



# Regency Review

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE REGENCY SOCIETY

ISSUE 27 AUTUMN 2010

CONSIDERING THE PAST... FRAMING THE FUTURE

## From the Chairman

Many of you will know that my mind has been focused on the Old Market, which has sadly been sold after twelve exciting years. You can find out what has been going on at [www.theoldmarket.co.uk](http://www.theoldmarket.co.uk).

As treasurer of the Society for seven years and now as chairman I have always felt that its methods and constitution need to be brought into the 21st century, to serve our members and to conform with modern best practice. My predecessors all played a vital part in the preservation, conservation and regeneration of our city – but we need to ensure that the Society

remains as vital to Brighton and Hove as in the past. I can't do this on my own, and am delighted with the election of a diverse and enthusiastic committee. Each person has taken on a specific role. By autumn, we will have a draft constitution for review. We hope then to call a meeting to put a new working document to the membership.

We want to be able to talk to you more often and more directly. Please visit our website at [www.regencysociety.org](http://www.regencysociety.org) to confirm your e-mail details with us so that we can also communicate electronically in future. Stephen Neiman Chairman



THE JAMES GRAY COLLECTION Volume I 'The Seafront' photo no 68  
KINGS ROAD AND WESTERN ENCLOSURES

Note from James Gray: "The photograph on this postcard was taken about 1907. The publisher must have taken a liberty in naming this Hove Parade as it has always been in Brighton".

Every edition of the Regency Society newsletter will include a photo from a different volume of the James Gray collection of 39 volumes, starting in this issue with Volume I: The Seafront. Duncan McNeill sponsored the digitisation of this volume. See Page 3

## LECTURE SERIES 2010/11 Season

### CHANGE OF VENUE

Please note that the venue is **City College, Pelham Tower, Pelham Street, BNI 4FA** unless listed otherwise.

**Lectures commence at 7pm**

Free to Society members

£5 per lecture non-members

Wednesday 6 October 2010

*The Story of the Stanford Family*  
Dr Sue Berry

Wednesday 3 November 2010

*Palladio and English Palladianism*  
Professor Robert Tavernor

Wednesday 1 December 2010

*The Inaugural John Small Lecture  
Linked Villas of Amon Henry Wilds*  
Professor David Robson

Wednesday 5 January 2011

*Brighton's Interwar Suburban  
Housing*  
Geoffrey Mead

Wednesday 2 February 2011

*A New History of the West Pier*  
Professor Fred Gray

Wednesday 2 March 2011

*30s 60s 90s. Three models for  
20th-Century Urban Living:  
Embassy Court, Park Gate and  
Argus Lofts* – Paul Zara

**Venue:** The Basement,  
Argus Lofts, Kensington Street,  
BNI 4AJ

Wednesday 13 April 2011

Dr Anthony Seldon (Title tbc)

**Venue:** Music Room, Royal  
Pavilion (before the AGM)

Please see website or  
*Regency Review* Issue Spring 2010  
for lecturers' details



In the gardens of the Sans Souci Palace, Berlin

## Study Tour to Berlin June 2010

Very early on Thursday 4th June, 29 Regency Society members set off for five fascinating days exploring Berlin. The trip was organised by Audrey Simpson, and expertly led by David Robson.

We visited the Holocaust Memorial, remnants of the Wall, and several museums, including the Jewish, the Neues, beautifully restored by British architect David Chipperfield, and the astonishing displays of ancient architecture in the Pergamon.

The group ventured by train to Potsdam and the extraordinary rococo Sans Souci Palace, and by bus to Dessau, for the 1925 Bauhaus School of Art, Design and Architecture by Walter Gropius. We toured the restored School and looked around the houses in which Klee and Kandinsky had lived as staff.

Prof. Robson also led us around a variety of housing schemes for ordinary Berliners, mainly flats.

We visited examples of the work of numerous architects, including Wilford, (British Embassy) and Foster (Reichstag). We were very impressed by Berlin – the gardens and public transport system, and the sheer walkability of this exciting city.

Delia Forester

## Midsummer Party in the Secret Garden

Once again we were the privileged guests of Mrs Yvonne Dale to enjoy

the colourful loveliness of her garden. June is her chosen month, for it is then that the roses are at their most beautiful. The garden was resplendent in a host of perfumed blossoms. We were entertained by Ashley Beauchamp, a young flautist who played a hauntingly beautiful selection of music. Members and their guests enjoyed tasty substantial canapés supplied by John Porteous, served with elegance by the staff of the Old Market. Wine flowed, and Regency Society members enjoyed the sunshine and conversation.

Audrey Simpson

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## Proposed Tour of the Veneto, June 2011

Following a successful visit to Berlin in June 2010, David Robson and Audrey Simpson are proposing to organise a study tour to the Veneto in 2011. The main aim of the tour will be to explore the world of Andrea Palladio, the 16th-century architect who later exerted such a big influence on Georgian and Regency architecture in Britain. For that reason we will base ourselves in Vicenza – Palladio's home during most of his career. As well as visiting key Palladio buildings in Vicenza such as the City Hall and the Olympic Theatre, we'll use it as a base from which to visit a selection of his villas in the surrounding country-side, as well as his bridge at Bassano. We also plan to study the work of the modern master architect Carlo Scarpa who developed creative ways to breathe new life into old buildings and we'll visit his tomb for the Brion family. The tour will also include day trips to Verona (the Roman theatre and arena, the Giardini dei Giusti and Scarpa's Castelvecchio Museum), Mantua (the Ducal Palace, Alberti's St Andrea, Romano's Palazzo del Te) and Venice (Palladio's churches of St Giorgio and il Redentore, Scarpa's Querini Stampalia and Olivetti showrooms).

We plan to fly to the Veneto on

Wednesday 1 June and return to the UK on Monday 6 June – this gives us five nights and six days. We will fly from Gatwick with a budget airline and stay in Vicenza in a four star hotel. The estimated price is working out at around £500 per person (i.e. approximately £475 for sharers and £525 for singles). This price includes air travel, airport transfers in Italy, bed & breakfast accommodation for five nights and the use of a coach throughout. It will not include main meals or entrance tickets. The weather could be quite hot during the day, and the tour will involve some walking. It will be planned carefully to avoid being overly strenuous, but participants should be reasonably fit.

If you are interested, please email David Robson on [greenstett@gmail.com](mailto:greenstett@gmail.com). In registering an interest it is essential that you provide us with your email address, postal address and main telephone number. Numbers will be limited to 26. The tour is likely to be over-subscribed, so you should register early to avoid disappointment. We will then ask you to pay a non-returnable deposit – the balance will be payable nearer to the time of departure.

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## Free Period Homes Workshops

Do you have problems with damp, dodgy render, rotting sash windows or clogged plaster?

Neil England, conservation consultant, is running a series of free workshops over the Heritage Open Weekend, 9-12 September. He'll help you to understand your period home and to try out ornamental plaster techniques.

Six places per workshop: Regency Society members get preference.

To book: type in all of the following link (NB with no spaces) [www.rth.org.uk/opendoor10/details.php?id=774954911](http://www.rth.org.uk/opendoor10/details.php?id=774954911)

## Saltdean Lido

Saltdean Lido "is one of the finest lidos to emerge in the 1930s, a lido that is unique" according to English Heritage's publication *Liquid Assets*. This Modernist gem is now under threat of becoming another site for development turning it into flats and an indoor leisure centre.

Currently the Save Saltdean Lido Campaign (see below) is working to challenge this and prepare alternative proposals that would retain this vital community resource without the flats. Architect/designer Sir Terence Conran, who supports the campaign, said: "I find it quite disgraceful that the lido has been left to rot. We must find ways to preserve our architectural heritage and breathe new life in to beautiful old buildings."

With Conran and Partners working with the local residents there is the opportunity for an alternative proposal that would retain the current building, improve its facilities and leave a legacy that in 70 years time future generations would want to save!

Martin Auton Lloyd

[www.saltdeanlidocampaign.org](http://www.saltdeanlidocampaign.org)

## Boxed in by BT

They are as tall as President Sarkozy, as wide as a double bed and as deep as an outside wall – and they're coming to a street near you.

While the 278 boxes holding the fibre optics for BT Openreach's new superfast broadband will provide an improvement to Internet access throughout the city, at 63"x 48"x 18" (1.6m x 1.22m x 46cm) they will also form a large and unsightly addition to our conservation areas. They will be sited close to, and in addition to, existing junction boxes. BT does not offer a smaller model and the CAG has opposed initial planning applications.

The Regency Society has been working closely with the council and acting as co-ordinator for conservation and amenity societies



Saltdean Lido (courtesy of Conran & Partners)

across the city. We aim to persuade BT to consult us about locations before more applications are made. As a letter published in the *Argus* and signed by six societies put it: "They have the technology. We have the local knowledge. Together, we can get the best possible result."

Sarah Gibbings

## James Gray

James Gray 1904-1998. The Regency Society purchased his collection on his death, a plan that was arranged during his lifetime. James Gray moved to Brighton, with his mother, when he was 18. He wrote in 1972: "I travelled to London on the 7.10am train, but in the evenings and at weekends I walked miles through the streets of Brighton and Hove, exploring the many courts, alleys

and twittens, now alas, nearly all 'improved' out of existence. I memorised street names, noticed similarities of buildings in different areas and by research found the names of the builders and the periods of building. I bought... books and old directories of Brighton, which added to my knowledge of the history and growth of the town. In 1950 I started my photographic collection with six old photographs of Western Road c.1910."

To view the collection:  
[www.regencysociety-jamesgray.com](http://www.regencysociety-jamesgray.com)

Prints of the photographs and details of charges can be obtained from the History Centre at Brighton Museum:  
[www.objectimages@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:www.objectimages@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Selma Montford

## OBITUARY

### Corrine Bennett – Distinguished Conservationist

Corinne Bennett will best be remembered locally as consultant architect for the exterior restoration of the Royal Pavilion, poorly built in the first place and badly restored using a form of plastic instead of natural stone, an error she quickly reversed. An expert in every aspect of stone restoration she was appointed architect to Winchester Cathedral in 1974, the first woman to be selected to advise on an English cathedral. She subsequently restored the Albert Memorial and worked on Charleston in Sussex. Corinne was educated at the Sacred Heart Convent in Hove. In later years if I ever wanted an expert opinion on restoration techniques, she was unfailingly generous with her advice.

John Wells-Thorpe

## Country Houses of the City c.1500-1700

The City of Brighton and Hove has spread over a dozen 'ancient' parishes on the South Downs: Aldrington, Brighton, Falmer, Hangleton, Hove, Ovingdean, Patcham, Portslade, Preston, Rottingdean, Stanmer and West Blatchington. During the early 1500s the village of Brighton began to expand and to become a town, by the early mid 1600s numbering about 3,500 – more residents than Lewes or Chichester. This was thanks to long distance fishing. The surrounding parishes were entirely rural. They produced wheat and barley as cash crops, and large flocks of sheep. This type of agriculture was most efficient on large farms, characteristic of the downs by 1800.

By the 1500s the downs were also popular for hunting, and as a means of travel between the east and west ends of Sussex. By 1700, country houses stood every few miles along them. The number of houses declined from the 1760s, when the larger estates expanded by acquiring smaller ones; surplus country houses were either demolished or became farmhouses.



Benfield House, Hangleton by Nibbs, mid 19th century.

Before 1500 the only 'country' house within the present city's boundaries was **Benfield**, a large hunting lodge used by the wealthy Covert family with estates in Slaugham to the north in the Sussex Weald. The Bellingham family built **Hangleton Place** (now a pub) in the mid 1500s in a courtyard style. Sold to the Earl of Dorset in the 1590s, it soon ceased to be a country



Stanmer House in the 1820s from T.W. Horsfield's *The History and Antiquities of Lewes and its Vicinity*.

house although for a while a wing was reserved for the use of the owners as they travelled to Halnaker House in West Sussex.

Richard Shelley, a son of the owner of Michelgrove (a massive house that stood on the downs in the parish of Clapham, West Sussex) bought land in Patcham. He probably built the original **Patcham Place** before 1552. The substantial older house is hidden behind a facade of black mathematical tiles. They disguise the extension of the older house between 1764 and 1782 by the Paine family and possibly some seventeenth-century work too.

The Shirley family demolished the ancient house at Preston and built **Preston Place** in the 1590s. In the 1730s the Western family turned the

house ninety degrees to face north / south, and in the 1760s added wings which can be seen most clearly from the north side. In 1792-3, Nathaniel Kemp (uncle of Thomas Read Kemp), who had rented Preston Place, built **Ovingdean Place**. Henry Pelham commissioned Nicholas Dubois to design the austere 1720s **Stanmer Place** in sandstone from Lindfield, and demolished the extensive living quarters of the old house.

The only house we have lost is Benfield. The rest survive, though most have been considerably altered.

A note on names – the Georgians used the term 'Place' to describe country houses, rather than 'manor', a Victorian term that has caused much confusion since!

Sue Berry

## Royal Pavilion Study Day

Saturday 2nd October 2010

The Royal Pavilion and Museums Foundation and the Georgian Group  
**Old Law Court Lecture Theatre, Church Street, Brighton**  
 (opposite the Corn Exchange) 10am to 5.30 pm

*George IV, Patron of the Arts* – Giles Waterfield

*Henry Holland and the early Royal Pavilion* – Prof. David Watkin

*Porden and Nash at the Pavilion* – Geoffrey Tyack

*Chinoiserie in Britain 1600-1820* – David Beevers

*The Craces and Chinoiserie at Brighton* – Megan Aldrich

*The development of the Pavilion gardens over 200 years* – Mike Jones

*The sale of the Royal Pavilion to Brighton and its early use* – Sue Berry

**Bookings:** Send a cheque for £40 payable to The Friends of the Royal Pavilion. Post with an SAE for your receipt and programme to: Abigail Dennison, The Royal Pavilion & Museums Foundation, 4/5 Pavilion Buildings, Brighton BN1 1EE or telephone 01273 292789 to pay by card.

Fee to include tea in morning and coffee in afternoon. Lunch is not included.