



## The Chairman's Report 2020

The scaffolding comes and goes, leaving pristine white walls and repaired roofs; basement areas become decked with flowers; aspiring photographers persuade would-be models to pose on front doorsteps beside railings; the sun comes out (occasionally). The 105 houses on the estate probably look better now than they have at any point in their nearly 200-year history. We count ourselves lucky to live here, and we look forward to less anxious times when we can once again enjoy the strong sense of community around the estate.

### Conservation

In the wider sphere of conservation it is good to be able to begin this year's report with news that the Black Rock site, derelict for 40 years, looks set to be developed, thanks to a £12 million



government Coast to Capital grant. 86% of those surveyed approved of the well-publicized scheme and KTS has been closely involved in the process. It will begin with a decontamination of the site (there could well be unexploded ordnance from WWII there) and thereafter the plan is to rebuild the sea wall, lay a surface suitable for recreational use, develop an ecology trail, and, importantly, for residents, make the Reading Room and Temple fit for commercial use.

These enabling works were originally intended to prepare the site for the deeply unpopular Conference Centre, but plans for this were shelved in December, and remain in abeyance whilst the parallel scheme to extend Churchill Square with all the uncertainties of retail trade are reconsidered. Members naturally remain anxious to know what is happening at the Marina. The latest intelligence from the developers is that planning permission for Phase 2 of the Marina Development has still to go before the council, the date already having been postponed several times. A further development being considered by the council concerns the gasworks site. A development company will shortly announce a public exhibition for plans for this easternmost fringe of Brighton.

We continue to keep a close watch on Madeira Terraces, having contributed to the crowd funding 3 years ago. Councillors have agreed to make £550,000 available for a regeneration and restoration project. We look forward to seeing the detailed plans to restore the first 30 of the 151 arches, including the 3 for which the money was originally raised.

The communal bins, which have been a concern for the past two years, have so far been only modestly successful. We have been regularly in touch with Cityclean about uncollected rubbish and the state of the gutters after emptying (particularly at the Sussex Square bus stop). It seems the GMB union have now resolved their dispute with the council, which means that the full service we all pay for through our council taxes should be resumed. KTS members hope to be able to attend a tour of the council's waste and recycling plant at Hollingdean to ask questions and learn how the system works

We are grateful to Michael Bedingfield, our conservation member and CAG rep, who monitors with an eagle eye all proposed developments in the Conservation Area.

## **Communication**

The Newsletter continues to be published three times a year for all members, smoothly produced by Gemini Print in Shoreham. Around 50 copies go out by post to members outside Kemp Town; the rest are hand-delivered round the Estate and in streets beyond. The question regularly arises of whether it should become an e-newsletter, but for two main reasons we think it should not. First, not all members are on e-mail; and second, many of those who are online positively prefer to read newsletters in printed form, treating them as a rare form of relaxation.

For some time, however, we have wanted to give members something extra, and in the summer we plan to expand the Newsletter to 6 or even 8 pages. This will allow us to run more photographs; to increase the font size, which is now approaching the edge of visibility; to spread out a bit, and to lose the present sensation that a quart is being squeezed into a pint pot, as it usually is. There will be changes too to the editorial team itself. Ann Wroe, who has done the job with such expertise for the last 12 editions, will continue to oversee the newsletter, but will be assisted by Michael Bedingfield and Keith and Jayne Paulin. Members with anything to contribute in the way of profiles or historical pieces (large or small) are urged to contact Ann Wroe ([annwroe@economist.com](mailto:annwroe@economist.com)) or Keith Paulin ([paulinkeith@hotmail.com](mailto:paulinkeith@hotmail.com)) with their ideas.

The website is updated regularly, with a topical photograph as its header and reports of various meetings attended in the Latest News section. We are lucky to have the expertise of Adam Liversidge to keep us abreast of statutory requirements with the Membership, which now numbers 190, and to put into effect technical improvements to make the experience of visiting the site increasingly user-friendly.

Meanwhile Vanessa Minns continues to curate with loving care the sister website Who's Been Living in My House. The physical manifestation of this in the form of the 5 Information Boards were erected in March. They form a wonderful addition to the estate explaining its history and heritage. We are immensely grateful to Vanessa for taking on the design and indeed living and breathing this project for the past two years following the Alex Bruce bequest. A consequence of good housekeeping is that monies are left over for a further phase of the project, to be discussed at the AGM.

## Events

The Garden Party took place as usual in the North Garden on June 30th. The theme was hats, which was just as well: for the second year in a row, surely a record, the sun baked down all day, and the temperature hovered around 30 degrees. Perhaps because of this (with older members prudently staying indoors) attendance was slightly down on 2018, but the takings were healthy. More than £1,000 was raised, with the £600



earned by the raffle stall being divided between our two chosen charities, the Brighton Youth Orchestra and the Community Night Shelter run by St Peter's Church on the Level.

Thanks are due as usual to all our hard-working helpers and stallholders; to our bar-keepers, Richard, Paul, Louise and Eve; to Johnny Muxlow's Vintage Hot Five for setting the party atmosphere; and to Tania and Lou at Marmalade, who donated an astonishingly generous shipment of cakes for the tea stall. Above all, huge thanks to Ann Wroe for once again planning and coordinating this most successful and high-profile event.

The Quiz, held in the EF Language School on 25 Oct was enjoyed by all 60 participants, as their obscure knowledge was put to the test by quizmaster Robert Snell, making a welcome return. The winners (once again) were the Ealing Comedians, who remarkably only dropped one point during the whole evening. We are aware that the stairs mean this venue is not popular with all and we are considering using the crypt of St George's, where there is a lift, but fear that the room is not large enough to accommodate us. Suggestions from members for more suitable venues would be appreciated.

St George's was the venue for the BYO String Ensemble Concert on 8 February. An audience of over 100 enjoyed an early evening concert of most sophisticated music-making from the young string players, who tackled some challenging works. Many thanks to our Deputy Chairman Vaughan Rees for overseeing this with such tenacity and enthusiasm. We were delighted to be able to make a donation of £500 to the BYO, and still retain a healthy surplus.

## **Blue Plaques**

Jill Sewell continues to represent KTS on the Commemorative Plaque panel, which meets quarterly to consider applications and verify facts about individuals nominated. Currently there are over 130 in Brighton and Hove. The charge for a plaque, met by the freeholder of the property concerned, is £1200. KTS has recently confirmed that no more than one plaque may be placed on the same house, no matter how many illustrious residents have lived there!

## **The Committee**

I remain, as ever, immensely grateful to all members of the Committee, who meet every 8 weeks or so and work tirelessly (and of course voluntarily) to maintain the impact of the Kemp Town Society in all its guises. Many are mentioned above, but two to single out are Jayne and Keith Paulin, our omnipresent secretary and treasurer. They carry out their key roles with genial good humour and plain common sense, and we are lucky to have them. Thank you so much from all of us.

## **Treasurer's Report**

At the end of its accounting year on 31st December 2019, the Society had cash assets of £29,391 which includes the remaining balance of the Alex Bruce Legacy. At the end of the year £4,478 had been spent from the legacy on the information boards project, with an estimated further £4,014 to be spent in 2020. This leaves just over £11,000 of the legacy for future projects.

The Society's two fund-raising events in 2019 – the garden party and quiz night – made a combined surplus of £1,445. Full accounts will be presented to the Annual General Meeting later in the year.

**Simon Smith**  
**March 2020**