



Regency Review

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE REGENCY SOCIETY ISSUE 28 WINTER 2010/11

CONSIDERING THE PAST... FRAMING THE FUTURE

From the Chairman

It is with sadness that I have to report the passing of Yvonne Dale, whose funeral I attended, along with fellow trustees, members and vice presidents of the society. Yvonne's contribution to the society, not only as Antony's wife but also as a supporter of the arts, crafts and heritage of our city, were highly praised at the service. She was given a good send-off. An obituary by John Wells-Thorpe appears on page 2.

Your committee has now secured the approval of the Charity Commission to the proposed new constitution, which will shortly be available on the Society's website. Prior to the lecture meeting on 2 March, we will be calling a **Special General Meeting (SGM)** for the sole purpose of considering and hopefully adopting the new constitution. It is necessary to adopt the new constitution in advance of

the Annual General Meeting so that the new constitution will guide the proceedings of the AGM.

I wish you all a happy and prosperous New Year and look forward to seeing you at the SGM.

Stephen Neiman, Chairman

LECTURES 2011

VENUE (except 13 April)

City College, Pelham Tower, Pelham Street, BNI 4FA

Lectures commence at 7pm

Free to Society members

£5 per lecture non-members

Wednesday 5 January

Scattered Squalor and Downland

Homes: Brighton's Interwar

Suburban Housing

Geoffrey Mead, Convenor of Local History and Landscape Studies, University of Sussex,

who will lead a walk relating to this lecture in Patcham on

Sunday 12 June at 6pm

Wednesday 2 February

A New History of the West Pier

Fred Gray, Professor of Continuing Education, University of Sussex, Trustee and historian of the Brighton West Pier

Wednesday 2 March

Special General Meeting at 6.30 (to be confirmed) followed by lecture at 7pm

30s 60s 90s. Three Models for 20th-century Urban Living in Brighton and Hove: Embassy Court, Park Gate and Argus Lofts

Paul Zara, award-winning architect and head of Conran's Brighton office

Note the change of venue: now at CITY COLLEGE not Argus Lofts

Wednesday 13 April

Music Room, Royal Pavilion (before the Society's AGM)

Anthony Seldon (see page 2)



THE JAMES GRAY COLLECTION Volume 2 'The Seafront' photo no 78 WEST PIER c.1870s (The digitisation of this volume was sponsored by Lavender Jones and Duncan McNeill. Prints and price details obtainable from History Centre at Brighton Museum. To view the collection: www.regency-society-jamesgray.com)

The West Pier was quite new when this photograph was taken about 1870. Judging by the number of different photographs in the James Gray collection of the pier in its early form, it must have been a great attraction to photographers. Work on the pier commenced in 1863, and the first pile was driven in 1864. It was first opened to the public on 6 October, 1866. At the pier head was a bandstand, one or two kiosks, but little else. Selma Montford

Yvonne Chevallier Dale 1914–2010

Antony Dale's unchallenged authority as a founding father of the Regency Society would not have been possible without the constant but unassuming support of his devoted wife Yvonne, whose death at the age of 96 was announced in October. She was born in London in 1914, one of two daughters of to Mrs. Clare Macfie and, following school, entered Art School. Later she had hoped to join Wedgwood, but circumstances intervened and she enlisted with the Red Cross where she met Antony.

Yvonne came from an age when it was naturally assumed that the wifely role was to provide understanding support for all that a husband undertook. She was a familiar and gracious figure at Regency Society events and not only expertly prepared and hosted luncheon parties for their many friends, but undertook many of the less glamorous tasks, including indexing Antony's many books.

In her own right, she was an extremely well-read and quiet



Photograph courtesy of Duncan McNeill

authority on botanical matters, sharing lightly-borne knowledge with countless Regency Society guests at each year's gathering at her Secret Garden. She was an enthusiastic and informed traveller, taking a particular interest in the Byzantine period. She also took many photographs for her own unique soirees.

In the 17 years since Antony's death, she was especially grateful to her good friend Dorothea Berwick whose engaging support and understanding was so essential to Yvonne's ongoing participation in Regency Society events. They also travelled together frequently.

We offer Madeleine, her daughter, our deepest sympathy at her sad loss and the Committee will shortly discuss in what form we should permanently mark Yvonne's life. The funeral took place on Friday 22 October on a bright and sunny morning at St. George's Church, Kemp Town, Brighton with many Regency Society members and friends present.

John Wells-Thorpe, Vice President

Bicentenary of the Regency

The historical period whose name the Society goes under began officially in February 1811. We hope to reflect this theme in the spring issue of *Regency Review*, when we will also include illustrations of the items owned by the Regency Society that are on loan to the Royal Pavilion.

Photographs, including this one, were taken recently by Keith Shaw – with kind guidance from David Beevers, Keeper of the Royal Pavilion.

Robert Edwards



The Level

The Council has plans to renovate the Level, using funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund and "Section 106 money" from the development of the New England Quarter. One of the proposals is to move the very well used skateboard park from its present location onto the southern-most triangle of the grassed area north of the Rose Walk.

The Regency Society has objected to this on the grounds that this is an historic piece of urban landscape, which should not have large ramps and walls or anything else permanent built on it, which will attract graffiti, and which would compromise the future use of the grassed area for other functions such as fairs, Festival events, and use by the public for simply enjoying the sunshine. We think the skateboard park should stay where it is.

Delia Forester

Annual General Meeting lecture

Dr Anthony Seldon is the eminent political historian and author of innumerable books including biographies of Margaret Thatcher, John Major, and Tony Blair.

From 1997 to 2005 he was a very successful headmaster of Brighton College; since 2006 he has been Master (headmaster) of Wellington College. One of his many achievements whilst at Brighton College was the development of the widely respected and inspiring City Forum, a discussion platform for visiting speakers.

His love of Brighton dates back to the 1960s, and he is the author of the much acclaimed *Brave New City* which looked at Brighton & Hove Past, Present and Future.

Audrey Simpson

Palladian London day tour May 2011

David Robson is proposing to lead a coach tour to London on Sunday 8 May 2011 to look at key examples of English Palladianism – the Queen's House in Greenwich, the Banqueting House in Whitehall, Chiswick House and Marble Hill.



Lord Burlington's Chiswick House, London

The coach will leave Brighton at 8.00am and return in the early evening. The cost will be about £15 per person. To register an interest please contact David Robson on greensett@gmail.com N.B. The study tour to the Veneto in June is fully booked.

Buildings at risk

In its Conservation Strategy Brighton and Hove City Council states its commitment to preserving and improving the urban environment. This programme includes liaison with owners of buildings of historic or townscape interest which require urgent repair or maintenance. These properties are listed in the Council's Register of Buildings at Risk, which is updated annually.

The Committee recently agreed to provide more proactive support for this important work and is therefore inviting members to help identify other properties requiring urgent repair. A photographic record will be created for inclusion in the Society's new on-line resource and a statement on each property submitted to the Council requesting inclusion in the Register of Buildings at Risk.

Helen Walker



Banqueting House, London by Inigo Jones



Villa Barbaro at Maser, by Andrea Palladio

Quiz

John McKean has photographed numerous locations in the city, taken from a particular angle or focused on a detail, to present a challenge to the viewer as to the whereabouts of the object or scene. It is hoped that a Quiz with these will form part of a future society event. Meanwhile here are two examples of the mystery pictures. Answers will appear in Issue 29 of *Regency Review*.



Royal Sussex County Hospital

Brighton and Sussex Universities Hospital Trust aims to submit a planning application in March or April 2011 for an immense redevelopment of the Royal Sussex County Hospital site. The plan is for comprehensive modernisation of facilities of this acute regional centre – neuroscience transferred from elsewhere, a major trauma centre instituted, the cancer centre expanded and the medical school facilities enhanced.



BSUH – 3Ts with kind permission

The planning is managed by a project team, 3Ts (www.bsuh.nhs.uk/about-us/hospital-redevelopment). Public exhibitions have been given at various locations, and a hospital liaison group has received regular presentations and consultations during the past year, primarily for local residents, but open to anyone interested. Presentations have also been given to the conservation advisory group, and information supplied by the trust to the Regency Society committee.

The project has received funding to complete designs. If planning approval is granted, an application will be submitted to the government for public funding of the scheme. The cost of the redevelopment is expected to be more than £400m, and the works are scheduled to take ten years. Reports on environmental impact are required by statute, and the project team is working with the relevant local authorities on the

location within Brighton & Hove of the off-site consolidation centre and the routing between it and the hospital of the large vehicle traffic.

The plans entail demolition of the present line of buildings immediately to the north of Eastern Road, including Sir Charles Barry's building. The two main new buildings on the south-east of the site would be similar in height to the existing tower block, which will remain. A helicopter pad would be positioned higher than the roofs. The replacement for the Barry building would be of similar height to the present.

Reports by heritage and conservation consultants and from English Heritage and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment may not be published until the planning application is made. Clearly residents in surrounding streets, extremely close to the site, will be most directly affected by the volume and massing. Two conservation areas, East Cliff and College, are adjacent to the site; and the helipad would enter certain views from and of the Grade I listed Kemp Town estate.

Opinions regarding the Barry building diverge in several respects. Only the Victorian chapel, in the centre of the building and on the first floor, is listed (grade II). English Heritage reassessed the main building in 2009 and reaffirmed their view that it is neither sufficiently interesting nor sufficiently unspoilt by accretions to merit listing. The judgment of the redevelopment project has usually been that to retain or restore the exterior of the original building is impracticable for clinical purposes (though the architectural information has not always appeared unequivocal on this point). Few dispute that



Photograph by Malcolm Dawes

retention would require some compensatory higher building in that area of the site.

The view of the building from Paston Place has come under increased focus. The design team has produced three consecutive provisional designs for the frontage in place of the main Barry façade, the latest being a dark-coloured vertical drum containing a revolving entrance. One alternative design proposal, for incorporation of the central façade within the remainder of the project's proposed scheme, has been offered to the project by a local practice (info@cchangearchitects.com). The Regency Society, in common with many other local and national societies, awaits the detailed application to decide on recommendations, but has monitored progress with the conservation advisory group.

Robert Edwards



James Gray Collection