

Design excellence and respect for the city's heritage – the draft City Plan

The emphasis on design excellence and the distinctive character of the neighbourhoods of Brighton and Hove is a key element of the vision at the heart of the new draft City Plan that has been welcomed by the Regency Society in extensive comments submitted to the council.

The Plan is a 200-page document that sets out the Council's vision of how the city should develop between now and 2030. It lays down the policies that will be applied when considering planning applications, such as the density of houses in multiple occupation, the need for space for business, future urban design standards and heritage policies.

We have also suggested that the reference to enhancing and maintaining the city's heritage should be strengthened by referring to the need to protect and promote the unique character for which Brighton and Hove are well-known and admired.

"We welcome the overall vision and have spent a considerable amount of time working through the detail of what will be a roadmap for Brighton and Hove's development until 2030," says Society chair Mary McKean. "We hope to play a significant part in the process of developing an Urban Design Framework, alongside the Conservation Advisory Group." See page 2 for our comments



Free day passes for members

There's a new bonus to being a member of the Regency Society – you can get a free day pass from each of the National Trust and English Heritage. You'll find details on the last page.

REGENCY SOCIETY WEEKEND single event tickets now on sale

Tickets for single events at the Weekend have now been put on sale, with prices from £6. Choose from:

The origins of the Regency Society and conservation of the Royal Pavilion

Illustrated talk by Jackie Marsh-Hobbs – Saturday 13 October 16.00, Sallis Benney Theatre: £10

The REGENCY SOCIETY WEEKEND Soirée

Explore the Royal Pavilion, Regency music, meet the experts – Saturday 13 October, Royal Pavilion 18.30: £6

A pay bar will operate in the magnificent Banqueting Room

Saturday bargain ticket

Both these events for £1 off: £15

Sunday afternoon tours

Choice of four tours – Sunday 14 October, different departure points at 16.00: £7

Postal booking only – see accompanying flyer or download from our website.

Hinton heads CAG



Roger Hinton, who heads our planning and conservation sub-committee, has been elected chair of the Conservation Advisory Group, which works with Brighton & Hove Council's heritage team on matters affecting listed buildings and conservation areas in the city. "I fell in love with Brighton in 1972," he says – and he's been actively working to ensure that its special character is preserved and enhanced ever since.

Draft City Plan – key points of our response

Issues we highlight include:

- The need for significantly better urban design in the **Brighton Centre and Churchill Square** area
- Development of **Brighton Marina** should generally be lower than the height of the cliffs
- Purpose-built student housing in the **Lewes Road** area should be designed to allow change of tenure in the future
- Further development in the **New England Quarter and London Road** should address shortcomings such as the lack of new buildings of real architectural quality, imaginatively designed public spaces and easy-to-follow pedestrian routes
- Careful consideration needs to be given to the infrastructure necessary if **Toads Hole Valley** is to be developed – inspiration could be drawn from successful Victorian suburbs, such as the Stanford Estate, and seafront squares with communal gardens
- There should be no further development on the south side of the full length of the **seafront** roadway between Black Rock and Hove Lagoon, while Saltdean Lido's heritage status should be respected
- The historic architecture of the **Valley Gardens** area should be protected and improved and the Palace Pier roundabout should become more pedestrian-friendly

You can download our full submission from our website, where you will also find a link to the full, 200-page draft plan and a summary prepared by the council.



Top: Toads Hole Valley – possible site for new development
Bottom: respect for heritage – Saltdean Lido



Signage scheme for Dome complex modified in response to objections

Visitors can find the Dome complex in Church Street and New Road difficult to navigate – hardly surprising, when the core of the buildings started life in 1805 as the Prince Regent's stables and riding hall. The Pavilion Theatre was added in 1935, shortly after the concert hall was given an art deco make-over.

A new signage scheme has been designed in response to research which shows that potential audiences and other visitors, particularly those not familiar with the area, are often confused about where the Dome is and how to get into it.

It features large, permanent banners on the exterior, new typography and internal signs and directions.

Brighton Dome and Festival have now responded to the Regency Society's concerns that elements of the exterior signage would be inappropriate on such important, historic buildings and have offered to withdraw the over-sized D on the south-facing wall of the Pavilion Theatre.

They have recognised that the lack of consultation with heritage and other local bodies before the submission of this planning application was an oversight and that full and proper advance consultations will take place over future Brighton Dome and Festival projects.

We have also been given further details of the external signage, including plans for its maintenance, and believe that it is unlikely to become weather-beaten and grubby, as we had originally feared, providing it is properly maintained. We are aware that these matters were also of concern to the planning committee. If the committee is satisfied on this point, we withdraw this aspect of our objection.

Top: example of over-sized D; centre: existing signage; bottom: interior proposal

All change for layout at Brighton Station

Major changes to the lay-out of Brighton station and a restoration of the historic main building are key features of proposals lodged with Brighton & Hove Council by Southern Railway.

The main building, whose imposing façade heads Queen's Road, dates from 1840 when the station first opened and is known as the Mocatta Building after the architect, David Mocatta. Its existing ticket office and travel centre will be moved to a new building on the eastern side of the site. They will be replaced by shops.

The WHSmith building and the indicator board on the main concourse will be demolished. The ticket gates will be moved to a more central position, with a new, smaller indicator board to the west, allowing a better view of the splendid station roof over the platforms.

Planning permission will not be needed for some of these changes where they relate directly to the provision of the train service. There is some debate over whether this permitted development status extends to the new shops.

The Conservation Advisory Group, which includes the Regency Society, has welcomed the plans but warns that the council's heritage team will need to monitor the detail closely in order to protect the historic character of the buildings.

In the early 1970s there was a plan to demolish the whole site. The station was to be moved underground, with offices, shops, homes and a 14-storey hotel above. Conservationists campaigned successfully against this scheme – and founded the Brighton Society in the process.

The site is now in the West Hill Conservation Area and parts of it are listed.

• You can see the plans at [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/planning, BH2012/02454](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/planning/BH2012/02454). A lot of the information is difficult to follow but the Heritage Report is well worth a look if you are interested in the history of the site. It includes old maps and photos.

From top: restored facade of the Mocatta Building; new station concourse; the station pre-1865; around 1910 (Regency Society James Gray collection)



Saltdean Lido in its heyday, c1938 (James Gray collection)

Saltdean Lido returned to council

Saltdean Lido has been handed back to Brighton & Hove City Council after months of negotiations designed to secure the future of the Grade II* complex, which is on English Heritage's *At risk* register.

According to *The Argus*, the lessee, businessman Dennis Audley, received £160,000 for the remaining 111 years of his 125-year lease after a specially convened policy and resources committee meeting agreed to take over the site.

English Heritage describes the lido's condition as poor, says it "is suffering from a maintenance backlog" and that there is "a particular deterioration of its reinforced concrete". The council expects to spend a further £200,000 on essential repairs.

Architects Conran and Partners have worked with campaign group Save Saltdean Lido to find ways of securing the future of the complex, describing it as "an outstanding part of the city's heritage". Partner Paul Zara adds, "This is a beautiful, iconic building, which should be preserved. We look forward to having the opportunity to work further on the campaign's plans to successfully run the lido and to restore this fine building and facilities to their former glory."

Bid to redevelop "the ugliest building in Sussex"

Derelict for 20 years, 13-storey Anston House been named "the ugliest building in Sussex". Now its 1.5-acre site at the gateway to Brighton on Preston Road is set for possible redevelopment, with plans submitted to the council by Urban Splash, which describes itself as breathing new life into buildings and communities.

It will consist of two towers, one of seven and the other of 15 storeys. In between, there will be a raised patio and a link building. Much of the space will be for 231 flats. The rest will be offices, 158 car parking spaces and 240 cycle parking spaces.

The site is within one of the council's tall building zones – the 15 storeys proposed for the northern tower is the maximum permitted in the zone, although councillors are not obliged to approve a building of this height. The plans also mean moving the building line closer to the park than on neighbouring sites.

The development is generating strong views both for and against. Regency Society vice chairman David Robson, himself an architect, welcomes the scheme, calling it "an intriguing modern design" which "brings echoes of Regency Squares". He also thinks that it "forms a suitable edge to the park, reminiscent of Central Park in New York".

The Conservation Advisory Group, of which the Regency Society is a member, takes a different view.

It has urged councillors not to approve the scheme, which it describes as an over-development that will be "detrimental to the listed park". Another objector claims that the taller tower is so high that the park will feel smaller once it has been built.

- You can see the plans at www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/planning, BH2012/02205.

*Top and centre: visualisations of the proposed new development.
Bottom: Anston House*



New study on future of King Alfred leisure centre

A study into the future of the King Alfred leisure centre is being commissioned by Brighton & Hove City Council as part of a wider look into sports facilities in the city.

Controversial plans by starchitect Frank Gehry for a £300 million project to replace the 1939 complex with sports facilities and 750 flats were approved in 2007 despite substantial opposition – including objections from the Regency Society – but dropped a year later when funding was withdrawn by Dutch bank ING.

Since then, the council has spent more than £2.2 million on essential maintenance and improving facilities at the

site. It is now run by Freedom Leisure, which has carried out further work.

The council has set aside £40,000 to set up a project team to look at future options for the site. A spokesman says that this is the "very earliest stage" in any potential redevelopment and adds, "There have been no decisions on what should be done with the site – that's the kind of thing the new group would look at. Public consultation would be crucial at every significant stage."

Meanwhile, Hove businessman Rob Starr has been working with Hawarth Tomkins, architects to the art world, on plans to demolish the leisure centre and replace it with an arts complex including a gallery, two theatres and music studios, plus health facilities including a swimming pool. He is also keen to consult widely before any designs are worked up. Hawarth Tomkins' projects include the Young Vic, the London Library, the National Theatre Studio and the Hayward Gallery.

£55 million expansion planned for Brighton College

Brighton College has mounted a £55 million, ten-year programme of improvements and expansion and the first planning applications – a tower over the front entrance, a £6 million boarding house and a new dining hall, music and drama buildings – are already in.

The proposed buildings are potentially prestigious items of architecture.

The slim clock tower in a Victorian gothic style above the front entrance (*top right, with the current gatehouse below*) is essentially decorative. It is modelled on a collection of plans and drawings by the original architects of the surrounding building – the gatehouse was designed by TG Jackson in 1884-8 and was always meant to have a clock tower.

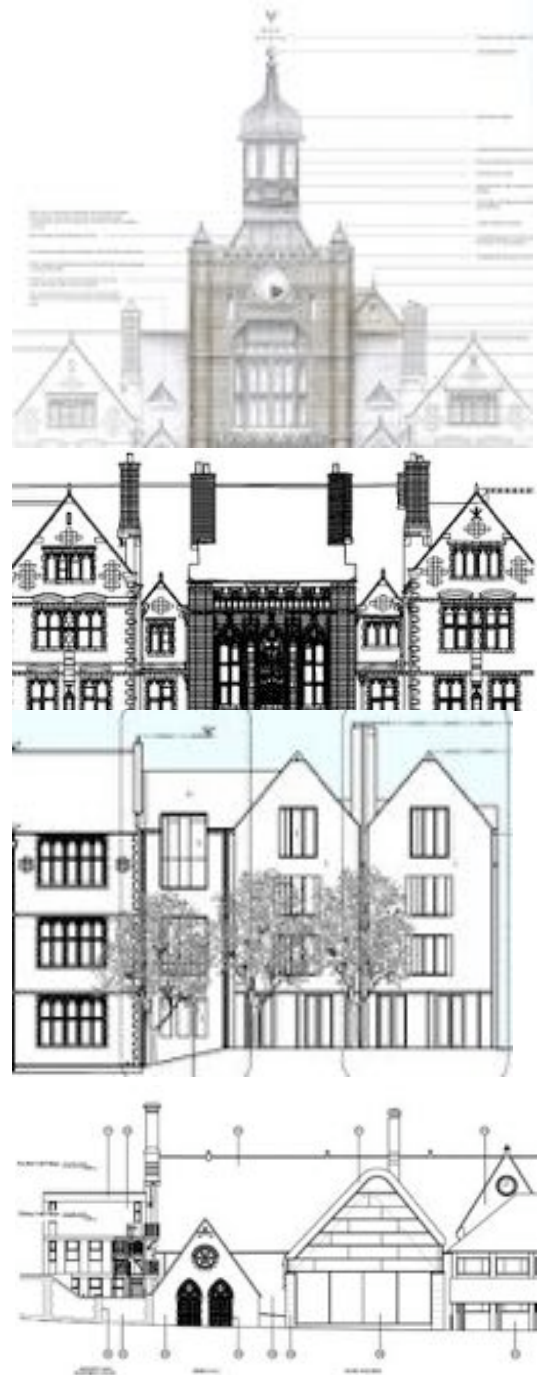
The proposal that would have the greatest impact on public views of the college is a building in the south-east corner of the main school site, at the corner of Eastern Road and Walpole Road: a four-storey boarding house (*third down, right*) in a modern design but with gables, materials and massing intended to match those of the adjacent existing listed red brick facades that form the familiar view along Eastern Road.

Meanwhile, some very different new architecture by another practice is planned for the north parade of school buildings that line the southern edge of the playing field. This area can be viewed less closely from outside the school but quite clearly from neighbouring Walpole Terrace and College Terrace – the latter facing the vista across the sunken playing field – both of which are in the College Conservation Area.

In this scheme, the present science building and part of the dining hall would be replaced by a new dining hall in a very modern idiom with a strongly triangular north elevation, along with a more conventionally contoured music and drama building with contemporary detailing (*bottom right, shows the edge of the servery and new boarding house, the dining hall and start of the music building*). Both are within the existing area of the college's architecture and of a height in keeping with the general rooflines.

Although part of the demolition involves a listed building, advice from conservation officers indicates that the demolition is of structures attached to, and not contributing to, the special or historic interest of the listed building.

• You can see the plans at www.brighton-hove.gov.uk, BH2012/01992, and BH2012/01993, BH2012/02379 and BH2012/02378.



London Road gets a £100,000 boost

London Road is getting a £100,000 shot in the arm from a government grant – it's one of 15 out of 392 applicants nationally to win the cash and advice from television retail guru Mary Portas (seen here on a similar mission in Dunstable) and her team. The bid was put together by Brighton and Hove City College, The Federation of Small Businesses, the London Road Local Action Team, local traders and the council. David Litchfield, development manager of Phoenix Media, who were involved in the bid process, says, "We really needed that shot in the arm and we now need to make sure we use the money wisely. It just shows what you can achieve when you all get together as a group and put your heart and soul into a project."

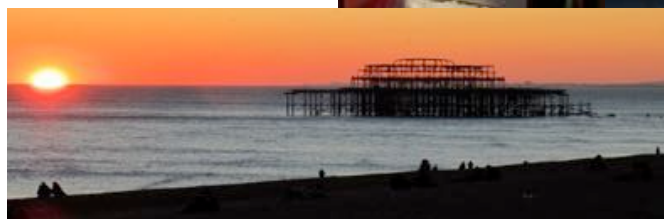
Can a poacher ever turn gamekeeper?

Proposed legislative changes could see advice from council conservation staff replaced by the views of agents employed by applicants for planning permission. There are obvious dangers, argues Regency Society chair Mary McKean.

Look up from the beach at Brighton and Hove's Regency and Victorian seafront buildings and you'll see some of the finest stretches of coastal architecture in the country – and, indeed, Europe. Many of these are among the 3,000 or so buildings throughout the city that are listed as being of architectural or historic importance.

They form a crucial element of what makes Brighton and Hove such a special place, whether they are part of the great Regency set pieces for which the city is famous, charming older buildings in the heart of urban villages such as Portslade or Rottingdean, or 20th century gems such as Saltdean Lido and Embassy Court.

The Regency Society (despite the name) is concerned with the future of all these buildings, of all these periods, and we're worried that they could be threatened by proposed legislation that is currently out for unusually brief consultation.



Lurking inside the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill is a suggestion to change the way permission is given to alter listed buildings (Listed Building Consent, or LBC). Currently, if you want to add an extension, replace the windows, strip out original plasterwork, modify the internal layout or do almost anything that might change the historic character of a listed building, you need consent from the council, which adheres to a strict system designed to ensure that our heritage is protected. The higher the listing grade, the stricter the rules.

So you submit an application for LBC and the council's specialist staff assess what you want to do and recommend whether or not you should be allowed to go ahead. Admittedly, this is a complicated process that can create delays but it offers invaluable protection to our precious heritage.

In its place, the government proposes that these specialist staff can be replaced by "independent accredited agents" employed by the applicant. At the moment, an agent submits most large-scale applications in places such as Brighton and Hove. Detailed heritage assessments are frequently included. So, the government reasons, it is logical to dispense with local authority expertise and rely on the experts employed by the applicant to make the recommendation on whether changes should or should not be approved. This may sound logical to the government. To us, it sounds as if we could face a

shortage of independent, council-employed gamekeepers, while the poachers are left to employ the gamekeepers themselves. This is bound to put the accredited agents (how they are to be accredited is yet to be defined) in a difficult position in situations where, if they were working truly independently, they would be inclined to recommend against approval of a particular scheme.

No wonder this proposal has already attracted criticism from the likes of the Royal Town Planning Institute, the Institute for Historic Building Conservation and even the Law Society, as well as conservation societies such as the Regency Society.

We are all particularly concerned that the consultation period



for this potentially disastrous change was a mere four weeks, instead of the usual 12 – and, as is often the case with controversial

consultations, it's taking place while a lot of people are on holiday. Apparently the rush is to make sure this fits in to the timetable for wider legislation on regulation but the brevity of this consultation seems contrary to the rhetoric of localism.

Other proposals in the consultation are less controversial. They include setting a short

time limit for councils to say whether LBC is needed; grouping types of similar applications together in a process known as class consents so they can be dealt with in the same way; and issuing certificates of exemption from LBC. We'd like longer to look into these ideas but at first sight they seem promising.

So where do we go from here? One option that would fill the skills gap might be to set up a national register of inspectors, appointed and employed by an independent body such as English Heritage, who would be paid by those who want to make changes to listed buildings.

Certainly, we need to highlight the potential dangers of the changes that are being proposed – objections had to be in by 23 August. The Regency Society's was among them.

Many of Brighton and Hove's most precious buildings have been around for 200 years and we want to ensure they will survive for at least another 200. A valuable piece of our history can be seriously damaged in an afternoon. We should not rush to demolish a system set up to prevent this from happening.

Czech out this trip – Bohemia and beyond

Alison Minns reports on a journey through Bohemia and beyond

A heady mix of Romanesque, Renaissance, Gothic, Baroque, Rococo, Jugendstil, Wiener Werkstätte, Biedermeier, Modernism... the Regency Society tour of Prague, Brno and Vienna organised by David Robson laid it all out before our bedazzled eyes. David decoded, demystified, enthused, explained. None of us could master Czech, so below is a simple alphabet to try and encapsulate the erudition and excitement of our six days in Prague (*below, left, and opposite, right*), Brno and Vienna.



A is for Professor **Alois Nový**, David's friend who took us under his wing and our other wonderful local guides, notably the genial Martin and the charming monk

B is for shoe magnate **Tomáš Baťa's** skyscraper (1938) and our utter amazement at Baťa's novel office accommodation – a lift, complete with running water

C is for **Castles**. Particularly memorable are the windswept and bone-chilling Prague Castle and the Hogwarts look-alike Pernstein

D is for architect Kilian Ignaz **Dientzenhofer** and his essence of Bohemian Baroque

E is for the Hotel **Evropa** – our gloomy but glorious Art Nouveau accommodation in Prague

F is for Ginger and **Fred**, the nickname of Gehry's Dancing Building set at a rakish angle

G is for **Gesamtkunstwerk**, where the architect designs the exterior, interiors, furnishings and landscaping of a building to form a cohesive whole

H is for the **Housing** estates we saw, including the kilometre-long Karl Marx Hof with 1,382 apartments (1927-1930); the model communist era suburb of Brno

I is for our carefully planned **Itinerary**. We packed a huge variety of visits and experiences into six days but David was flexible enough to accommodate changes of plan

J is for **Jugendstil** (Art Nouveau), which appropriately managed to interweave and intertwine itself everywhere.

K is for **Klimt**, whose 150th anniversary it is and who featured prominently in the Vienna museums.

L is for **Libraries**. The Strahov Monastery, whose Theological Hall (library) from around 1720, stunned us all

M is for the liveable-in **Müller House** designed by Adolf Loos (1920-1930), with its interacting room levels and idiosyncratic colour scheme – the embodiment of gesamtkunstwerk

N is for **John of Nepomuk** who, refusing to divulge the secrets of the confessional, was thrown into the river by King Wenceslas, thereby becoming a martyr. His tongue (thankfully just a representation) features in the roof of the delightful Santini church at Zelená Hora

O is for **Opera**. Some of us were lucky enough to attend performances at both the Prague and Vienna State Opera Houses

P is for the **Pegas** microbrewery, where we over-indulged in dumplings, palačinky (pancakes) and beer

Q is for our persistent **Questions**, which David was always able to answer, keeping us in order and (mostly) to time

R is for the **Regency Society**, under whose aegis the tour was organised

S is for **Jan Santini** (1677-1723), a favourite of David. His remodelled church at Sedlec contains a quirky ossuary, including a disconcerting chandelier made of human bones

T is for Mies van der Rohe's **Tugendhat House** (*below, left*) with its clean lines, spacious interiors

U is for the **UNESCO sites** that bowled us over at Sedlec, Kroměříž, Lednice, Zelená Hora and Brno



V is for **Vienna**, where we did museums, galleries, castles, housing estates, churches, monuments, opera, cafés, pastries, beer and walking... and stayed in a youth hostel!

W is for **Otto Wagner** whose ornate yet understated Steinhof church, was completed 1907 (*above, right*). He did a nice line in railway stations (Stadtbahn), too

X is for (e)**Xcellent**. It was.

Y is for **Yes**. If you asked any of us if they'd do it (or a similar Society tour) again, they'd respond with an emphatic "Yes!"

Z is for **Zlín**, home to film studios and birthplace of Sir Tom Stoppard... and also for Zzzzz – the sleep I need to catch up on before the RS Glasgow tour

In an English seaside garden

The sun shone, the wind blew (don't you love the English summer?) and 100 guests gathered in Marine Square for our annual garden party because the steps in our normal venue, the Secret Garden, had become unsafe after months of rain. Our thanks to the square's enclosures committee for making us welcome.

This year's caption competition winner can take his or her pick of a print from the James Gray Collection, our photographic archive. All you need to do is tell us what's going on in this photograph of the mayor and our chair, Mary McKean. You can e-mail your suggestions to regencysocietybh@gmail.com or send them to Regency Society, 18 Bedford Place, Brighton BN1 2PT.



Lectures and events for the 2012-2013 season

Highlights include the Antony Dale lecture in the Music Room of the Royal Pavilion on *The life and works of Sir John Soane*, given by Ptolemy Dean, right. Many of you will know him as a presenter on BBC2's *Restoration* but he is also an architectural historian who runs a conservation practice. He is an adviser to the National Trust and Surveyor to the fabric of Westminster Abbey. He is also the author of two books on Sir John Soane. There is a charge for this lecture to cover the cost of hiring the Music Room.

Other topics range from Indian textiles to the building of the Dome and from Regency colours to the conflict between energy efficiency and conservation.

A number of our 2012-2013 lectures will follow the theme of the **REGENCY SOCIETY WEEKEND**, which replaces the usual October lecture. Subsequent lectures will develop themes from the weekend.



The Georgian town house and how it worked

7 November

Neil Burton, architectural historian. His talk ranges from town planning to the construction and design of houses.

A conversation about conservation – should we be conserving energy or architecture?

5 December

Talk by Duncan Baker Brown of BBM Sustainable Design, which specialises in low-energy design. He argues that the paramount need to make our buildings more energy efficient obliges us to rethink our attitude to our built heritage. Followed by a debate.

Indian textiles in Georgian Britain

9 January

Rosemary Crill, curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum and author of a history of chintz. The story of chintz lies at the heart of Regency fashion and underscores the links between Britain and India that developed during the 18th century.

William Porden and the building of the Brighton Dome

6 February

Geoffrey Tyack on the life and work of William Porden, who designed the Prince Regent's riding hall and stables and the house of his sometime wife, Mrs Fitzherbert.

Antony Dale lecture, Music Room, the Royal Pavilion The life and work of Sir John Soane

6 March

Ptolemy Dean, architectural historian, television presenter and author of two books on Soane.

There will be a charge of £10 to cover the costs of hiring the Music Room and a glass of wine.

John Small lecture, followed by the AGM Regency Colour and colour theory

3 April

Alexandra Loske, art historian attached to the University of Sussex, who is currently researching the use of colour in the Royal Pavilion.

Unless otherwise specified, lectures take place on Wednesdays at City College, Pelham Street, Brighton BN1. They all start at 7pm. We have adopted the Breeze Brasserie in Trafalgar Street as our preferred post-lecture watering hole, where you can talk to the speaker over a drink and meet the Society's officers and trustees. Entrance is free to members – please remember your membership card. Guests and non-members are charged £3 to defray the considerable costs of the lecture series. City College offers full wheelchair access, good public transport connections and ample parking nearby.

Free day passes for National Trust and English Heritage properties

We're always looking for extra benefits for our members and now, courtesy of our friends at Civic Voice, Regency Society members are eligible for free day passes from the National Trust and English Heritage. Both offer great days out at hundreds of locations nationwide. If you are already a member of the National Trust, you can give your free pass to a friend or relative but the English Heritage pass is not transferable.

To apply online for the National Trust day pass, which is worth up to £14 and runs to 30 April 2013, or to apply online for the English Heritage pass, which runs to 31 January 2013, go to www.regencysociety.org and follow the links. Restrictions apply – see the website links for details.

To apply by post, please write down your:

- Name(s) • Full address, including post code • The fact that you are a member of the Regency Society (or members if you are applying as a joint member). You might also want to include your telephone number in case of queries.

Enclose a stamped, addressed envelope and send your details to:

Ian Harvey, Civic Voice
Unit 101, 82 Wood Street
Liverpool L1 4DQ

Mark your envelope *National Trust Offer* or *English Heritage Offer* or put both on the cover, as appropriate.

If you experience any difficulties booking online, e-mail ian.harvey@civicvoice.org.uk. Enjoy your day or days out!