



# Newsletter



50th Anniversary Edition

Summer/Autumn 2017

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Society and of the statutory creation of Conservation Areas. An early fruit of the latter was Burtons' St Leonards' designation as one of the first two such Areas in the borough. There are now ten others in St Leonards and the Society is contributing in detail to the discussions regarding revisions to these. Although the most serious threats to the identity of the original St Leonards have diminished, new challenges are constantly arising. The redevelopment of the Archery Ground and the restoration of the Archery Villas have required intensive monitoring (see p. 2 for more detail). On the positive side, rejuvenation continues apace. An outstanding example is the renovation of Warrior House (see below). The Royal Victoria Hotel now has a seaward elevation which reflects its Edwardian heyday. Church Road and Warrior Gardens are being transformed as their Victorian stucco features are progressively redecorated. Well-designed new flats have been completed on St Johns Road and in Shepherd Street. The beautiful Listed Grade 2 St Leonards Gardens have again been awarded a Green Flag.



Above left, the Edinburgh Hotel on the south-west corner of Warrior Square in the Edwardian era (later the Marlborough Hotel). The building, dating from c. 1853, was the first to be built in Warrior Square, as the original Burtons' new town spread eastwards towards Hastings. Planning consent was given by the Borough Council in 2001 for its demolition against professional advice and despite a well informed campaign for the preservation of its façade; replaced by the building on the right. Below left, its mirror image on the east corner of the square, originally c. 1855. It became the Warrior House Hotel. Semi-derelict in recent years, it has recently been attractively restored as apartments.



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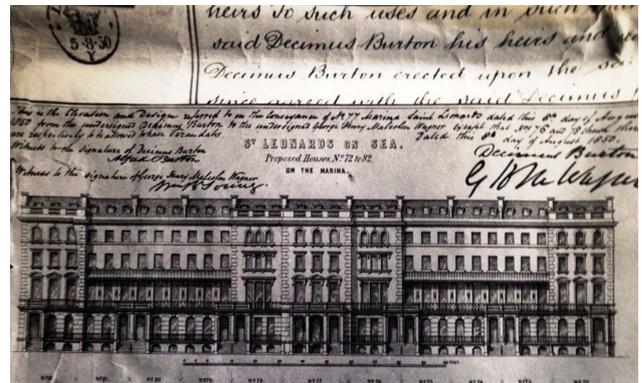
A major concern at the Archery Ground has been the crushing of concrete on the site involving serious noise and dust nuisances. The Society's tenacious representations eventually resulted in the operation being banned and the crusher removed from the site. Other representations have concerned the lack of proper care of the trees, slope stability and potential damage to the local roads. Works were stopped while associated risks were evaluated to the satisfaction of the County Council as the local highway authority and Southern Water in regard to drainage of the site.

A proposal to construct an overbearing block adjacent to Winchester House and St Michael's Hospice was radically scaled back in response to the Society's observations. Other planning applications on which the Society submitted critical observations included St Mary's Cottages and No 1 Marina. The former was withdrawn and the latter refused.

A site visit undertaken with Councillor Kim Forward, Deputy Leader of Hastings Council, to Nos 37 to 40 Marina, Undercliff, St Leonards Parish Church and the steps to West Hill Road identified a number of serious problems. An immediate benefit from this was the removal of rubbish and litter from slopes adjacent to this stepped footpath.

The Society was pleased to comment with approval on an application relating to 74 Marina to improve the balcony and reinstate the property's historic sash windows at first floor levels on the front façade, and the canopy. We noted that the terrace forming numbers 72 to 82 Marina was the work of Decimus Burton (or had involved him in design and supervision) and

that it was lamentable that planning permissions had in the past been granted which degraded a number of the houses in this terrace.



The terrace shown in a document held in the RIBA archive at the V&A Museum with reference to Decimus Burton

There is substantial evidence that the terrace numbering 89-99 is also Decimus's work and the Society is looking to submit representations to Historic England concerning the Listing of these terraces, which are of immense architectural importance. Together with other buildings of historic interest on St Leonards' seafront, they constitute the 'shop window' of the Burtons' new town. Proper recognition of their importance has been denied them by the borough council. We have some grounds for hope that this is changing. Their proper conservation and care could contribute enormously to the image which the borough presents.

**The Society continues also to be in discussions** concerning possibilities for development or adaptation of the former convent site in Magdalen Road and in particular the restoration of its Pugin chapel; the parlous condition of St Leonards' parish church (Giles and Adrian Gilbert Scott); structural problems and risks at Undercliff; and proposals for the redevelopment of the Reservoir site on West Hill Road and the proposed demolition of the cottage at no. 46. The state of the Colonnade on Marina remains a disgrace.

Guided tour of the Reform Club, Pall Mall  
Sunday 17th September

A superb restoration of this Grade 1 Listed building designed by Charles Barry has recently been completed. The tour will illustrate the history of the Club as the hub of British politics during the Liberal Party's ascendancy. Other nearby architectural masterpieces can optionally be visited, including Inigo Jones' Banqueting House and two rooms in Admiralty House (Samuel Pepys Cockerell), both in Whitehall, and the Queen's Chapel at St James' Palace (Inigo Jones and Christopher Wren). The coach will leave Upper Maze Hill at 8 am. A charge of £20 for Members and £25 for guests is payable in advance. Places are very limited. Please ring Christine Francis on (01424) 421207 if you would like to join the group. The visit may be repeated.



The Saloon at the Reform Club by Sir Charles Barry (1795-1860). Barry had earlier designed the nearby Travellers Club. He is best known for his Houses of Parliament (1847-52) on which he collaborated with A. W. Pugin, the former Palace of Westminster having been destroyed by fire in 1834.

Our visit will coincide with the admission of women to membership of The Reform 35 years ago.

The Club was founded in 1836 as a meeting place for those supporting the ideas associated with the First Reform Bill. It became closely associated with the Liberal Party, who largely succeeded the Whigs in the second half of the 19th century. The clubhouse, one of the grandest in London, was designed by renowned architect Sir Charles Barry and based on the Palazzo Farnese in Rome, for which he had a great love. It inspired the Italianate style he brought to much of his work. The Saloon at the Reform is regarded as the finest in any of London's clubs.

**South Lodge (West)**

We encourage everyone to visit the Society's premises at South Lodge (West) - the entrance is under the arch leading into St Leonards Gardens. The Lodge has recently been partly renovated with a generous grant from the Georgian Group, and fully redecorated. It has a permanent exhibition illustrating the history and architecture of Burton's St Leonards. Booklets and cards are stocked.

We are generally open on:

Wednesdays: 11 am - 2 pm  
Saturdays: 11 am - 4 pm  
Sundays: 1 pm - 3 pm

Further information can be had from the Society's Secretary, Christine Francis, on (01424) 421207.



## Events programme for the coming Autumn

To make the Society's talks more accessible to weekend visitors these will now be held on Sunday afternoons in the Burton Room of the Royal Victoria Hotel commencing at 4 pm. Nominal charges of £2.50 for members and £5.00 for others are being made to defray the costs of room hire.

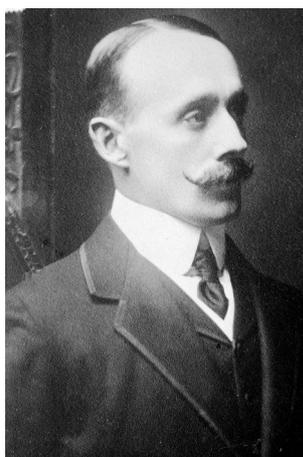
### Sunday 24th September

"From Bodichon to Levetleigh - Hastings and Women's Suffrage" Helen Wojtczak

Helen is a local author of four books documenting the lives of Sussex women. She is a member of the Royal Historical Society. Her talk will describe the extraordinary lengths which local women went to to obtain the right to vote. It will be illustrated with photos which include the smouldering remains of Levetleigh, the Dane Road residence of Sir Arthur Du Cros, the borough's MP, in 1913.



Plaque in Pelham Crescent commemorating Barbara Bodichon, Victorian feminist campaigner and educationalist, and co-founder with Emily Davies of Girton College, Cambridge



Sir Arthur Du Cros was the Conservative Member for Hastings from 1908 to 1918. He was strongly opposed to the Suffragist movement. The burning down of his house was attributed to an arson attack by Suffragists.

Talks continued

Burton Room, Royal Victoria Hotel, at 4 pm

Sunday 29th October

“Rye Pottery”      Robin Wilson - Chair of the Rye Potteries Society

This illustrated talk will record the important role which Rye Pottery has played from 1869 to the present day. It will commence with illustrations of the vernacular pottery made under the Mitchell family's ownership of the Cadborough works and later at Belle View on Ferry Road, Rye. A selection of the distinctive "hop ware" from the 1920's to WW2 will be illustrated. The major contributions made by Wally Cole to contemporary pottery in the immediate post war period and its flowering into an international business under Tarquin Cole will be demonstrated with samples.



Left: The Wife of Bath from the Canterbury Tales range

Right: William the Conqueror from the Bayeux Tapestry & 1066 range

Two of the many beautiful ceramic pieces available from the Rye Pottery

## Talks continued

Burton Room, Royal Victoria Hotel, at 4 pm

Please note that the **Annual General Meeting** of the Society will be held before this meeting, in the same room, commencing at 3 pm.

## Sunday 26th November

"Views of St Leonards on 19th century Porcelain"

Christopher Maxwell-Stewart

Rockingham porcelain was made for only 26 years, between 1836 and 1842. A small group of artefacts of this famous manufactory featured hand-painted illustrations of notable buildings of James Burton's St Leonards New Town. The Chamberlain's works at Worcester followed suit with other illustrations of Burton buildings painted by the outworkers Doe and Rodgers. These fragile specimens are increasingly difficult to find. Christopher's talk will illustrate the range of these delightful artefacts which he has identified over the past 40 years. They include specimens featuring North Lodge, the Clockhouse and East Lodge.



This beautiful Rockingham piece from the 1830s shows Burton's North Lodge painted within a gilt leaf meander border, the rim moulded with leaves and applied with relief moulded flower sprays.

The Lodge (1830) on Upper Maze Hill was the original northern entrance to St Leonards. A toll road ran from the Lodge and joined the main London to Hastings road.

North Lodge became the family home of Jane Wood, James Burton's daughter. A later resident was the Victorian popular novelist Sir Henry Rider Haggard who lived there from 1918 to 1923.



James Burton  
1761-1837



Decimus Burton  
1800-1881

## Membership of the Society

£15 per person per year or £25 per couple

Membership application details can be found on the Society's website at:

[www.burtonsstleonardssociety.com](http://www.burtonsstleonardssociety.com)

[info@burtonsstleonardssociety.co.uk](mailto:info@burtonsstleonardssociety.co.uk)

The Society was instituted as The Burton's St Leonards Preservation Society by a meeting of residents of The Mount in 1967 and was incorporated as The Burton's St Leonards Society in 1970. It is now called The Burtons' St Leonards Society (shift of apostrophe) in recognition of the importance of Decimus Burton's furtherance of his father's work. The Society's objectives are to

- encourage high standards of architecture and town planning in St Leonards on Sea and prevent unsympathetic development in the area.
- stimulate public interest in the character of St Leonards on Sea and its surroundings.
- encourage and pursue the preservation, development and improvement of the features of general interest, in particular the contributions made by James and Decimus Burton to the architecture and town planning of St Leonards on Sea.



As can be seen from this newsletter, the Society keeps a vigilant eye on local planning applications, especially those affecting listed buildings, and on alterations to such buildings made without planning consent. Applications in the Conservation Areas are subject to careful checks and where appropriate formal observations are submitted. We are fortunate in the expertise available to us through our committee, which includes experience in the law, town planning, architecture, civil engineering, history and the academic field. We have a major programme of work in hand but are comprised entirely of volunteers. We are always grateful therefore for any help which members can offer. We hope readers will spread the news of our work and encourage others to join the Society, especially as more and more people are moving to the locality and appreciating its remarkable heritage.

Members who have not already done so are invited to let us have their email address, which will not be made public without their consent. [info@burtonsstleonardssociety.co.uk](mailto:info@burtonsstleonardssociety.co.uk)

## The Hastings & St Leonards Society

The new civic society - an umbrella organisation for all concerned with conservation, heritage and development - is now fully fledged with constitution, committee (and bank account!).

Its aim is to encourage enthusiasm for and pride in the town, and to celebrate its spirit and the beauty of its natural setting. "We have two wonderful and distinctive towns here, Hastings and St. Leonards-on-Sea, and we need more recognition for them, nationally and internationally, as together forming one of England's great historic towns."

The Society aims to work with the local authority, planning committees, voluntary organisations, charities, and other groups with similar aims to the Society's in planning for the Town's future. It has already begun discussion of the borough council's proposed Heritage Action Zone for central Hastings.

Benefits for members will include regular news, priority booking for lectures and trips, and discounts on publications.

A website is under development.

**Introductory Annual Subscriptions** are very modest :

Single: £5

Joint (two persons in same household): £8

Student: £4

Corporate membership subscription varies according to the membership size of the organisation.

For more information, please email: [hstlsoc@gmail.com](mailto:hstlsoc@gmail.com)

The Society has organised a programme of walks for Heritage Week - see opposite; and will shortly announce details of a Heritage related event to be organised in Hastings Week, 7-15 October.

## HERITAGE OPEN DAYS, GUIDED WALKS

**Thursday 7th – Sunday 10th September**

**Supported by East Sussex Health Walks (TCV)**

**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September: *The Stade to the Pier***  
Architectural walk led by Anne Scott from Old Hastings Preservation Society, concluding with an introduction to the Pier with volunteer architect Kevin Atkins

**Start time: 10.30 a.m. Meet at The Stade Open Space.**

**Friday 8<sup>th</sup> September: *The West Hill***

Join Steven Whitford, from the Hastings & St. Leonards Society, for a stroll across the West Hill, and hear the history of this interesting location.

**Note: Steep walk up to Ladies Parlour, otherwise mainly on the level**

**Start time: 11.00 a.m. Meet outside the top station of the West Hill lift.**

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September: *Linton Gardens***

Steven Whitford tells the history of this secluded public green space with special guest, Owen Johnson, identifying the trees.

**Note: Steep slope on this walk**

**Start time: 11.00 a.m. Meet at lower entrance to Linton Gardens on Braybrooke Terrace.**

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> September: *Burtons' St. Leonards***

Looking at the main points of interest in the conservation areas of Burtons' St. Leonards, including St. Leonards Gardens, with Christine Francis (Burtons' St. Leonards Society)

**Note: Moderate slope in St. Leonards Gardens**

**Start time: 11.00 a.m. Meet outside the front entrance of the Royal Victoria Hotel.**

*The walks last for between 1 and 1½ hours. They are free, but donations to the Societies leading the walks will be welcomed. Booking is not available. For further information please e-mail:*

[hstlsoc@gmail.com](mailto:hstlsoc@gmail.com)