

# Marine Gate Newsletter

Future: Marina Plans | Present: General Manager | Past: Before Marine Gate

## Our General Manager



We welcome Derek Mead, who on 19 June was appointed by the Directors as our full-time Residential Building Manager.

Derek, who lives in Hailsham has enjoyed a wonderful range of careers, from the military and later civil police as a detective; then to facilities and building management in his 15 years with British Airways; and then to driving round Europe collecting and delivering animals! Derek likes to help, and enjoys working with people. He is very approachable, and looks forward to getting to know us all.

He has pride in our fine building - very different from the ugly Vantage Point above Preston Circus which he ran. Marine Gate is the first residential building he has managed and he looks forward enthusiastically to his time with us.

## Your Newsletter

Your newsletter will only be as good as the material you offer it. Please send reactions, thoughts, or news, in text or pictures old or new, on paper to: **John McKean, BI** by email to: **nbf@clara.co.uk** or telephone to: [01273] 554278



## News from the Board

As mentioned in the last Newsletters, Directors (and now in conjunction with the Building Manager) are working on Health and Safety within common areas and grounds of Marine Gate. You are reminded that all public areas must be kept clear and nothing placed on any stairway that may cause restriction or danger, were evacuation of the building to become necessary. It is particularly important that the underground garage, as an integral part of the building, is kept free of unnecessary hazards and we remind you of the terms of the lease for garage spaces, namely "the spaces are for use as a private garage space only for the housing of a private motor vehicle and not for use for storage purposes". Whilst the Directors always aim to take a reasonable view, the storage of any flammable or dumping of flammable (e.g. cardboard boxes or flammable materials) is not acceptable and must be removed.

Unacceptable items placed in any public area will be labelled to ask the owner to remove it within a specified period, or Marine Gate will arrange for it to be disposed of.

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The Directors hope most leaseholders will have met Derek Mead, either in the office, on his regular walks around the premises or at the garden party. You will all know that starting a new job requires time to settle in and adjust to a new working environment and Marine Gate is no exception. We trust that you will all bear with Derek over this period.

The Directors undertook a detailed analysis of the business of Marine Gate Holdings Ltd., looking at a number of alternatives to achieve its purpose. In appointing Derek, they decided on a full time manager with appropriate experience in property and facilities management.

The Directors all welcome Derek to Marine Gate and look forward to working with him to maintain and improve services.

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## Marine Gate people

We welcome as new neighbours since June, Mr John and Mrs Zara Rochfort (G16)

We say farewell to Rowena Kolesar who has moved from R3 to care elsewhere. Rowena (I dare to call her that, though she explained that when she arrived here "it was very formal and we didn't call people by Christian names until we'd known them for years"), was on the Marine Gate board for 14 years.

She taught games at Roedean, having played lacrosse for Lancashire and for the North of England. Her surname is Balkan, her Croat grandfather having become a Cunard captain made the move to England.



As a residential housemistress for many years at Roedean, Rowena initially saw R3 (where she is pictured here) as her holiday flat, into which she finally retired.

## A final whisper...

Acoustic separation in a block of flats as old as ours is always a problem. I'm astonished my neighbours are not more upset by my piano (I do try to check!). The thick carpets in public areas certainly help, but there have been recent complaints about intrusive door slammings. Please take care.

Immediately to the West of the Marine Gate site was Rifle Butt Road. (Soldiers were based here during the Napoleonic wars and the street name may descend from that memory.) As is clear in the early aerial photograph, this row of terraced cottages stretched back from the top of the cliff. At the southern end perched the Abergavenny Arms, which was demolished in 1932 before erosion helped it collapse over the cliff-edge. The new road on which Marine Gate now sits cut through Rifle Butt Road and isolated the pub. More of the southern terrace houses of Rifle Butt Road were demolished to make way for Marine Gate. Among the demolition at that time was a popular creamery with an outside garden on the corner. The remainder of this terrace, including the tea shop where early Marine Gate staff went for lunch, disappeared in the 1960s with the construction of the access to the Marina and its slip road up our western side.

*images from the James Gray Collection, courtesy The Regency Society*

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## Book & Film Groups

Following a summer pause, these groups are meeting again with (in the words of Miriam Beza) "renewed vigour." Do contact her (G4) to join in.

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## Coffee Mornings

The next few regular Monday coffee mornings are on

**6th October - 3rd November - 1st December 2014**

The history of these coffee mornings, Patrick Wallace writes, springs from a 2012 AGM Open Meeting comment about fostering a sense of community within the building, not just relying on the annual garden party and carol singing. Sue Wallace (F12) and Lynda Ball (A2) set it up with Evelyn Parker (J17) and it alternates between east and west entrances.

Other residents have joined in with the organisation, and the housekeeping staff and security porters help with the setting up (and disposing of any deliciously decadent biscuits left over).

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## Macmillan Cancer Support special coffee morning

Do please come along and support this. Every coffee sold and every cake eaten helps give someone facing cancer the support they need to feel more in control of their life, from the moment they are diagnosed, through treatment and afterwards. You will find invitations with details posted through your door. For more information see the notice boards or contact Lynda Ball (699271) or Sue Wallace (604780)

**11.00 am 26 September in the West (red) entrance**

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## A very special day

On 26 June, our "100 flag" was raised to celebrate Sibbald McMichan. Her 100th birthday tea saw the best china, sandwiches, scones and cakes on tables dressed with bright cloths, balloons and flowers in the west foyer. The birthday cake and its candles stood alongside a message and photograph from Her Majesty The Queen.



Sibbald's son Andrew proposed the toast to his mother, who responded and, after a rousing rendition of "Happy Birthday", cake was cut and champagne corks popped.



## Our garden

Marine Gate's informally organised Gardening Group is always very grateful to the many residents who donate plants, but it asks anyone planning so to do, please to contact them to discuss where it might be planted. Gina Bryson (E12) is very generously donating a new bench and table for Marine Gate garden.

The garden has been looking wonderful this summer, but the few stalwarts - with Paul Ripley (D7) doing most heavy work - plead again that "what we really need is younger, stronger residents to take up the task." If you are interested in joining, helping or donating to the garden, please do contact Miriam Beza, in G4.

## Marina developments



The tall tower crane currently between us and the sea ensures we know: something is happening at the Marina. The complexities of what developers want, what the city needs as new housing, what actually has permission to be built and what really is now rising out of the Marina is almost impossible to untangle. Robert Powell (R5) will help us in the next Newsletter. Meanwhile, he offers a 2006 image of what is permitted (left) and a 2014 image (right) of what they are now trying to build. With highly respected initial architects sacked, contractors' current "designers" unknown, quality is clearly lost. The buildings are not identical and Bob is demanding they require a new approval.

## "Sleepwalking into war" with its catastrophic results

The commemoration of the momentous events of August 1914 by Marine Gate was an initiative by Derek Mead, who proposed the idea at his first Board Meeting. The idea was enthusiastically endorsed by the Board and on the morning of Monday 4 August,



residents gathered around the flag on the middle lawn at 1100am. The Marine Gate flag was struck and the Union flag raised and flown at half mast while the "Last Post" was sounded. This was followed with some reflections by Derek before he recited the Exhortation, from the poem *For the Fallen* by Robert Binyon:

*"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,  
We will remember them"*

Residents responded by repeating the last phrase. Derek then recited the Kohima Epitaph:

*"When you go home tell them of us and say,  
For your tomorrow we gave our today."*

At end of the two minutes silence, Reveille was so sounded followed by the singing of the National Anthem which brought this solemn commemoration to a conclusion.

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photos: David Woodcock

## Flags aflutter

We have our "100" flag (right) and, of course, the Union Flag (opposite) which may be under redesign soon. And now Robin Plummer (C2), painter and former Dean of Art & Design at Brighton Polytechnic, has designed the fine new Marine Gate flag (below).



A recent anonymous note through our letterbox suggests:

Someone asked  
 "What does our flag mean?"  
 I was flippant  
 "Couldn't you guess"  
 The blue could be a deeper sky  
 Or the sea  
 Maybe.  
 Round white can be the moon  
 A bit mad  
 Circling  
 Or hot sun if you wanted  
 Or think black portholes  
 Darkly.  
 White squares is where we live  
 Among hard edges  
 Kept in place.  
 The whole can be us  
 All fluttering.



## Garden Party fun, 13 July 2014



photo:Terry Hardy

## Marine Gate before there was Marine Gate

The land on which Marine Gate now stands was sold by the wonderfully named Steyning Beard to George Dickinson Byfield in 1898. Steyning Beard (1845-1909), is buried in the churchyard of St Margaret's Rottingdean, where he was the last squire of the parish. The Beards were a very wealthy Quaker family who had been farming in this area since the 16th century. They owned Grange Farm in Ovingdean and had extensive lands in Rottingdean. But he died leaving considerable debts, and much of his land was sold to pay them - perhaps including the Marine Gate site.



The sale was subject to a covenant that the purchaser must construct roads. This had become urgent because coastal erosion had forced the coast road to Rottingdean to be abandoned in 1897, with Roedean Road much further inland as the only alternative.

*The Marine Gate site from Black Rock Gardens a century ago. The building nearest to the edge of the cliff is the Abergavenny Arms, and pinnacles of Roedean can just be made out much further to the right.*

In 1931, Brighton Corporation bought the land, and by 1932 construction of the under-cliff walk had been completed and the new cliff-top (if not cliff-edge) road was opened.



*An ariel view in 1933, with the new coast road constructed but work not started on Marine Gate. Construction work on the undercliff work was underway, while The Abergavenny Arms now perched precariously on the cliff edge. story continues overleaf...*

