



AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2020

Kindness and community in the time of covid

Kelly Walsh reflects on how the crisis brought the Estate together.

The reality of Covid-19 hit me as I listened to a podcast by a traumatised Italian doctor.

The hospital ICU was at capacity and he and his team were having to make life-and-death-decisions regarding who would be ventilated and who would not. This was early March, three weeks before Boris Johnson would issue the stay-at-home order here. In that period of escalating anxiety, as the infection took hold in Europe, the Community Square and Crescent Support Group was created for the residents of the Kemp Town Estate. Our mission was to provide support for anyone who might be vulnerable, self-isolating or finding it difficult to cope.

Time in lockdown had a strange elastic quality, and reflecting back has felt a little like peering through a thick fog. What do stand out are the truly humbling efforts of so many people who have done so much to help others.

Two people in particular worked tirelessly when we were first getting the community organised. Stephanie from Sussex Square spent two days mapping out the entire neighbourhood, flat by flat, organising teams to manage specific addresses and setting up WhatsApp groups so they could communicate. Sam from Sussex Square worked until 4am building a website where volunteers and people requesting support could register and find critical information.

By the beginning of April we were operating as part of the Mutual Aid Network, many of us going on to volunteer with the wider network of groups that sprang up to provide a raft of essential services, from food banks to hot-meal deliveries. Kindness came in many forms, and local independent retailers such as Seed 'n' Sprout and Dubleaus stayed open throughout the lockdown, supporting the community by delivering food boxes to people who were self-isolating.

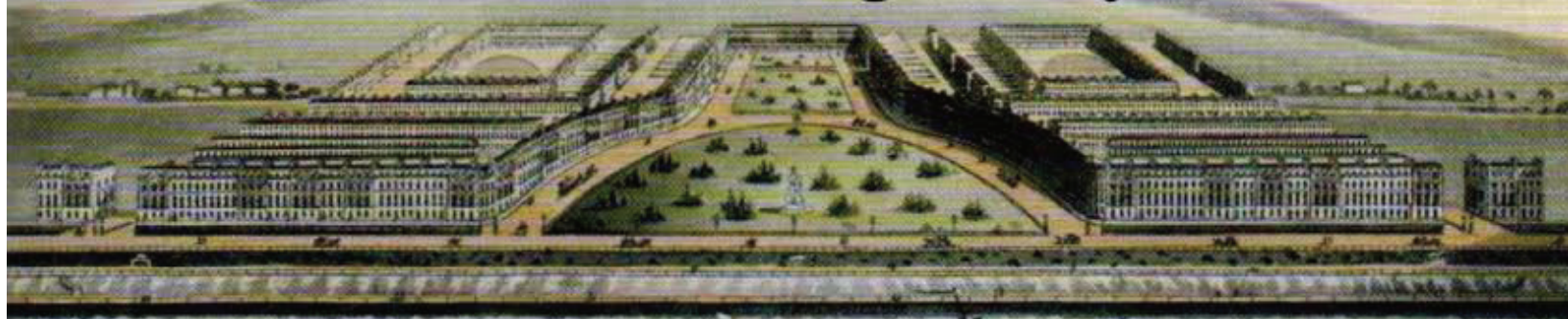
So what role has the Square and Crescent Support Group played in our lives over the past four months? I'll leave that with Stephanie and Naomi, two of the more than 70 individuals who have kept the conversation going on our WhatsApp space, sharing stories, advice, support and laughs.

"My husband and I moved to Brighton a couple of weeks before lockdown so we hadn't met any of our neighbours and didn't know who might need help during this time. Amazingly, within just a few days, this wonderful community sprang forth. Our neighbours came together, collaborated and leapt into action delivering notes to every household in the entirety of Sussex Square, Lewes Crescent, Chichester and Arundel Terraces, doing our collective best to ensure no one would be left without help, if they needed it."

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Registered office. Flat 1, 9 Sussex Square, Brighton BN2 1FJ
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Who's Been Living in My House ?



Alex Bruce Legacy: The infoboards are here!

Suddenly, on May 28th, we woke to discover that the Information Boards were finally going up!

After a two-month delay caused by lockdown, all the boards on the railings were in place by 9am, speedily and efficiently erected by Neil and Len of Fitzpatrick Woolmer Design from Rochester. Neil applied the fixings, Len checked constantly with the spirit level; the boards faithfully follow the line of ground level rather than the undulations of the railings.

Two of us were just able to catch the installation of the free-standing board on the Esplanade, which was naturally a longer job. The men could not dig down



very far before hitting solid rock, so the footings had to be carefully prepared with ready-mixed cement and the board-supports shortened by an inch or so, with a power-assisted metal-cutter, to make them more secure. ("Stand back even further, darling, sparks are going to fly!"). Then, after a good deal more careful measuring with the spirit level, the last board was set firmly in place.

The impact was immediate, as nearly 4,000 people saw the news and photographs on the Society's Facebook



page and many thousands more saw the interview with Vanessa Minns, the board designer, in the Argus. Visits to the Society's Who's Been Living in My House? website also spiked as people followed up the links on the boards.

The Committee thanks the installers very much for their hard work, and now invites all members to take the "Board tour" for themselves!

With thanks to Michele Lahey and Bill Gatward for the North Garden photographs.



Maggie Tattersall reports on Kemp Town Estate in bloom

Coronavirus drastically, though necessarily, changed the Society's social calendar for this summer. Our public opening of the Lower Enclosure to the general public, so successful last year, was lost, as was the Garden Party, always the highlight of Kemp Town's summer programme.

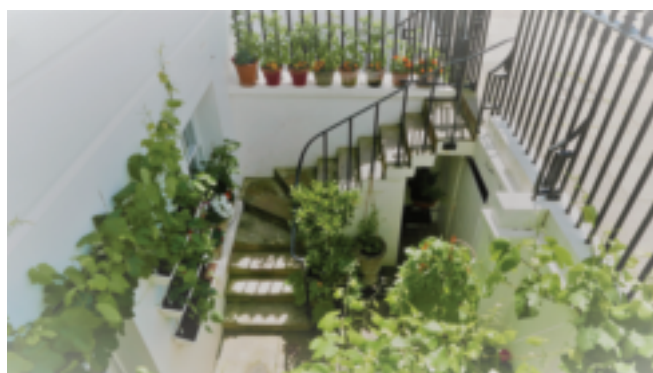
After some thought, and timely promptings from our president, David Morris, we decided to hold a Patio Gardens Competition. Many of us had been taking our daily exercise along the streets of the Estate, and enjoyed looking at the little gardens in front of the grand houses above. They are like small jewels, which add greatly to the glory of the Estate. Besides, in this year of Lockdown, they have become special places from which people have been able to see their neighbours from a distance, and so keep in touch. This makes it all the more appropriate that we should recognise the gardeners whose labours have done so much to brighten hard times.

On Saturday June 27th, as rain started to fall, the Kemp Town Society announced the winners chosen by the four judges (Maggie Tattersall, Ann Wroe, Jill Sewell and Mark Eynon).

We awarded First Prize to Lucy and Mark Dean at 50a, Sussex Square, where the vine with its ripening grapes, strawberries that were just waiting to be picked, and tomatoes and broad beans to come made a luscious display.

Second (but only just!) was Mark Tucker at Flat 7, 8 Sussex Square, who had packed such a variety onto his patio, with beautifully contrasting colours of flowers to delight the eye throughout the seasons.

Such was the quality of the entries that the judges awarded two additional Highly Commended Prizes: to Caroline Minogue at 6a Lewes Crescent, whose magnificent fig tree is garlanded with clematis, and James Aynesley at 11a Arundel Terrace, with the nearest



anyone came to a joyously wild cottage garden. .

The judges were impressed by the different ways the entrants approached the problem of making a garden in the inhospitable paved space between the front window of a basement flat and a street some ten feet above. Some of these areas were sunny all day and very dry, some were very shady, most were windswept. The plants had to be in pots, and keeping them watered must have been a nightmare: most of the areas had no outside taps.

Choosing what to grow in these spaces is complicated; in a tiny garden each plant has to work very hard to earn its place. Seasons change, and most plants flower only for a relatively short part of a season; but for a patio display, a long flowering season is a prime requirement. The shape and ultimate size of each plant when not in bloom is also important to maintain a balanced display: if a plant grows too big it will need to be pruned, so access for that has to be factored in as well.

But it seemed all the entrants in the competition surmounted these problems with ease, and had made gardens that were a delight to look at.

Please keep on doing so, as we hope to make this an annual event!

Kelly Walsh reflects on how the crisis brought the Estate together – *continued*

I feel so incredibly grateful that through this difficult time, we have been privileged to come to know our neighbours, many of whom have become friends. Seeing the community spirit and immense kindness of our lovely neighbours has reinforced for me just how lucky we are to live here.” Stephanie

“Five years ago I came to Sussex Square from London to optimise healthy living. Chronic fatigue affects me, so when the community support group emerged I felt a sense of relief. I live on my own, and all my regular groups and support workers were no longer able to come.

“One neighbour posted a leaflet through my door saying he was happy to assist with shopping. Someone else offered chat support and I was called every Friday to check if I was

OK and had enough supplies. I also heard about the Bristol Estate lunch and food parcels through the group, which I signed on for. It was lovely to receive a warm lunch every day that I didn't have to cook!

“This amazing support made me feel connected to the outside world, as there's always someone online chatting about a new service that's sprung up, or a new food supplier who's willing to deliver.

“As a consequence I'm starting a group across a few doctors' surgeries called Well, Well, Well, for people of all ages living with long-term health issues. So a huge thanks to everyone's work, concern, connection and community care. Long may it last. I feel proud to be a part of this group!”

Naomi

Kemp Town Society

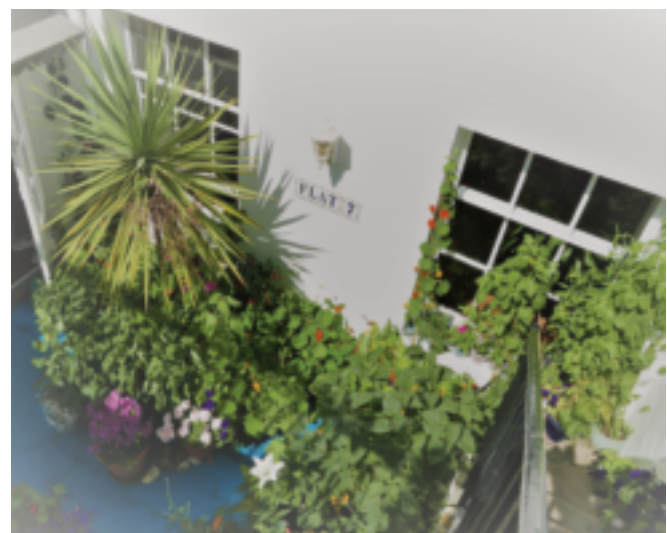
Best Patio Garden 2020 – Lucy & Mark Dean, 50a Sussex Square



Kemp Town Society

Runner-up – Mark Tucker, Flat 7, 8 Sussex Square

The Judges - Mark Eynon, Jill Sewell, Ann Wroe and Maggie Tattersall along with umbrella-wielding Society chairman Simon Smith



Kemp Town in Art

Our beautiful part of Brighton has long attracted artists, and in this new series we want to draw attention to representations of Kemp Town - paintings, lithographs, sketches, sculpture, photography - which may sometimes be well known, but may also be quite new and unexpected.

Roger Amerena, a member of the Society who has long been prominent in local conservation groups, has kindly sent us news of two of his discoveries, as well as the stories of the artists behind them.

The first picture is an original drawing by Henry George Hine RI (1811 - 1895), which Roger discovered and successfully bid for at auction earlier this year.



Madeira Road 1872 -77

As he tells the story,

“I always take an interest in local auctions, looking for anything with a connection to 19th-century Brighton and Hove, in particular prints, lithographs and drawings. On this occasion I was not aware of the lot until the description was made by the auctioneer: “A sketch of Marine Drive in an envelope addressed to a Miss Haines of 23 Hampton Place.”

“As the description was “Marine Drive” (I might add, wrongly catalogued, as I found out after the purchase), I did not take any notice, as that could not be a Brighton address. But the Hampton Place connection for me was of interest, as it is the next road to where I live.

“On collecting the item I discovered that the envelope was stamped “1930”, a disappointment. However the incorrectly described drawing was actually signed by Hine and annotated “Madeira Road”, the early name for Madeira Drive.

I was delighted. A real discovery, and it has been added to my collection of 800 odd prints, drawings, lithographs, watercolours and photos of early Brighton and Hove.”

Hine was a true Brightonian and the son of a coachman. He taught himself to draw, by copying the work of Anthony Vandyke Copley Fielding (1787-1855), before being apprenticed to Henry Meyer. From 1841 to 1844 he drew for *Punch* and, after that, for the *Illustrated London News*. Hine began to exhibit landscapes in 1830 and in 1863 was elected to the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours. In 1867 the *Art Journal* remarked that “The landscapes of H. G. Hine are of singular beauty.”

His works are found in the British Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, Fitzwilliam Museum, Leeds City Art Gallery, Manchester City Art Gallery, Sydney Art Gallery - and now in Roger's home. Quite a find!

Roger has also sent us a lithograph, “Panoramic View of East Brighton 1839” by Day & Haghe, which was published for the benefit of the Sussex County Hospital. William Day and Louis Haghe formed their partnership in 1830 and were appointed Lithographers to the Queen in 1838. They are regarded as the pioneers of lithographs printed in colours. Many of these survive, and rather stunning they are too, with a view to Kemp Town from the Chain Pier.

This particular lithograph, which is as rare as the Hine sketch and does not feature in “Images of Brighton”, was purchased by Roger many years ago in the Lanes.

We would also love YOU to share your examples of Kemp Town in Art, which can include art in any medium, from large sculptures to postcards, and from ancient to modern! There must be many gems on members' walls, and if you are willing to add details about why you like the piece, and how you came by it, all the better. Please get in touch with Keith Paulin or Ann Wroe and let us know.



East Brighton Panoramic View C 1839 Lithograph. Day & Haghe

DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Progress on the Madeira Terraces has been disappointingly slow. In March, BHCC appointed Purcell Architecture to undertake the first phase of restoration on 30 of the 151 arches. They bring extensive experience of heritage and cast-iron structures. An advisory panel has been created by BHCC, representing residents, businesses, tourism and conservation. They are currently considering where the first 30 arches should be, with input from KTS.

More positively, in June BHCC approved plans for the improvement of the Black Rock site. Members will scarcely need reminding that this has been an eyesore for some 40 years, since the swimming lido was demolished in 1979. Work will begin in late September with the construction of a new sea wall, and thereafter decontamination and landscaping of the site. This will extend north to the Esplanade and involve renovation of the Reading Room and Temple, currently favoured by street artists and rough sleepers. It is hoped one or both of these might have a commercial use, for example as a café. A beach boardwalk and play area are also planned. These works, funded by a £20 million grant from the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership, are intended to “enable” future development of the Waterfront Project.

The deeply unpopular plans to move the Brighton Conference Centre to Black Rock are on hold while Aberdeen Standard Investments explore further options for the future of the central Brighton site, comprising Kingswest, Churchill Square and the Conference Centre. In the meantime, Kemp Town residents will be able to enjoy a newly landscaped, accessible space for leisure and sporting pursuits. An update on the Waterfront Project and Black Rock Development will be discussed by the Policy and Resources Committee in December. Further east, no update is available on the planning application for the next stage of the Marina Development.

The Brighton Gasworks is a newly proposed development by St. William, a joint venture between the National Grid and The Berkeley Group. The first phase of consultation took place in June and July. KTS has been closely involved, attending their webinars and maintaining contact with the developer.

The site has a great history. It was established in 1818 by the Brighton Gas Light and Coke Company,

and provides an important link between the South Downs National Park and the coast. The proposed development is for 600-700 new homes. KTS encourages members to be part of the consultation, before a planning application is submitted towards the end of 2020. Further opportunities for comment will be available then.

KTS's early concerns are the height and massing of buildings, which we believe should be significantly reduced to fit the scale of the surrounding area and lessen the detrimental impact on views from the Grade I-listed Kemp Town Estate. Further investigation is needed into transport and traffic links to meet the demands of the extra residents, along with provision for health support and schooling if there really are to be up to 700 new homes. We will keep you updated about this and all the above projects.

Art for our times



This painting on paper by Lyn Rohde, 31x40 cms, was painted in May at the height of the pandemic.

As she describes it, “The foreground is in remembrance of those who have died, with lilies. You are then led up through the tunnel into the Gardens, with covid-19 bushes on each side, and then to more cheery and hopefully Rainbow Trees and finally to the top of Sussex Square, where there are messages in residents’ windows thanking the NHS.”

The painting is for sale; or Lyn is also happy to make prints of it and, once she has covered her costs, donate any money earned to a chosen charity.

If you are interested, please contact her on lyn.rohde50@gmail.com

Return to Kemp Town

Sarah Miles, famous for her roles in “Blow Up”, “The Servant” and “Ryan’s Daughter” (for which she received an Oscar nomination) visited the Enclosures in June, her first visit for many years.

In the third volume of her autobiography, “Bolt from the Blue”, she describes her first visit to her parents’ newly bought house in Lewes Crescent (east side), which she found bleak and uninviting, despite its grandeur. Her mother revealed that one of the reasons for moving to Brighton was so that Sarah could be near her long-standing secret lover Laurence Olivier. She then describes a walk with her father (who later became a friend and regular chess companion of Olivier) through the Enclosures tunnel to the beach.

The Gardens did not make a good impression: in conversation she always described them as bleak, windswept and desolate.

Ever since then her friend Mark Eynon, who lives in Sussex Square, has been wanting to prove how the Enclosures have changed since the early 1970s. When at last he managed to escort her round, she was overwhelmed by the experience. In an email the next day she wrote:



“But oh! Our walk through Lewes Crescent Gardens was rather like an epiphany in itself!

It has completely changed my outlook towards, not only Brighton, but it has recoloured all my memories.

That bleak, dank, unloved feeling has been obliterated, and in its place, a mass of colour, benevolent, wise trees to caress, to gain strength from (so tall already!) all culminating in vast areas of complete paradise!

Thank you so much for bothering to escort us round - a genuine memory changer!”

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY – KTS EVENTS

KTS AGM

The Society’s Annual General Meeting, delayed from May, will now be held on **Saturday October 3rd at 10.30am**. The agenda and a proxy voting form are included with this newsletter.

To ensure the safety of members and to respect social distancing, the meeting will take place ‘virtually’ using the Zoom video meeting app. The meeting link will be e-mailed before the meeting and papers - the full 2019 accounts, last year’s minutes and the trustees’ report previously sent out with the last newsletter - will be available to view or download from the Society’s website one week before the meeting. Hard copies can also be obtained on request in writing from the Society at Flat 1, 9 Sussex Square, BN2 1FJ.

KTS Autumn Quiz

Please make a note in your diaries that this popular event will go ahead on **Friday 30th October at 6.30pm**.

Much as we would like this to take place in the real world with its customary merriment and conviviality, circumstances may dictate otherwise with quizzing by Zoom in smaller teams. We will announce the format at the AGM on 3rd October.

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