

THE  
**MONTPELIER**  
AND  
**CLIFTON HILL**  
ASSOCIATION

REGISTERED CHARITY  
NUMBER 267889

NEWSLETTER NO. 31  
OCTOBER 2019





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### ASSOCIATION CONTACTS

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The Montpelier and Clifton Hill  
Association was established in 1971 and  
is registered with the Charity  
Commission (Reg. Charity No. 267889).

The MCHA executive committee  
consists of;

**Jim Gowans**, Chairman

**Chris Jackson**, Honorary Treasurer

**Corinne Attwood**, Honorary Secretary

**Jack Tyson**.

The co-opted members are **Carol  
Dyhouse, Tony Davenport, Brian Morris,  
Jane Osler** and **Ninka Willcock**.

**Gabi Tubbs** is the conservation awards  
co-ordinator.

### MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Single membership is £10, couples £15  
and corporate £30.

Subscriptions are due on the 1st April  
each year.

### FOR YOUR DIARY

#### Autumn Lecture

Friday 18th October (see updated  
flyer)

#### Christmas Party

Tuesday 17th December (see flyer)

#### Spring Lecture

To Be Confirmed



The front cover shows 24 Montpelier Crescent which is grade II\* listed. It is soon to be decorated with a blue plaque to commemorate Octavia Wilberforce and Elisabeth Robins whose achievements will be featured in a future newsletter. Wilberforce is recorded in various street directories as being resident here from the 1930s to the 1950s.

The house is now the Seven Dials Medical Centre and was previously the offices of the Sussex branch of the British Red Cross. The central part of the crescent (No.7 to No.31) are ten grand detached villas, an impression carefully contrived by the architect A.H. Wilds by setting back the lower part of the building which links them. Each villa originally comprised either two or even three dwellings each surmounted by a

pediment supported by four pilasters (flat fluted columns) except in the case of No.s 24 and 25 which boast six pilasters, thus making this pair the grandest of all.

It is interesting to speculate on why this pair was not centrally located in the crescent in order to achieve some form of symmetry.

The north west orientation of the crescent is itself something of a mystery. The picture above shows the north end of the Crescent which is Grade II listed. As the houses were built out from the centre they became smaller, but still gave the impression of detached residences. However at the north end (No.35 seen above) and also at the south end, the pretence of being detached properties is dropped all together. **JG**



# INMAN ADVERT NOW “DISTRESSED” STREET FURNITURE



**Your committee has finally prevailed upon the BHCC Planning Enforcement Team as the two pictures illustrate!**

Not that the present situation regarding the Inman's advertising hoarding at the corner of Powis Grove and Dyke Road is entirely satisfactory.

The reinstatement of the original but now dilapidated timber sign is a step in the right direction but it would be nice to see Inman's behave with less petulance and repair the scruffy sign which hardly now preserves or enhances the conservation area or indeed their reputation as auctioneers.

It was in 2018 that, to the dismay of local residents, the large plastic sign appeared. The MCHA pointed out to the Council that this new sign did not comply with its own “Supplementary Planning Document 2007” because of its inappropriate size, design and materials. Shortly after the complaint was submitted a motor vehicle, travelling at night down Dyke Road, crashed into the new sign, battering the sign and demolishing the flint wall to which it was fixed!

The accident revealed that the new plastic sign had been placed over the old timber sign which itself received something of a battering as a result of the crash. The flint wall was nevertheless rebuilt and to Inman's credit it must be said, to a high standard of workmanship. But to the consternation of residents the plastic sign was put back!

Meanwhile the battered timber sign had been dumped it seems, in Inman's

yard where it languished for several months.

It is this bruised and battered sign which has now been fixed back onto the wall. The removal of the plastic sign had been delayed by the Council's claiming that it was a lawful sign, quoting some obscure section of the Town and Country Planning Act. The MCHA, having taken some pro bono legal advice, then demonstrated to the Council that this was not the case at all. The Council still dragged its feet but after further (by now rather terse emails) the MCHA succeeded in having the rules protecting the conservation area enforced. **JG**



## HISTORIC TELEPHONE BOX NOW RESTORED



**The before and after pictures of the telephone box on Dyke Road opposite St Nicholas church bring some cheer.**

The criminal damage to the box had taken place in the last two years and the fate of this Grade II listed box seemed sealed forever as the windows were smashed one by one and the spray painted tags proliferated. It is a sad reflection on the increasing lawlessness of our streets that a listed structure in a prominent position next to a listed Rest Garden and within yards of the mother church of Brighton could be left to the mercy of vandals in this way. There are two more Grade II listed telephone boxes of the same K6 design in the area. These are in Powis Square and were restored two years ago thanks to efforts of a local resident and the Little Mustard Shop which now holds the

lease for them. The Powis Square boxes are used as gallery space for emerging and varied artists and as a marketing tool for the Little Mustard Shop but to date no suitable advertising or other use for the Dyke Road box has been found. **JG**



# THE HANGING BASKET PROJECT - YEAR 2!



**Seven pairs of hanging baskets have again provided summer colour in Vernon Terrace.**

Thanks to the successful bid made by

the MCHA to the Co-op Community Fund in 2016 funding for the floral display was secured for three years. Next year not only does the funding end but also the test certificates for the seven lamp posts on which the 25g baskets are hung. The MCHA paid £103 for the testing of each of these seven lamp posts and if the project were to continue would have to pay a similar amount, just for a three year test certificate, once again. It is surprising that BHCC does not routinely test its lamp posts to at least support a pair of hanging baskets and it is then disappointing to learn that rather than contribute to the cost of testing the Council's lamp posts Regency Ward councillors chose to support "Art and Believe". The two

artists who seem to operate under this name are described on their web site as: "a professional outfit ... they really love to push the boundaries with people and organisations...". They have certainly pushed the boundaries with our councillors and BHCC having successfully obtained a one thousand pound grant from public funds for their "bright breath-taking geometric murals". The mural on the Bedford Tower has attracted complaints from residents of the Regency Square conservation area; the painting of the Grade II listed bus shelter by the Royal Pavilion has no listed building consent whilst the mural inside the Coggins Burger Restaurant in Dyke Road has already been painted over by the new management of Atelier du Vin! **JG**

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## AROUND ST. NICHOLAS' CHURCH, DYKE ROAD



The pink geraniums perfectly complements the octagonal stone "font" in St Nicholas' Church's Rest Garden and are the work of volunteers gardeners led by Upper North Street resident Richard Brown.

The Rest Garden on the west side of Dyke Road was opened as a graveyard in 1841 as a further extension to the graveyards on the east side. The Rest

Garden was locally listed in 2015 and is entered through the Grade II listed archway of 1840. It was laid out by Amon Henry Wilds although most of the headstones have been moved to the side walls leaving just the larger Victorian tombs in situ. The open spaces created have in recent years provided an excellent venue for open air theatre, most recently "A Midsummer Night's Dream" performed by the renowned Lord Chamberlain's Men during the 2019 Brighton Festival; the "high levels of mature vegetation" referred to in the local listing forming a perfect backdrop for Shakespeare's sylvan comedy. Along the north side of the garden are fourteen burial vaults also designed by A H Wilds and Grade II listed.

Just a few yards from the St Nicholas Rest Garden and on the edge of the conservation area Century House is the subject of a planning application for the replacement of the existing

pitched roof with an additional storey to create additional office space. The MCHA recommended refusal of this application to the Conservation Advisory Group which agreed to endorse the MCHA position and itself recommended refusal to the Council. It was argued that the additional floor would harm the setting of both the conservation area and the listed buildings nearby. **JG**





# SUMMER PARTY 2019 AND CONSERVATION AWARD

The MCHA plate for outstanding conservation work completed last year was awarded at this summer's garden party, held once again by kind permission of Pauline Messum in the lovely garden of her house in Clifton Road. Gabi Tubbs, the MCHA award co-ordinator, presented the Jill Pryke designed plate to Ray and Gunilla Bullock to recognise the time, effort and resources which the Bullocks devoted to rebuilding the annex of their listed 1845 house in Montpellier Villas.

The original house "Arden Lodge" was extended in the mid-20th century and it is this extension which has been rebuilt facing Victoria Road. Given its prominent position and proximity to the Grade I listed church of St Michael's and all Angels the project

required very careful planning and is now, together with its attractive front garden, a pleasure for all those walking through this part of the area to enjoy. The summer party itself was a convivial affair with, for a second year a red Béarn 2014 and white Jurançon "Grand Large". For those who wish to sample more of the latter it is available online from M&S at £11.50p a bottle, sadly the MCHA stock is exhausted!

A novelty this year was a white Sauvignon blanc "Château de Pocé" from the Loire, pictured is the château itself which is close to the famous château d'Amboise and is occasionally open to the public. Brexit or no Brexit your chairman promises "Do or Die" to bring back more interesting and good value wines from France when he travels there in 2020! JG



## 24 MONTPELIER STREET ROOF TERRACE REFUSED

**Planning officers have refused to grant permission for the removal of the existing "butterfly" roof and the construction of a roof terrace and sunroom at the house pictured, which is the three storey property behind the two storey corner property (currently occupied by a doctors' surgery). The reasons for refusal were as follows.**

"The loss of the historic roof form and addition of an incongruous and visually prominent extension would detract from and cause harm to the character and appearance of the host building, wider Montpellier & Clifton Hill conservation area and the setting of the Grade I listed Church of St Michael & All Angels. The proposed terrace, by reason of it having the potential to create activity and visual clutter at rooftop level in a historically sensitive location, would appear as an

unsympathetic feature that detracts from the historic character and appearance of the wider street scene within the Montpellier & Clifton Hill conservation area". The MCHA had recommended refusal to the Conservation Advisory Group which in turn recommended refusal to the Council planners (for much the same reasons as above).

It also drew attention to the fact that three similar applications for roof terraces in nearby streets had previously been refused. Whilst not of relevance to this planning application it is nevertheless interesting to note in the picture the "trompe l'oeil" door on the corner. It seems it was painted on the otherwise blank wall for the 2004 film "Wimbledon" starring Paul Bettany as a washed up tennis pro and Kirsten Dunst as an up and coming tennis star. Several scenes in the film feature a

betting shop. This was, in fact, the hairdresser "Headlines" on the opposite corner which was remarkably transformed by shop fitters to change its appearance from a hairdressers' to a turf accountant for just one week's filming. JG



# VIEWS FROM ST. NICHOLAS CHURCHYARD



## View of St Paul's West Street

This picture was taken by MCHA member Steph Pain in 2016, after the Ice Rink was demolished and before construction of the six storey apartment hotel which can be seen more or less completed in the second picture taken this summer.

## View from the churchyard today

The "serviced apartment hotel" was granted planning permission in 2012 amid great controversy. As the MCHA newsletter reported at the time: "The plans for a 56 room hotel were approved by the planning committee after a farcical series of votes in which the committee first rejected the plan, then voted down the reasons for rejecting the plan and finally decided to approve the plan".

The MCHA submitted a detailed objection to that application, citing amongst other things the Council's planning guidance note of March 2009 which was quite explicit about the height of any new development on the site. "Four storeys would probably be the maximum acceptable height for the development at its highest point." Although described in the application as five storeys the building is effectively six, dominating the southern part of the churchyard and casting shadow on the adjacent trees.

The building seems to be owned by "Supercity Apart Hotels" who already operate serviced apartment hotels in London and Manchester. An online advert from April this year now refers to over 60 one and two bedroom fully furnished apartments and is seeking to let the ground floor as a restaurant or gastropub at a rent in excess of £65k per year (exclusive).

The view, now lost, from within the churchyard of St Nicholas shows the grey tower of St Paul's West Street set against the blue sea to the left. St Paul's was designed by R C Carpenter who also designed the Woodard schools now referred to as Lancing College and Hurstpierpoint (Hurst) College. It was paid for by the Rev'd Henry Wagner who lived in the Old Vicarage Temple Gardens, today part of Brighton Girls School. The tower was originally intended to have a tall spire but in 1874 twenty five years after the church was consecrated the octagonal lantern was added instead.



## Grave of Anna Maria Crouch

The grade II listed tomb of this colourful 18th century actress may be dilapidated but it remains an impressive monument to a woman famed as much for her romantic liaisons as for her acting.

She began singing and acting as a child and made her name at Drury Lane playing Polly Peachum in John Gay's "The Beggar's Opera" and Ophelia in Shakespeare's "Hamlet". She soon



came down to Brighton and wowed the audience at the opening night of the Duke Street Theatre (since demolished) in 1790. Her first dalliance seems to have involved an Irish peer but she recovered from this to marry a Royal Naval Lieutenant named Crouch whose name, if not whose memory, she took to the grave. Soon after becoming Mrs Crouch she met another Irishman Michael Kelly. Having cast off her naval husband she and Kelly became lovers, although this did not prevent her from having a brief but financially rewarding encounter with the future George IV. She apparently returned to live happily with Kelly dividing their time between Brighton and London and it was he who erected the monument and composed the inscription which sadly is barely legible today two centuries on. JG





# PLANNING ENFORCEMENT BY OUR LOCAL COUNCIL

## Annual Report

The Enforcement Team at BHCC presented its annual report to the Planning Committee in September. The report covered the year to 31st March 2019. For some years now the MCHA has been frustrated by the Enforcement Team's inefficient handling of the Inman's case and the lack of enforcement with regard to listed properties which have been disfigured in Powis Square. In fairness to the team it must be said that their resources are woefully inadequate and it seems that (perhaps under political pressure) such resources are being misdirected. According to the report an extraordinary 42% of appeals against the Council's enforcement notices were successful which compares very unfavourably with just 18% for all other unitary authorities. The report concedes that a key factor in this disparity is the number of notices issued by BHCC to HMOs; it also reveals that the enforcement team has started a project to determine the planning status of four hundred "large" HMOs across the City which are properly licensed but which may also require planning permission. The map shows just part of our conservation area and gives some idea (although not precise information) about the number of HMOs in the streets shown. These are represented by blue dots. The council web site merely says that the map "shows properties which are recorded or likely to be HMOs". It is not clear if this includes both large and small HMOs.

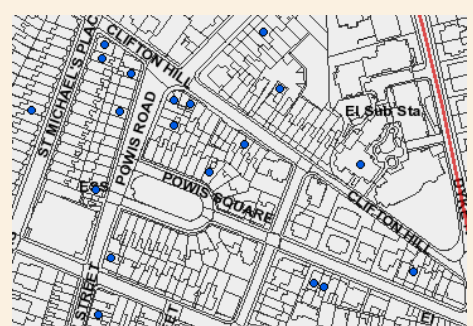
## Estate Agent Boards

Nine years after the ban on unauthorised estate agents boards was introduced in our area it is to the dismay of many residents that a local

estate agent, in this case "AR Lettings" (a trading division of "Austin Rees") is seemingly unaware of the ban. The ban is made by a Regulation 7 under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007. It restricts for sale and to let boards on the street frontages of properties in most of the central conservation areas of the City. By strange coincidence the pictured board is outside 36 Montpelier Crescent the Grade II listed part of the Crescent referred to on page 2.

## Tagging eyesore remains

No 5 is a licensed HMO whose front boundary wall was the victim of the spray paint vandalism which was inflicted on most of the homes and businesses in Clifton Road in the spring (the picture shows the Crescent Pub just after the attack). It is disappointing to note that the only property where the tagging remains six months later is this HMO. HMOs are not necessarily a bad thing in themselves. They provide low cost homes for people whose housing options are limited and who may be young professionals, workers on modest wages as well as students. It is vitally important, however, that they are well managed and this surely includes maintaining the outside of the property. But when the only HMO in a road sticks out like a sore thumb because its front wall is permanently covered by tagging it is hardly surprising that there is so much local opposition to any proposals for more HMOs. Whilst there is sympathy for any property owner who is a victim of tagging, it must surely be expected that the damage, which is causing harm to the character of the street and the conservation area, will be repaired by the owner within a reasonable length of time. **JG**



# WAYS OF GETTING YOUR MESSAGE ACROSS!



## Pirates in Temple Street

The skull and cross bones are perhaps a challenge from piratical Brexiteers in response to the Remainers EU flag in Norfolk Road which lies just to the west. Let us hope that any differences are settled more amicably than was the case when, at New Year, a suitably bearded resident of Temple Street ran onto the street brandishing a knife which he used to slash two men who he claimed had been taunting him. According to the Argus newspaper the weapon was a "Stanley knife" rather than a cutlass but inflicted serious injuries nevertheless. The buccaneering culprit at least had the good sense to instruct a lawyer named "Lamb" to defend him and stress the normally gentle nature of his client. Mr Lamb said "(his client) is at a loss to explain why he acted in the way he did. He can only have been affected by alcohol and drugs. Clearly it was a substantial amount that he is not used to". The MCHA chairman has commented: "Surely no self-respecting pirate would admit to this".



## Flying the flag in Norfolk Road

The Historic England entry for this Grade II listed house refers to the "spearhead finials" on its cast iron railings which suggest that the Remainers are well armed to confront the buccaneering Brexiteers in the adjacent Temple Street. Like most of the houses in the road it was built in the 1830s by which time, it should be noted, the golden age of the pirate had long since ended. It is one of seventeen grade II listed houses in Norfolk Road which are those which retain their original 1830s bow fronts and other features of that period. As in Temple Street (which has eight grade II listed houses) there are a great number of attractive houses, some restyled in the late 19th century, which together with neighbouring Borough Street create a particularly charming part of the conservation area. It must be conceded that the dark blue of the EU flag contrasts well with the white render of the host building and the pale blue of the adjacent house. Will it still be flying after the 31st October?



## Traditional Signwriting by John Bant

"Teddy Edwards" (barbers and cutting rooms in Dyke Road) must be congratulated for enhancing the appearance of the conservation area not only with the high quality design of its shop front but also the attractive signwriting carried out by John Bant seen here on his ladder expertly

applying his paint brush to the fascia board. John Bant's web site [signwriterbrighton.co.uk](http://signwriterbrighton.co.uk) can be recommended to both householders and business owners (perhaps also including auctioneers) and he can otherwise be contacted on mob. 0782 758 6394. His complaint that anyone with a computer, a plotter and a sign programme will now claim to be a sign expert seems justified when seen in the context of his four year apprenticeship followed by thirty years of experience. The examples of his work prove the point in any case.



## The "Monty" says it with flowers

The grade II listed pub which is the local for residents of Temple Street, Norfolk Road and Borough Street is not at the present time revealing its affiliations. It is perhaps waiting for an expert sign writer to produce a new pub sign as one normally hangs from the bracket visible in the picture. The flag of St George has graced the façade in support of England's soccer and rugby teams from time to time in the past but flowers have always been a very lovely feature in recent years. JG