

THE
MONTPELIER
AND
CLIFTON HILL
ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15

Executive Committee

Jim Gowans, Chairman
Mick Hamer, Vice Chairman
Corinne Attwood, Honorary Secretary
Chris Jackson, Honorary Treasurer
Tony Davenport, Honorary Membership Secretary
Michael Fisher
Graham Towers
Gabi Tubbs

Co-opted Members to the Executive Committee

Carol Dyhouse
Brian Morris
Jane Osler
Ninka Willcock

Independent Examiner of Financial Statements

Arthur Collins OBE

Subscriptions

Due 1st April each year
Single - £10
Couple - £15
Corporate - £30

Executive Committee Report

Your committee has met on eight occasions since 1st April last year. Whilst there are vacancies for two trustees, all the officer positions have been filled and Brian Morris has been co-opted to serve for the first time.

In March Vice Chairman Mick Hamer announced that he would not stand for re-election to the committee at the AGM in May. He has served on the committee since 2007 and has made an immense contribution. He was a powerful advocate for the successful campaign to save the Royal Alex from total demolition, speaking at the public enquiry and defeating the arguments presented by the developer's barristers. As chairman in 2010-11 he steered the Association through a tricky period of constitutional reform and as vice chairman dealt effectively with legal challenges, winning compliments from a judge on his meticulous case preparation. He has kept the authorities on their toes, whether the issue be communal bins or planning processes whilst at the same time providing them with valuable information and advice on conservation issues. Council officers have recently accepted five buildings nominated by Mick for its draft local list and if, as expected, this list is approved by councillors it will represent a significant added protection for the buildings and for the areas in which they are located. As editor of and main contributor to our newsletter and website he has ensured that the Association's message is as widely broadcast as possible. It has been published three times each year without fail and at the same time the website has been regularly updated. He will no doubt continue to write the occasional article with his characteristic wit but will now retire as editor in order to concentrate on his own writing.

The Royal Alex or more precisely the Lainson Building is one of those buildings nominated by Mick Hamer for local listing. In February the committee was once again given a guided tour of the now virtually finished building by Taylor Wimpey. It was pleasing to see some of the 19th and early 20th century plaques had been reinstated but disappointing to note the loss of many interior features such as tiling and original joinery. The apartments now created are of an undeniable splendour and, despite being priced accordingly, are selling well. Modern building regulations have unfortunately required glass panels to be fixed above the balcony balustrades on the south facade but these are fairly discrete and allow residents access to the existing large balcony as well as to the smaller balcony which now has masonry balustrading to match, rather than the white timber seen in some early photographs. The other major development site affecting our area is the site of the former ice rink that adjoins St Nicholas church yard and is to the rear of Wykeham Terrace. The latest planning application for a residential block rather than a party hotel was

refused by the City Council Planning Committee but is now the subject of an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate. The Association has objected to the residential block because its height and size are hardly different to the previous application and has made a submission to the planning inspectorate pointing out that the controversial nature of the decision to grant the party hotel application makes that decision an unreliable precedent. The appeal decision, which will be made on written submissions only rather than a public enquiry, will not be made for some months, it seems.

The Association has objected to a number of minor applications that threatened the character of the area. These include repeated attempts to convert a front garden into a hard standing for motor vehicles in Victoria Street and a harmful extension to a listed house in Montpelier Road, which would also result in the loss of significant original parts of the building. In contrast, a good illustration of how to adapt a Victorian house for modern living whilst achieving a high standard of conservation was provided by the winners of the MCHA Conservation Award Plate whose restored canopy and other restoration works in Clifton Road featured in the March newsletter.

The Association continues to be represented on the Conservation Advisory Group (CAG) which will no doubt in due course consider the proposals for the site of the redundant Baptist Church in Montpelier Place. The MCHA has already made contact with the owners of the site and for further detail you are again referred to the March newsletter.

Members' meetings with lectures or informal talks or demonstrations have again taken place on three occasions and a Summer party was held by kind permission of Pauline Messum in her lovely garden, whilst a Christmas party was held in the beautiful setting of St Nicholas Church. About thirty MCHA members were also invited to a reception in the Mayor's Parlour in recognition of the contribution to the community made by the Association over the past forty five years.

As always I take this opportunity to thank you the members for supporting this charity. It is established for the public benefit and aims to stimulate interest in this area, where it promotes high standards of planning and design and seeks to preserve and protect its historic character.

On behalf of the Executive Committee I recommend this report to you and trust you will adopt it at the AGM 2015.

Jim Gowans, *Chairman*, May 2015

Treasurer's Report

The next two pages provide the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2015.

Both income and expenditure are comparable to last year. The Executive Committee notes the reduction in subscription income, which relates to some 30 households, and is encouraged by the more favourable position in relation to member-only parties and continued reduction in admin costs. Gift Aid claims for the last two years need to be made. We have reviewed our website hosting arrangements and identified a lower cost alternative, so I expect this to be reflected in the figures for next year.

Our position at the bank continues to be healthy and is very comparable to last year.

Chris Jackson, *Honorary Treasurer*, May 2015

Independent Examiner's Statement

I have examined the Financial Statements on pp. 6 & 7, without carrying out an audit, and confirm that they are in accordance with the records, information and explanations provided to me.

Arthur Collins, *Independent Examiner*, May 2015

Balance Sheet for the year ended 31st March 2015

	Notes			2013-14	
Fixed Assets					
Wootton Print	1	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
Current Assets					
Debtors	2	5.41		5.41	
Conservation Plates	3	320.00		400.00	
Room Hire Deposit	4	100.00		100.00	
Cash at Bank (Current Account)		3,199.76	3,625.17	3,154.65	3,660.06
Liabilities					
Current Liabilities	5	140.00	140.00	10.00	10.00
Total Assets less Total Liabilities			<u>3,610.17</u>		<u>3,775.06</u>
Reserves					
Opening Reserves		3,669.06		3,750.94	
Deficit for Year		-164.89	<u>3,504.17</u>	-81.88	<u>3,669.06</u>

Notes

- 1 The Wootton Print is in the Committee's possession.
- 2 £5.41 carried over from 2012-13 and relates to claims/counterclaims made against the Association by Roger Amerena. Please refer to the Association's 2012-13 Annual Report for further details.
- 3 Represents eight Conservation Plates. The 2012-13 and 2013-14 plates have been awarded.
- 4 Held by Brighton & Hove High School on account as a deposit relating to room hire.
- 5 Receipts of subscriptions in the period January - March 2015 which will be counted in the Financial Year 2015-16.

Approved by the Executive Committee on 14 May 2015.

Chris Jackson
Honorary Treasurer

Corinne Attwood
Honorary Secretary

Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31st March 2015

	Notes		2013-14	
Income				
Subscriptions	1	1,331.00	1,736.00	
Donations		80.00	35.00	
Events	1	1,058.00	803.00	
Gift Aid	2	0.00	0.00	2,574.00
		2,469.00		
Expenditure				
Events	1	744.79	634.41	
Meetings		240.31	286.00	
Leaflets/Stationery	3	176.15	60.00	
Admin	4	42.50	187.00	
Memberships		281.90	321.91	
Newsletters		1,057.25	1,166.56	
Gifts/Donations		10.99	0.00	
Use of Conservation Plates		80.00	0.00	2,655.88
		2,633.89		
Excess of Expenditure over Income		-164.89		-81.88

Notes

- Attendance at member-only parties has increased.
- Gift Aid claims for 2013-14 & 2014-15 to be made.
- This year's figure relates to the repairs on Association's website.
- Expenses in the Admin category continue to decrease this year as the new Constitution allowed for increased electronic communication with members.

The Report Cover is in the same colour as that originally used for the exterior of buildings in the conservation area.

The Logo of the Association is inspired by the Victorian cast iron and china street signs.