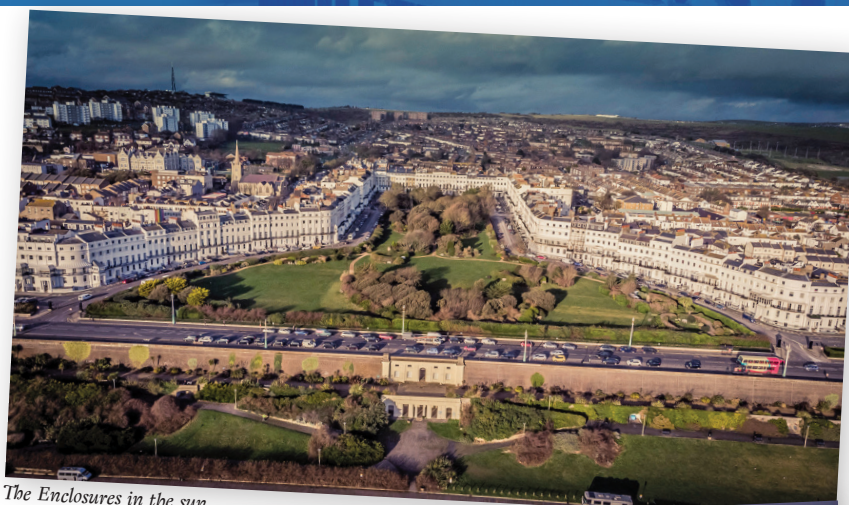
Drones fill their leisure hours with fun, too Jon captures

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Kemp Town Society

A drone flies in Kemp Town – *continued*

images along Brighton seafront all the time, taking thousands of pictures, trying to catch the changing light or sending up drones at night (and also covering specific events, such as Paddle Round the Pier). Another joy of the latest drones is that they can be sent back to the exact GPS spot time after time, to catch places in different seasons, such as the startlingly monochrome shot (actually, in full colour!) of the Estate under snow. As fairly new residents, they did not know the 19th-century prints of the original plans for it. When they saw them, “We were amazed”, says Jon, “to see how like our pictures it was.”



The Enclosures in the sun



Piñata time



The Enclosures in the snow

For more pictures, visit Jon's website: Jon@doublexair.co.uk

Garden Party 2019



Lightning may not strike twice, but heatwaves plainly can, and if anything the temperature on June 29th was even higher than last year, which was unprecedented. Perhaps a reminder that climate change is real!

Luckily the theme was “Hats”, which most of us would have worn anyway, though perhaps not a man's boater piled with vintage

roses, or the Mad Hatter's topper complete with price-tag, as the winners of the “Best Hat” competition did.

A hearty thanks to all our helpers and stallholders, one of whom actually keeled over before the day was done (though she swiftly recovered); to Cathy Moss and Rupert Bagilhole for another splendid raffle; to the hardworking bartenders, who kept the Pimms and rosé flowing; to Johnny Muxlow and the Vintage (Very) Hot but Undeterred Five; to my son Simon for entertaining the children; and to Tania and Lou at

Marmalade for providing the most wonderful array of cakes ever, which proved irresistible despite the weather!

Both attendance and takings were marginally down, perhaps because of the heat, but we still made enough to donate £300 to each of our chosen charities, the Brighton Youth Orchestra and the Brighton and Hove Churches Night Shelter Project (see page 3).

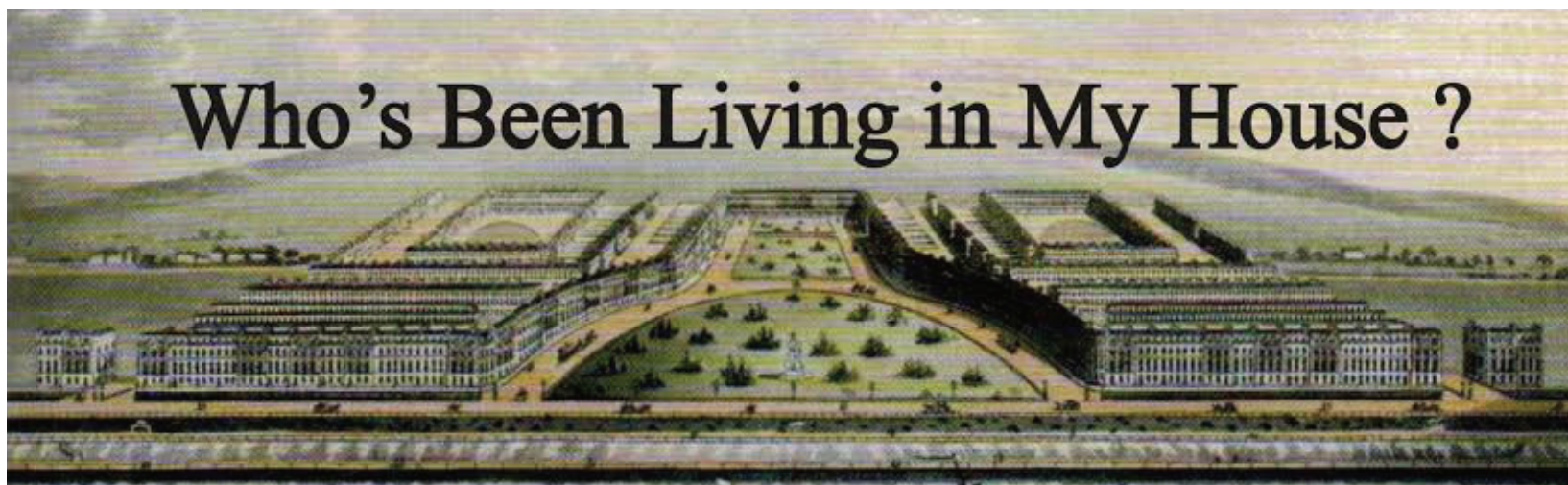
National Garden Scheme Open Day

After days of wet and windy weather, on the afternoon of Thursday 6th June the sun shone and the gardens looked wonderful as the South Garden was opened to the public for the first time. Tickets for the event had sold out well in advance. The Gardens welcomed 250 visitors for 16 tours – all achieved through the efforts and expertise of Jeremy and his team alongside an enthusiastic group of volunteers – and raised almost £2,000 for health charities.

The visitors, many from far away, also loved it. Perhaps the most moving comment came from one who was here on her own: “I have been very ill and this is one of my first days out... I don't know what words to use to explain how I feel here, in this garden... It has given me hope.”

A similar opening is planned in 2020, again in partnership with the NGS.

Who's Been Living in My House ?



The way they lived then

Vanessa Minns reports:

Trawling through archive copies of the Brighton Gazette I found these two charming entries, giving us a glimpse of how life was lived in these grand properties on the Kemp Town Estate.

• July 14th 1860:

TWO SUPERIOR RESIDENCES, FOR SALE (combined as one dwelling) situate and being Nos. 18 and 19, LEWES CRESCENT, KEMP TOWN, overlooking the Kemp Town Enclosures,

18, LEWES CRESCENT comprises dining room, library, ante room, smoking room, billiard room, bedroom, and dressing room, on the ground floor; double drawing rooms and room over portico, and seven bed rooms and a dressing room above. On the first half-landing is a conservatory, communicating by an outside iron staircase with the basement, which is light and cheerful, containing butler's bed room, kitchen, cellars, fire-proof plate closet, and every convenience.

No 19, LEWES CRESCENT contains dining room, library, bath room, and three bedrooms, on the ground floor; double drawing rooms and conservatory communicating with large lead flat roof, and six bed rooms and a dressing room on second and third floors, with every comfort in the basement. The STABLING is situate at the rear, communicating with the house by a tunnelled way and



"Horticultural Engines, Machines and Syringes" in full flow

stone steps, and consists of three stall stable and coach house, harness room, coachman's room, loft, &c., with good yard.

With two conservatories to fill:

• September 1855

BRISTOL NURSERIES, KEMP TOWN. MITCHELL AND CO, FLORISTS AND SEEDSMEN, respectfully Invite attention to their Stock of **ORANGE TREES, IN FRUIT, CAMELIAS**, well set with bloom. **AZULEA INDICAS**, choicest varieties, and **TREE CARNATIONS**. Also their well assorted Stock **Geraniums, Fuchsias, Phloxes**, and other Stove and Green House Plants. The Nurseries and Houses, stored with the choicest productions, are open for inspection daily, from ten till dusk, gratis. Bristol Nurseries, Kemp Town, Close to St. Mark's Church.

The Night Shelter

One of our chosen charities this year was the Brighton and Hove Churches Night Shelter Project. This is a group of 10-14 churches, including St John the Baptist in Kemptown, which have worked for eight years in rotation to give shelter, a hot meal, a bed and breakfast to homeless people every night between November and April, in the coldest season of the year. Their work is co-ordinated through St Peter's Church on The Level, and involves around 600 volunteers.

Tuesdays are the night for volunteers from St John the Baptist. About a dozen of them meet at St Joseph's church hall at 6.30pm to greet their "guests" with a cup of tea, provide a hot meal and get the sleeping bags and cot-beds ready. They also provide a listening ear for anyone who needs one. At 10.30 a four-person night shift takes over, who sit quietly with the sleeping guests til morning. At 6am, the morning shift arrives to serve breakfast. Two

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Kemp Town Society

The Night Shelter - continued

volunteers there, who are also KTS members and live in Sussex Square, describe the work as “a privilege”.

The numbers passing through are relatively small, perhaps 40 a year; they are passed on by referral through St Peter's, and need to be fairly well organised to find their way to the various churches. But the project's organisers also liaise with city agencies to help them to find housing or work, or to link up again with their families if they are

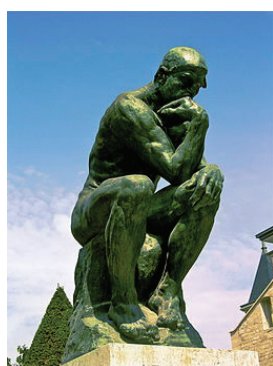
local. They are also planning to have one central shelter, probably St Patrick's in Cambridge Road, where volunteers from each of the member churches will continue to come, serve meals, listen and help.

For more information about the next Night Shelter, please contact the Central Coordinators:

**saz.fury@stpetersbrighton.org or
elisha.phillips@stpetersbrighton.org**

EVENTS FORTHCOMING

October 25th: The Kemp Town Society Quiz, featuring once again Quizmaster Extraordinaire Robert Snell. Get a party of 6 friends together, and come and exercise your wits! At EF, 1-2 Sussex Square, first floor, 6.30 for 7pm; admission £10 each, for a light supper and cash bar.



Tickets available from Michael Bedingfield, Flat 5, 9 Chichester Terrace, Kemp Town, BN2 1FG; Email: cag@kemptown-society.org.uk

Gardens calendars

Sally Henry's beautiful Gardens calendars for 2020, which were a great hit at the Garden Party, will be on sale again, as will the Society's Christmas cards.

The **Friends of St George's Church** are delighted to offer a particularly wide-ranging autumn programme:

September 12th: Coach outing to **RHS Wisley Gardens and the Surrey Sculpture Trail**. Coach departs 10am from St George's, returns 5.30pm. Cost £38.50 or £26 for RHS members

October 18th: organ recital by Nigel Wilby to mark the refurbishment of the church organ. Includes pieces by Bach, Percy Grainger and Saint-Saens. 7pm for 7.30. Café format – bring a picnic. Cash bar. £10

November 2nd: samba drumming from the **Silver Sounds**. This community band for older people will take us on a tour of Brazilian street music, followed by an opportunity to try your hand! 2.30 for 3pm. £5, children free.

November 21st: Traditional music of Afghanistan.

Veronica Doubleday, John Baily and Marc Clayton will perform more music and songs on the classical instruments of that country. Supper, in the same Afghan vein, from caterer Julie Mack. 7pm for 7.30. £16 to include supper; Concert only, £10.

All events take place in St George's Church, BN2 1ED. Email friendsofstgeorgeschurch@gmail.com for full details and to reserve your tickets.

KTE Bicentennial planning: On Saturday

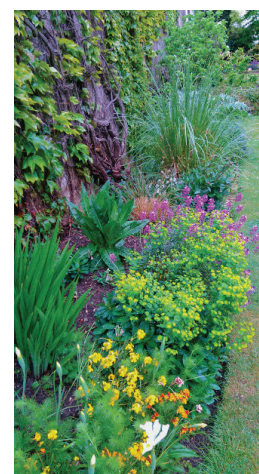
October 5th there will be a meeting to discuss plans for the KTE Bicentennial in 2023. Do come along! At 10am at the EF Language School, 1-2 Sussex Square. If you wish to know more, please contact Janine Nahapiet at nahapiet@btinternet.com.

The best and the

brightest: Announcing our new competition, proposed by our president, David Morris, for the **best patio and balcony** on the Estate. David

reminds us that 30 years ago or so this was a very popular annual event. It was judged in mid-July, over various days (so that devious people could not pop to the Garden Centre just in time), the winning address was announced (by word of mouth in those days

– much easier now), and on an agreed weekend morning a crowd would assemble at the winner's house for the presentation of a bottle of bubbly. There could also be a (discreet) plaque....details are still to be refined, and suggestions are welcome. But now is the time to start thinking, planning and planting!



Please send all ideas and contributions for the next Newsletter to annwroe@economist.com, or drop them through the door of 14 Lewes Crescent.
Thank you!