

Marine Gate Newsletter

We become 'heritage asset' | our new manager | Marina legality queried

OUR GENERAL MANAGER



Ann Miles, who joined us as General Manager at the start of 2015, says she really is as happy in her new job as she appeared on her recent birthday, with rosette, balloons and a bottle of prosecco under the desk for later! Having been for many years a director of a cleaning company, moving from sales to administration and accounts director, she had just got into an even more responsible post when Derek Mead left us and our Board, rethinking the job specification we needed, was persuaded to apply.

As a resident already, Ann probably avoided the surprises which greet a newcomer, but she is far too diplomatic to comment, while full of thanks for the friendly support she is receiving from residents. We are all already noticing the many small ways in which our vessel is becoming more shipshape under her offices. Pet licences are now formalised, already all contractors and agents at MG are reporting to the office and wearing lanyards; and, very shortly, the staff will be wearing neat MG uniforms!

This really is Your Newsletter
*The newsletter is only be as good as the material you offer it.... So please do send reactions, thoughts, or news, in text or pictures old or new, or just angry letters to the editor! Send them on paper to: **John McKean, B1** by email to: **jmlmckean@me.com** or by telephone to: **01273 - 554278***



News from the Board

Our AGM will be formally announced in due course, but we now have the date - put Friday 29th May at 7.00 pm in your diaries.

Two of our directors have to retire each year, and Michael Shakespeare and Patrick Wallace retire in 2015, having been elected in 2010. Candidates to replace them will be invited, while Michael and Patrick may also offer themselves for re-election.

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Editorial

One of the themes in this issue is that of pride in our building, and the sense that this can really make a difference - difference to the re-sale value of our flats may be the bottom line, but difference to our everyday enjoyment and pride in Marine Gate is even more important.

Indicators which we should be celebrating range widely: from the elegant new lift to the increasing number of apartments being restored to 21st-Century standards, but in style which sympathises with the original design ethos of the building, well exemplified by Michael Mason's C12; and from the new Marine Gate uniforms for staff to our building being added to the city's list of 'Heritage Assets.' We are all aware that the Board has its sights on upgrading the public entrance areas, and all this must offer them a most supportive wind in their sails. Doing little things really well can do so much more for morale than tackling big things with half a heart or half the required resources.

Marine Gate people

We welcome to MG, as new residents, Mr Curtis (R4) and Mr & Mrs Smith (F1). Mr Everett will be moving in to D1 when his refurbishment is complete, Miss Celia Carter to C7 in April, and Mr & Mrs Easton, who have been staying in G15 have bought and moved in to G6.

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Michael Mason

Michael Mason was a gay activist who spent all too little time in Marine Gate, in his refurbished apartment, before he died of cancer in February, aged 67.

As a founder of the pioneering paper *Capital Gay*, Michael was at the forefront of the fight for gay rights in Britain. He was among the first to recognise the potential impact of Section 28, which forbade local authorities from promoting homosexuality, and his campaign against it remained one of his proudest achievements.

A framed copy of the newspaper advertisement he organised, signed by many leading figures of the day, was stacked along with his large art collection, ready to hang in pride of place in C12, bought for his retirement.

Michael had long earmarked Marine Gate to move to after leaving the family publishing business. Using architect Linda Turner, of Inature Architecture and Design, he transformed C12 into a modernist take on art deco, in neutral colours with an open plan kitchen, and a full wall devoted to his extensive library.

On Sunday 1 February, Michael's carer
continued opposite...

MG listing officially recommended

Brighton and Hove Council, reviewing the 'Local List of Heritage Assets', has recently produced a recommended list of buildings, parks and gardens considered to be of special value because of their historic, architectural design or townscape value. Marine Gate is, for the first time, proposed for inclusion.

This is not the 'statutory listing' (carried out by Historic England), which creates designations like 'Grade 1' or 'Grade 2' listing. Brighton and Hove has many statutory listed buildings including, nearby, Arundel Terrace, Lewes Crescent and Chichester Terrace, and also including Embassy Court on Kings Road, which was built just before Marine Gate. Statutory Listing creates legal obligations on anyone wishing to make alterations. Marine Gate was submitted for statutory listing in 2005 but rejected for not being sufficiently unique or outstanding of its type. (It was not to do with uPVC window frames, as rumour had it. So, as research uncovers more about MG and its place in history, that rejection's ground could be revisited.)

The Local List does not create the same obligations as national listing, but it does record that the building is of special interest and this must be taken into account when planning permission is required. Proposed developments in the neighbourhood will be considered in the light of the need to conserve or enhance the special interest of the 'Heritage Asset' including its setting.

Marine Gate is recommended for inclusion because of its particular architectural design, the innovative steel frame and the reputation of the architects (Wimperis, Simpson and Guthrie), its townscape interest - in particular its 'landmark' quality, and the fact that it is reasonably intact and unaltered.

This list still awaits final approved; but the consultation period closed a fortnight ago, and the nomination is most unlikely to be changed. This represents an official acknowledgement, for the first time in recent history, that this is an important building which deserves to be cherished.

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Marina developments

In an impressive achievement, Robert Powell (R5), our resident campaigner against the Marina development, now has a date in June for his High Court appeal, attempting to stop the current development.

In a text too long to quote here in full, Robert spells out clearly the basis for his claim that the approved development is illegal - he would happily give you a copy of his longer explanation.

Briefly, the tale begins in 2006, when the council gave permission for eleven tower blocks, one of them at 40-storeys, housing in total 853 apartments. Robert has three grounds where this appears to have been an illegal permission:

continued opposite...



helped him out of bed to watch the Australian Open tennis final on television. A week before, the apartment had been full of friends, celebrating his new home. More were expected later in the day, for a second party.

It was a beautiful morning, our horizon clear and bright. After a while, Michael said he was tired and that he'd like to return to bed. He died a short while later.
Stephen Wrench (F8)

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MG Film Club held their own Black Tie event coinciding with the BAFTA Film Awards on 8th February. While watching the ceremony and picking the winners, the Film Club's own 'Best Dressed' award was unanimously awarded to **Dr. Miriam Beza** - whose prize is lunch in the BAFTA Members Restaurant in London.



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Terry Emery has been appointed Working Supervisor for the building, and we welcome **Tony Golding** who joined us as a cleaner at the start of the year.

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Spots changed: a colourful resident at MG for two and a half years, this Mini has now moved to a new home. The Leopard, given its distinctive livery when Mohammed Al-Fayed bought it for one of his daughters, was sold by Bonhams at Goodwood last week.



John McKean (B1)'s Photographic Exhibition in The House of Friendship, Lewes High Street, closes later this week after a very successful three weeks show.

First: *the plan deposited with the 1968 Brighton Marina Act shows that the 40-storey and one other tower are outside the limits to the extent of the development dictated by parliament.*

Second: *the Act also stipulated that all development must be 'landward' of the tidal flood barrier running behind David Lloyds, the West Quay and the Boardwalk. All eleven towers - including current construction - are 'seaward' of that tidal flood barrier.*

Third: *letters from the relevant ministers, clarifying details in the Marina Act stipulated (in 1966) that 'no building shall exceed the height of the cliff,' and (in 1975) that 'no building should exceed 15 metres (49ft).' The permitted development also breaches this requirement.*

Robert, and his supporters, the Brighton Marina Action Group, say they have already spent £45,000 in legal fees, have raised more but are appealing for a further £8000 for their final hurdle, the High Court appeal in June. He adds " We have been battling against this huge overdevelopment for ten years at considerable personal cost and I hope that the June court date will bring the matter to a successful conclusion."

MG Newsletter has asked Robert, with his expertise, two further questions and we hope to publish his response:

First: *In the light of the city's current urgent housing needs, what would be your ideal vision for the future of the marina?*

Second: *We hear rumours of changes in the design and designers, changes in permissions and even that only part will ever being built. What is the current state of play in the development?*

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The Gate Gourmet visits The Tiger at East Dean

"It was a fine crisp sunny winter day and we wanted to give my granddaughter a treat. We decided to take her out to lunch. We had a number of possibilities in mind but decided on the Tiger. It is nearly in Eastbourne, but part of the drive is along the beautiful coast of Cuckmere Haven, part of it is through Peacehaven so know how lucky you are to be in Brighton. It's a gastro pub in a small village and on the edge of a spacious village green, behind it is a large free car park. Ideally one can sit outside but this day was too cold for that, at least for us; others were braver.

The pub is like a longhouse with low ceilings and a bit rustic but it has an excellent kitchen, visible to all, good chefs and friendly service. It feels as though the people running it are family (I think they are) although having said that we were served by a young Frenchman! Their telephone number is not in any phone books, but it is 01323 423209. They are quite selective!

Prices are modest, the most expensive main course is £11.95. This was the 'Famous Tiger Burger' devoured by the Granddaughter, while Gudrun and I had 'Beachyhead beer battered cod'. This was excellent if pretty basic, but we could have had 'Seafood Linguine with a creamy chilli, lime and coriander pesto.' There are eight main courses on the menu.

We didn't have starters (homemade soup, homemade paté, hot Sussex smokie, poached pear and blue cheese tatin with roasted walnuts) although they are tempting but did have steamed ginger pudding. Lethal and delicious.

If you go on a hot summer weekend get there early, it is very popular. Best to go during the week if possible. Sitting outside with a pint of Harvey's is a real delight."
Robin Plummer



The sparkling refurbishment of Lift 6, achieved at lower cost than Otis' quotation, was designed for the Board by **Stephen Adutt** (C5). Stephen's master plan (with RHP Architects) to transform and regenerate the

North Street Quarter of Lewes was published online and submitted for planning approval last week.

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A few residents have enthusiastically contacted MG Newsletter about a cabaret and cocktail evening with **Michael Bennett-Law** (B10) in the autumn. Would you join us? There is not yet a tidal wave to overwhelm the Board with the idea!

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The MG 2014 Staff Christmas Fund collected on our behalves by **Eric Stowe** (D9) received £2078 – that is, on average, over £15 from each flat. This was distributed to all staff, who were most appreciative and sent Eric on behalf of all of us, a letter of thanks.

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The next **Marine Gate Coffee Mornings**, avoiding bank holidays, are on: **April 11th, May 13th and June 1st**

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Robert Powell (R5) has just published *The New Sri Lankan House* the latest of his many volumes on architecture of the Far East.



Bob Powell at his book launch

CORRECTION: Glen Clamp, who cleans Marine Gate's windows with skill and charm, had the wrong phone number in our last Newsletter. Sorry! . He can actually be found at 07748-744309

Heard around the Gate

Following our note in the last Newsletter about the bizarre flat numbering system here - which appears only to annoy me and the postmen - we hear of another navigational gremlin for the unwary or inexperienced around Marine Gate. It seems that one of our postcodes, BN2 5TQ, if entered into a visiting vehicle's GPS, will invariably lead drivers to the garages up at the back off Cliff Road! And presumably it is as likely to lead unwary delivery lorries, removals vans and who knows what awkwardly large vehicles in that direction too. David Woodcock has had family friends but also delivery lorries end up there while try to find his flat. As he points out, reversing a large vehicle from our garages up Cliff Road, which is often solidly parked on both sides, is a hazardous business in itself.

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An informal note from our Chairman, just after the last MG Newsletter went out, concerns one evening when George Abo-Rish was on security duty:

“Apparently George got some exotic fruit pips stuck in his back teeth, and couldn't get them out, nor could other residents help. One resident is a dentist and when she heard about his problem she brought her kit down to the security cabin and succeeded in dislodging the offending item, aided by another resident who held the security torch aimed down George's throat and passed her instruments from her case. Just goes to show what a varied and resourceful population we have here!”

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A resident writes that: “in the last two month I had a special shower installed on the roof of the building, free of charge, on the landing in front of my door. Water was directed, via the hatch access door from the roof, so every time it rains, the management provides me with buckets: one yellow and two black to collect rain water. Even the landing lamps have collected enough rain water to fill a tank. I am told it is good for the plants to use rain water. I was assured that the water which penetrates the electric lamp and lines is not a fire risk so I can sleep easy. I was promised that a more appropriate solution will be found sometime in the future.”

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There seems to be another Sherlock Homes in the building: George, on security, said he has solved the mystery of who is grubbing up the violas in the yellow entrance's tubs, and not clearing up the mess. It is a nearby resident caught on CCTV at about 3 am, known only as Mr Reynard...

What's more, George (who is Egyptian himself) has calculated that there are 31 different nationalities living at the welcoming melting-pot of MG.

Who was where

As many of you know, Mary McKean is compiling a database of residents before 2000 at MG, and it is already throwing up fascinating patterns of occupancy - from post-war austerity to the disappearance of maids and then over-population of cars! We will publish stories in forthcoming Newsletters. Meanwhile, anyone who had friends or ancestors, or friends of ancestors, who lived here last millennium do please tell her.

The editor would love to have information about the activities of residents, preferably legal and interesting, and particularly from newer, fresher (and even younger) residents, to enliven your Newsletter.

