



SPRING/SUMMER 2023 NEWSLETTER: BICENTENARY EDITION

Gentleman Jack in Kemp Town

From August 23rd to 26th 1826 Anne Lister—better known nowadays as ‘Gentleman Jack’, after the TV drama series written by Sally Wainwright—paid a visit to Brighton. Her trip included a viewing of the Kemp Town Estate, then under construction, and her report is possibly the earliest written impression of it. Alexandra Mackay, who transcribed it, reports;

Anne’s account of the trip is found in her diary, the ninth of ten that have now been published online by the Calderdale Office of the West Yorkshire Archive. Altogether her diaries, which she kept from the age of 15, fill 27 volumes: 6600 pages, or almost 4m words. They are hard to interpret, being full of abbreviations, and about a sixth of the journals are written in an esoteric code, devised by Anne, to conceal extraordinarily frank details of her affairs with women. A group of 130 volunteers known as the Codebreakers, including myself, have just finished the massive task of transcribing the volumes.

Anne was born in 1791 in Halifax, grew up in the East Riding and in 1815 went to live permanently with her uncle and aunt at Shibden Hall, just outside Halifax. From 1826 she was the co-owner, finally inheriting the hall in 1836.

Her diaries show her as a remarkably confident and exuberant woman, who refused to submit to the norms that governed the behaviour of wealthy young ladies. She bucked codes of “feminine” dress, studied voraciously, managed her estate, and elbowed her way into the male-dominated coal industry. She was a great traveller, and

indeed she died—from a fever-carrying tick—while on her most adventurous and arduous journey, a trip through Russia and over the Caucasian mountains into Georgia in 1840. Through all her life, she was adamant that ‘I love and only love the fairer sex...my heart revolts from any love but theirs.’

Anne came to Brighton at an important time for her, as she had just inherited her share of Shibden Hall and the estate and a subsequent increase in income. With her paternal aunt Anne and her then lover Mariana, the wife of a Cheshire landowner, as well as two servants, she had travelled by coach from Cheshire via Birmingham, Oxford and London. Brighton was hot and sunny when she arrived. They intended partly to see the ‘haut ton’ town and partly to enjoy the convenience of the steam packet to the continent. Her full accounts for the trip survive, as well as her impressions. She thought Brighton beautiful; she and Mariana, she wrote, would ‘like it exceedingly’ to live there. Sadly, it was not to be. But I am developing an Anne Lister Brighton trail and this will be forthcoming!

Alexandra Mackay

Anne Lister’s Brighton Diary – see pages 4 and 5

Many thanks to the Regency Society for permission to use the image of the Chain Pier, published in 1824. You can see the whole of the Regency Society’s Brighton Prints collection at sbpc.regencysociety.org



Happy winners: from left to right David Saunders, Emma Swann, Carol Saunders, Cathy Bagilhole, Rupert Bagilhole and Mike Schofield

The Return of the KTS Quiz Night

Everyone knew that Tintin's dog was Snowy, but few knew the literal translation of Kamikaze. As ever, the annual KTS Quiz on 3 March delighted and perplexed in equal measure. The 39 quizzers in 7 teams (a record) all learnt something at the hands of quizmaster Robert Snell, making his fourth appearance at the event. They experienced that warm glow of satisfaction of getting a question right, and marvelled at his ingenious way of fitting questions to themes in each round.

Thanks are due to EF for making their elegant first-floor café space available to us and for helping

with the set-up; and also to the ever-resourceful Paulins. Jayne, with Ann Wroe, acquired and served a most agreeable buffet supper in the interval and doubled as bartender, whilst Keith was a stern presence on the door to ensure that everyone paid up.

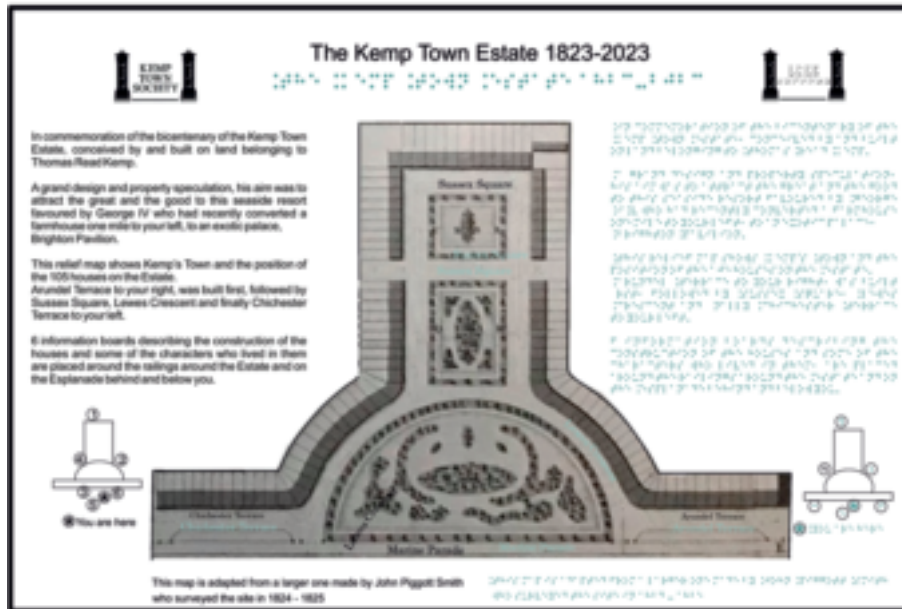
Well done to the outright winners, one of two teams calling themselves The Scrambled Eggheads, who knew that that Kamikaze meant Divine Wind and were able to answer one question in Latin and English. They wore their winners' medals with pride.

Brighton Gasworks - Planning Application Delay

Thank you to all members who contributed comments earlier this year, to the Gasworks Planning Application: BH2021/04167. The number of comments has increased to in excess of one thousand, with 985 objections recorded.

We have been advised by the Planning Department at Brighton & Hove City Council that the application will not go to the Planning Committee until after this May's local elections, most likely to be July or later. We will keep you updated as we hear more over the summer.

Kemp: a bicentenary tribute



resistance to the weather, of which it will encounter plenty.

The lectern could have been placed in the Enclosures, where it would have needed fewer permissions. It is on the public way, like the information boards (of which a sixth, at the eastern end of the southern railings, will also be dedicated in May) because Kemp's vision transformed the whole of Brighton, and his Estate is a treasured part of the city's architectural heritage. As you stand there reading it, perhaps when returning from Asda, or the bus stop, or the gym, it should not be hard to imagine Kemp reviewing his achievement beside you.

Among the celebrations of the Bicentenary of the Estate, a bronze lectern will appear in May on Marine Drive. This, like the information boards, has been designed by Vanessa Minns and funded from Alex Bruce's most generous legacy to the Society.

The lectern, halfway along the southern railings and on the sea side of the road, shows the Estate as it appeared in the first map that was drawn of it, by John Piggott-Smith in 1824-25. It is therefore probably the closest we can come to the vision that was in Thomas Read Kemp's head when he began his great work of building.

The idea of a monument to Kemp himself was first floated a few years ago. At that stage the Committee were considering a statue of the man himself, perhaps with a roll of plans under his arm, or with his dog. We imagined him looking out over the Estate, not grandly from a plinth but perhaps from a bench (as Rudyard Kipling is portrayed at Burwash), or as he walked past the building site. A sculptor was contacted, and various maquettes were made.

Then the wind changed. Suddenly, statues of white males were out of favour, and councils began to take them down elsewhere. Obviously Plan A had to be abandoned, and the lectern emerged as a simple alternative.

It is designed for both sighted and blind people, to be touched and traced as well as seen, with normal text to the left and Braille to the right. Casting in metal (as Vanessa observed on plaques outside Westminster Abbey) raises the text more effectively than resin or stone, making it easier to read. It also offers more

Hidden Treasures now available for pre-order

The Society's bicentenary book "Hidden Treasures: The Bas-Reliefs on The Kemp Town Estate" is now available to pre-order in advance of its publication on 1st May.

The book tells for the first time the story of the 40 plaster bas reliefs, until now unidentified and unrecorded, which are thought to have been installed by Thomas Cubitt in the houses he built on the Kemp Town Estate between 1823 and 1850. The book was researched and written by Vanessa Minns with photography by Keith Paulin.

Hidden Treasures is profusely illustrated with photographs throughout and accompanied by the stories and locations of each design. The book will be both a permanent and important record of a previously unexplored aspect of Regency Kemp Town, and a suitable commemoration of the 200th anniversary of Thomas Kemp's Estate,

"Hidden Treasures: The Bas-Reliefs on the Kemp Town Estate", published 1st May 2023 by Grosvenor House Publishing, 36 pages fully illustrated, price £12.95 available on line from Waterstones, Amazon and other on line booksellers.

An “ensemble surely quite unique in England” – Anne Lister in Brighton and Kemp Town in 1826



Anne Lister in 1822. She thought this an “admirable likeness” of herself.

1826 August

— From the top of the hill just out of Crawley a very pretty view of wooded country — the cottages and farm houses all along picturesque — several gentleman’s boxes — Stapeford common pretty — the cottages scattered round it picturesque — fine wooded undulating country ...got to Hixted [Hickstead] at 3 — M- [Mariana] and I got out — the off hind wheel taken off — annoyed at George for doing it while my back was turned with what he called ‘grey grease’, saying he could not get the tool box off — annoyed also that he had not dusted the carriage but brought it out this morning windows and seat covered with road-dust —

...very beautiful for the 1st 4 or 5 miles from Hixted [Hickstead] — the chalk hills beautifully formed and beautifully wooded — nearer Brighton little or no wood the downs quite bare — the road winding along the valley at their foot — just before entering the village of Patcham, wooded again and very pretty — Mr. Paine’s house at the entrance of the village (of very dark brown coloured brick) very strikingly neat — the

richly wooded hill at the back of the house, beautiful — wooded and pretty beyond Patcham, and all the way to Brighton — very pretty entrance along a long straight road, the foot-way fenced off by white posts and a green chain —

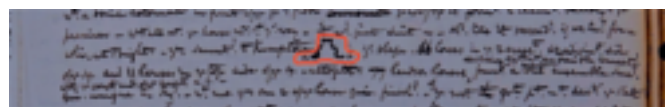
got out at the York hotel Brighton at 5 1/2 — the house full — lucky to get my aunt a sitting room and bedroom close together on the ground floor — M and I at the top of the house (55 steps high) but the room large and comfortable — a packet sailed about 1 this afternoon — will be none tomorrow — M and I went out at 5 — impossible to see the Pavilion or the stables — the duke of York there and not well — we paid a toll of 2d. each, and were then allowed to walk to the suspension pier — having 1st inquired the Albion hotel if we could be taken in there — no! quite full — and then at a library, en passant, of one of the agents, about the packets sailing — there may be one on Friday —

the suspension pier beautiful — met with a very civil little man there at the one of the little wooden shops — He said he knew there would be no packet till Monday for an accident had just happened to one of the packets, another was before under repair, and there was now only one of the 3 packets in sailing condition — it sailed yesterday, and could not be back to sail again till Monday — would be 15 hours in going — or at least 12 — will sail about 6 1/2 on Monday morning — Bad hearing for us — the Albion hotel has been opened about 2 months — a regular charge made, and nothing allowed to be given to the servants — cheaper than the York hotel — 3 ladies a gentleman and a man and maid here 3 days and their bill was £50 — this alarmed us...

bought of [the shopkeeper on the pier] a 4/. book of plates of Brighton — he gave £16 a year for his little shop (staid there all the year) — too much but it answered well to him — he made his living chiefly by selling ginger beer — average sale 30 dozen a day — there have been days he had sold none but he has lately sold 75 dozen in one day — made it himself for 3 farthings a bottle — sold it for 2d. — so tied down, the corks had never occasion to use a corkscrew, and used the corks again and again — Captain Brown Royal Navy built the pier himself sole engineer and at his own expense — cost him £30,000. ...every person pays a toll of 2d. and the packets a certain toll — a storm last November did the pier £500 of damage — walked

to the end of it — my aunt can very well be shipped from the end of it in the carriage — beautiful view — delightful promenade — we must see Ireland's royal gardens, and Kemp town ...

1826 August Thursday 24 *No kiss* Had a capital night — beautiful town — both downstairs at 10 3/4 at which hour breakfast — my aunt pretty well — had the bill = 2.16.0 — no fault to find with it — determined to stay till Monday — send for the lady of the house Mrs. Sheppard — never goes to bed till 3 a.m. not up till 12 — change our sitting room — go higher — i.e. to the premier a very pleasant balconied room — ...M and I went out at 3 — went to a pastry cook close to here, and M had a basin (1/.) of capital vegetable soup — we then sauntered along the marine parade — went into a handsome building, 3 houses just finishing, (belonging to major Russell) with a doric colonnade in front of the ground floor, [illegible] the roof of it forming a charming balcony to the premier — went all over the house nearest this way — it would just suit us — should like it exceedingly if we lived for a while at Brighton —



then sauntered to Kemptown [sketch above] in this shape - 66 houses in the 2 crescents and 2 adjoining sides of the square and 11 houses in the top side of the square — altogether 77 handsome houses exclusive of those that are and are to be connected with the south ends of the crescents a. b. — forming a tout ensemble surely quite unique in England — not more than one 2 of the house quite finished — of the rest the greater part not having the slate put on the woodwork of the roof — went into one of the houses of the farther crescent — Mr. Strafford, the builder and proprietor of several of the houses, is living in it, but having a board of sale up, his wife very civilly shewed us all over — a good house — sale price £2800 — or rent £160 a year unfurnished — a purchaser might furnish it comfortably for £500 because all papering and painting done — customary for the buyer and seller jointly to pay for the title deeds which would in this case cost each party about £25. — the people thought us on the look to buy or rent a house, and we played our part very well — did not expect houses had been so cheap — an immensity of building going forwards here — surely they must be outbuilding themselves — several have been ruined by their undertakings in Kemptown, and obliged to throw [illegible] their houses on Mr. Kemp (the owner

of the ground) to finish, having spent all their money — we did not like the house here near so well as major Russell's — went to the far end of Kemptown, to the Bush hotel — the woman civilly shewed us all over it — she and her husband building it themselves — will cost them £1200 — hot and cold baths — every convenience — will surely be an excellent hotel —...

Friday 25... *Good kiss last night got into bed again this morning for half hour and had another kiss...* my aunt and M and I went out at 2 in a pony carriage to Kemp town and back in 3/4 hour — my aunt much shaken, and could not bear it any longer — M had a basin of soup at the pastry cook's — we sauntered about a little and then came in to see how my aunt was — went out again about 4 to Ireland's gardens — prettily laid out with temples etc. for a sort of Vauxhall — wires hanging from tree to tree — a tennis-court, and bowling green — a band of music playing there — ...In returning home went into the bazaar — a pretty little thing of the kind — bought a 2nd hand thermometer about 10 inches long, in a red moroccan case for 5/. the man asked 6/. — Got home at 6 1/2 — washed our hands dinner at 6 — At 7 a storm of heavy rain and thunder and lightning came on which lasted about an hour — the perpetual sheet lightning illuminated all around us, and had a fine effect — not much thunder, nor yet very loud — streams of electric fluid seemed every now and then to shoot in zigzag currents down the sky — ...the air seems soft and muggy here— It would not suit my aunt—'tis too damp—...

Saturday 26... settled the accounts of yesterday and paid our bill — packed, and off at 1 very well satisfied with the civility of the people, and with their charges, and having been very comfortable — my aunt wonderfully well — the bustle seemed to do her no harm — Brighton (York hotel) to Newhaven 9 miles new road — every now and then deeply excavated through the chalk hills and the stuff thrown into the next valley this sinking raising so as to make the road very good considering the excessive unevenness of the country...

Maria and Mariana board the packet at Newhaven, which takes them to new adventures in France...

From Diary no.9. Published by kind permission of the West Yorkshire Archive Service Calderdale, online catalogue no. SH:7/ML/9/0148

With particular thanks to Ruth Cummins, Calderdale Archivist.



Val's Taverne – the Bar in the Basement

Val's Taverne, in the basement of No 11 Chichester Terrace, was a flourishing bar or club in the 1950s. The photograph is in the form of a postcard, one of the many Val would send out regularly to patrons in order to encourage their visits.

The licence, unusually, was held by Val herself. It was very difficult for women to obtain licences at this time; opening hours were strict and enforced by the police. However, Val ran the place as a club. There were lots around at that time, which meant more flexible opening hours in the mornings and afternoons. She can be seen in the photograph leaning against the bar.

Longstanding Estate resident Karl Gisholt, who grew up in No 12 Lewes Crescent, recalls that having a 'local' so near at hand was very welcome for some residents. He remembers his mother being one of Val's regulars, and also being asked round in 1953 to watch the Queen Elizabeth's Coronation on Val's television set with some of his friends.

Vanessa Minns

To see more Kemp Town stories go to
www.kemptonestateshistories.com



Garden Party – we need your help!

As this year's Regency Garden Party for our Bicentenary, on June 24th, is more elaborate than usual, we need skilful volunteers to help make **paper flowers and garlands** for the gazebos. Two sessions will probably be organised, and all materials will be provided. Please contact Vanessa Minns (vanessaminns.no28@gmail.com)

We are also collecting **straight-sided jamjars**, 6 inches high or so, and looking for people who could **arrange flowers** in them on the day. Again, please contact Vanessa.

Any **books** for the book stall will be gratefully received by Ann Wroe (annwroe@economist.com). Delivery to the stall on the day itself is fine, or email Ann in advance to arrange collection.

And last, volunteers are needed to help **setup and decorate** the stalls on the afternoon of June 23rd, from 3pm, and take everything down afterwards.

All help would be very much appreciated, to make this Bicentenary Garden Party the best yet!



A REGENCY GARDEN PARTY
to commemorate the
Bicentenary of the Kemp Town Estate

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

June 24th 2023
12 pm - 4 pm

SUSSEX SQUARE
North Garden

EVERYONE WELCOME

Many Entertainments
New Special Childrens' Area
Please wear pastel colours or
Regency dress optional

PAY BAR

NEWS – EVENTS – DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Notice is hereby given that
The 12th Annual General Meeting of the Company
Will be held on
SATURDAY 13th MAY 2023 at 10.00
EF Language School, 1-2 Sussex Square (Ground Floor)

AGENDA

1. **Welcome and apologies for absence**
2. **Minutes of the 11th (2022) Annual General Meeting of the Company**
3. **Accounts of the Company for the year ending 31 December 2022 - Treasurer's Report and appointment of Reporting Accountants**
4. **Resignation/Election of Trustees**
5. **Chairman's Report**
6. **Alex Bruce Legacy**
7. **Summary of Fund Raising Events**
8. **Website & Communication Report**
9. **Bicentenary**
10. **Any Other Business**

KTS members wishing to raise detailed queries are advised to contact the Secretary in advance of the meeting via secretary@kemptown-society.org.uk

Background papers and proxy voting forms can be viewed and downloaded from:
<https://www.kemptown-society.org.uk>