

PROJECTING A NEW IMAGE

**By Christine Goldschmidt
Acting Director**

Not many of you will have seen the concrete yard at the back of Hastings Wall Flats, East Street, but the people living there have to - every single day. Determined to do something about it for themselves, a residents association was formed and decision was made to turn their back yard into a garden for the benefit of all. A few conversations over the back wall from the Trust's office then ensued, and a "garden ideas and planning day" was held, with the help of BTCV and Acres Wild - garden design specialists - on February 29th.

It was, in effect, a mini Planning For Real exercise, where everyone had to plot out their "wish list", then get together and work on a realistic plan which they could all agree on. Debbie and Ian of Acres Wild then went off to draw up a feasible plan, which the residents themselves can carry out on a phased programme.

Climbers and shrubs will be encouraged to clothe the large blank wall to the west of the site, and raised beds will be built by the residents, who also hope to make benches for the garden out of reclaimed materials. A rockery is planned for the rubbish tip on the NW corner, to vary the planting and give a focus to the area. Clothes drying posts will be re-located and raised, thus giving a more open space where a childrens' play area can be.

All the physical work from site clearing/digging/building and planting will be done by the residents, with help from BTCV. The Trust has applied for an Environmental Bursary for the Residents Association to help towards the cost of the work, and will continue to work with them in an advisory and voluntary capacity until the scheme is complete.

'C' COMPANY, 5TH BN THE QUEENS REGIMENT

By Robert Firth

In early December I happened to answer the telephone one morning to Captain Steven Hinton of the Territorial Army Centre. He was calling to chase up some information on the Trust he had request-

ed, his interest stemming from having read articles on our launch in the Hastings Observer.

Over the period of an hour, various benefits from developing this contact began to register. David Jeapes was in the process of resurrecting the Burton Memorial Garden project and we knew that some heavy labouring would be involved. We donned our 'glad-rags' and went to visit Captain Hinton the following week and came away overwhelmed by his enthusiasm for the Trust.

A good relationship has since developed and 'C' Company have made the following contribution to community projects :-

On the 19th of February, I spent the day

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The men of 'C' Company

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working on the Cooper Barnes site in George Street with a group of ten able men (I spent the 21st & 22nd recovering). Their input was invaluable towards pushing along a clearance job that was dragging its heels (due to the committee running the project suffering a variety of physical ailments!).

On the 14th of March, Captain Hinton and a score of men ran the Hastings Half Marathon. They chose to raise project funds for the Trust through sponsorship and helped improve our profile into the bargain. They estimate to have raised over £600.

Next month, two score men will be joining us for two days on the Burton Memorial Garden project. Without this enormous input, the works would have proved infinitely more difficult a task to complete in one weekend.

We hope to continue developing our relationship with 'C' Company and, subject to limitations on allowed 'training' days, plan to work with them on a number of other community projects that are in the pipe-line.

On behalf of the Trust we would like to express our deepest gratitude to Captain Hinton and all the men who have worked with us and raised money. In these early days their contribution has been highly significant and a great boost to our often flagging moral.

**4th & 5th April see
you at the Burton
Memorial Garden**

TREE OF LIFE PROJECT *Pledging for the Planet*

By Juliet Foot

The Tree of Life Campaign, master-minded by Jonathon Porrit, is being organized on an international level to raise awareness of the Earth Summit in Brazil this summer.

The slogan is "TALKING GLOBALLY? ACTING LOCALLY" and the Trust is organizing a local campaign to make sure the people of Hastings do just that.

The idea is to collect leaf-shaped pledges from as many people as possible, then send them out to Brazil to be

attached to the Tree of Life, a central feature of the Earth Summit.

The Trust is building Hastings very own Tree of Life, and we aim to collect all the local pledges ourselves before sending them off to Brazil at the end of May.

There are eight pledges to choose from, and there is room for action on an individual as well a national level: **Energy, Third World Debt, Transport, Recycling, Forests, Fair Trade, Acting Locally and Spreading the Message.**

All the local schools have been contacted and we will be delivering pledge forms around the area in the next few

BURTON MEMORIAL GARDEN UPDATE!

By David Jeapes

"We're ready for the off." Having gained all the necessary permissions from the Diocese of Chichester and confirmed that a licence has been granted to HBC the only thing we now are now waiting for is the start date of 4th April 1992.

The works to the garden will be carried out in three phases:-

Phase 1

4th and 5th April - laying of paths, site levelling, laying turf and planting

Phase 2

Re-pointing of walls during Environment Week (w/e 24th May 1992)

Phase 3

Siting of interpretation boards, restoration of gate and the siting of benches and bins.

I would like to thank, in advance, all those below, without whose help it would have taken another 30 years to complete this garden.

The men of 'C' Company, the 5th bn the Queens Regt. TA
(Well done in the marathon chaps!)
The Burtons' St. Leonards Society
Hastings Borough Council - Planning Department
Hastings Borough Council - T&L Parks & Gardens Department
ESCC Planning Department
English Heritage
Local Artist - Ian Hunter
HAARG
Coblans Nurseries
FARGO
TESCO's Staff
Drinkwater Sabey
STAMCO
Hastings Contract Services
Hastings College of Art & Technology
The Diocese of Chichester
All of my colleagues

I hope to see you all on site to assist or give support on the 4th and 5th April

weeks. If you would like to help distribute pledge forms or make a pledge please get in touch.



TREE OF LIFE
Pledging for the Planet

ONE HUNDRED STEPS

By Robert Firth

Not that I have counted them.

This project will be carried out in three stages. Stages one and two to run concurrent.

STAGE ONE:- Litter clearance and planting of appropriate trees to screen buildings. This requires permission from Coastal Amusements Ltd. and Mr H. Simmons will receive a proposal on his return from holiday in mid April.

STAGE TWO:- Repairs to steps and railings. ESCC are interested in supplying materials which is a major contribution. UK2000 and Tourism and Leisure have also expressed a keen interest and we are offering a couple of options regarding the necessity for skilled labour.

STAGE THREE:- Improvements to lighting and decor in entrance. We are leaving this relatively simple stage until last to discourage use of the steps whilst they are still in a dangerous state of repair.

We do have a problem with costing this project and a couple of similar projects that are at proposal stage. The assistance of an amenable Quantity Surveyor would be invaluable and if anyone knows of such.....

NEW RESOURCE CENTRE DATABASE

By John Turner & Chris Fyfe

Now that the Trust possesses a powerful 'relational database' programme, we can provide the new Community Resource Centre with a key tool: a set of cross-referenced computerised files on sources and resources for local initiatives.

Building on Beth and John Turner's experience, John and Chris Fyfe are developing a 'user friendly' service which can supply cross-referenced information on demand from a wide variety of files: on people who can help with advice or their own skills and knowledge; on organisations that can also be approached for information or for other services such as funding local initiatives; on the publications, videotapes and filed information in the Resource Centre's

library.

Chris and John have learned how to set up files, the first of three stages of development. Next they will be running tests with sample files - and the participation of intended users, (members of the staff and the public) will be essential. When the design is finalised in the light of the tests, the up-dating and transfer of existing files will be carried out - a major task. If all goes well the service should be available by the New Year.

For more information regarding this system please contact John or Chris at the Trust's main office - (0424) 446373.

HELPING THE TRUST TO HELP THE COMMUNITY

By Robert Firth

There has been a steady increase in the number of people expressing an interest in becoming actively involved in the Trust. As these offers begin to stack up, we recognise the need for the Trust to meet the demand and the importance of not allowing opportunities to fall by the way-side.

Towards this end, the staff have taken the initiative with regards to a stream-lining of the Trust's administrative procedures, and are consequently increasing their project activity. We have a 'Help' Card Index System where all offers of assistance are recorded. 'Trust Us' will be sent to all these people to keep them informed of what projects we are involved with. Anyone who reads about a project which they think they can help on can call us on (0424) 440909.

Thank you to all those who have expressed their interest.

Stade Warden Scheme

By Catherine Griffin

The Stade Warden Scheme was started in 1990 as a joint project between local organisations and the Borough Council to help keep a working beach tidy, rather than sweep it clean so tourists could appreciate its "quaintness". The scheme is managed by a committee representing all the sponsors and administered by the Trust. A local fishing family, the Whites, actually do the work of clearing the rubbish but specific problems are dealt with by the sponsoring organisations Progress

is monitored by means of daily record sheets and a Progress Chart which is updated quarterly.

During the first two years over 1250 bags of general rubbish were removed as well as quantities of old oil drums, rope, winch wires, trawl warp, fishing nets boxes, wood, old iron and dumped household furniture. Several areas of building rubble was buried and covered with beach. Several piles of bricks and breeze blocks were stacked neatly. Warning notices were placed on over 10 dumped cars, which resulted in some of the cars being removed by the owners. Repairs were made to chain fences. Owners of derelict winch huts were persuaded to clear them up. The Fishmarket was assisted in purchasing a better compressor so ending the problem of polystyrene boxes blowing about in the wind. The skip areas were cleared up and the emptying service improved. The Committee believes that there has been a very noticeable improvement in the appearance and useability of the area.

The Scheme has got off to a good start with very limited resources. While continuing with improvements to the beach, other initiatives will include: starting a net shops maintenance programme; improving the appearance of Winch Hut Road; inviting other sponsors to join the scheme.

COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE

By Laurence Homewood

It has been proposed that we turn our shop into a Community Resource Centre and so accordingly for a trial period, commencing Wednesday April 1st, that is what it will become.

Although we will no longer be trading as before there will still be plenty of services on offer to community groups, etc.

Our current stock of books will form the basis of a community resources library. Members of staff will be 'on-hand' to give assistance and advice to any and all.

We feel that in this way we can continue to give the people of Hastings and St. Leonards a level of commitment to the local environment and issues that they have come to expect.

Hastings Trust's Current Project List

- a) Burtons' Memorial Garden - See report elsewhere.
- b) Hastings Wall Garden - See report elsewhere
- c) Cooper-Barnes Site. See report elsewhere.
- d) Pelham Crescent and Arcade Restoration - Steps still on for late spring early summer if £2,500 can be raised, but due to the demise of the Town Scheme Grant, close liaison with St Mary-in-the-Castle Working Party needed to maintain this scheme during the next twelve months.
- e) 100 Steps - Phased development agreed with Roger Dennett and Bob Dawson of T&L, as a much reduced scheme from original £30,000 scheme. This is mainly due to sensitive ecological nature of the site and the recession. See report elsewhere.
- f) Station Approach. Feasibility study and proposal for enhancement scheme completed and sent to British Rail for consideration. They usually contribute 50% towards their enhancement schemes. Matching funding to be raised by HT from sale of plaques on railings. Due for completion by late summer, early autumn if go-ahead given.
- g) Torfield School Environmental Resource Area. Approach made by school for help and assistance in setting up Environmental Resource Area for disadvantaged and handicapped children. Trust enabling and assisting, working with John Tucker (Parks & Gardens) and Sian Hayward, Torfield School. In research and development stage.
- h) St. Mary-in-the-Castle Working Party. Continued support to working party over six months, Trust in enabling and assisting role for whatever Working Party require.
- i) Tree of Life Project. See Report elsewhere.
- j) Stade Warden Project. See report elsewhere.
- k) Old Town Forum - quarterly meetings continued. Trust in co-ordinating role.
- l) Architectural and Archeological Trails - Research continues...

Letter to the Editor

Burton Memorial Garden Project

I warmly commend the enthusiasm of our new team of young members of the Trust, and wish David and his helpers all possible success in achieving the result we desire. We need action even more than money now.

The project however goes back much further

Rumbles and grumbles have echoed about Hastings for years: what it needs, what should happen, what isn't being done. BRUCE HAYWARD almost stumbled on HASTINGS TRUST where he discovered an enthusiastic team working to aid conservation and making some very encouraging noises in the process for...

PROJECT HASTINGS

A LOT goes on behind the scenes and we may be surprised when we discover just how much. I was in the Old Town High Street the other day and by chance came across the HASTINGS TRUST SHOP where my enquiries led me to some very encouraging discoveries about a good deal of conservation work and projects in development.

David Jeapes, a young man among several young people who have chosen to work for the Trust on employment training, told me about its aims.

Originally set up, as the Hastings Urban Conservation Project in 1986 it was a joint project of Hastings Borough Council and East Sussex County Council. This year it reformed itself as the Hastings Trust - same objectives, but no longer funded directly by the councils: it had to go independent. The Trust continues to receive core funding, but there is not as much money as before. The shop is the separate trading part of the venture and disseminates information on local history, green issues and architectural conservation generally.

In its Review of 1991 - an impressive and encouraging document - the Trust details its grants and project expenditure - many town centre scheme grants, shop front grants, enhancement grants, and special project grants together with all the addresses where the work has been carried out. 40 per cent of the funding has been provided by the trust; 60 per cent comes from the residents themselves.

New projects - yes, lots of those, but dependent on fund raising and to which the Trust is applying itself.

It is also identifying projects such as the community garden in St. Leonards-on-Sea being created as a memorial to James Burton. The original concept started in 1963. Now the Trust is involved and 50 volunteer helpers are ready to do the physical work. David Jeapes indicated a need for £5,000 to complete the project and says donations are coming in.

The Trust is also involved with

ideas concerning the Hastings Shopping Centre and Priory Meadow. This is a 'planning for real' exercise which will enable the townspeople to express their view. The exercise is concerned with establishing what the public wants for the area rather than allowing the experts to impose ideas on the town.

There may be alternative places for a shopping centre - apparently there is land adjacent to the railway station and which is currently not used. The Trust is inviting people to say what they think about it.

Another major project is the Pelham Crescent scheme, with St. Mary-in-the-Castle Church as its centre-piece. This is the Trust's top priority, and perhaps not least because of the Queen Mother's interest in it. Sir Hugh Casson has offered to do a painting of the crescent itself which can then be auctioned to raise funds: a huge sum of money is needed simply to stop the rot and get some of the work done - in the region of £2 million.

But not all projects are so expensive: there is one for using a derelict site in George Street which would turn an eyesore into a temporary open space amenity. And there is another to renew the 100 steps on the West Hill down to the Old Town. The overall project is a large one, but step by step it is a project the Trust can undertake and will end up costing probably in the region of £20,000.

So an awful lot is going on in and

around Hastings to make it a nicer place in which to be, both as a resident or as a visitor. The Trust shop itself is filled with a wealth of information about projects and activities, schemes, plans, action groups and societies. You can find out here about Hastings Conservation volunteers and how YOU can get involved; find out about the Hastings Environmental Bursary (and how it can give financial assistance to suitable schemes which aim to improve areas of the borough and thereby improve the quality of life within Hastings).

In the shop you can also discover information about the St. Helen's Park Preservation Society; or pick up details about the Hastings Alternative: an ever-increasing group of progressive and forward thinking people who wish to see Hastings regain its former glory without destroying its history; there is information about Hastings Community Woodlands Project; and details about Living Over the Shop - a project set up to focus attention on the under-use of accommodation above shops in town centres.

A visit to the Trust shop would be interesting to anyone living in the area, and to many others too, who come to the town attracted by history.

Hastings Trust is a partnership between the public, private and voluntary sectors to tackle problems others find difficult on their own. It is concerned with Hastings and St. Leonards heritage, beautiful natural scenery and some attractive architecture, with improvement and innovation. The Trust believes you can help in a number of ways: through membership, through becoming a volunteer, through starting a local project, through sponsorship or donation.

And if that sounds a good idea the Trust would very much like to hear from you!



Hastings Trust is concerned with conservation, many houses can benefit from its activities

Extract from Aspect Southern - Spring 1992 issue

(The East Sussex County Magazine - Available from Newsagents)

than the 22 years you read in the first issue of the Newsletter.

In 1962 the Local Authority (Historic Buildings) Act was passed, and in 1963 Hastings Borough Council (Corporation as it was then) agreed to carry out repairs on the Burtons tomb, by then in a dreadful condition. But, due to "Bureaucracy, Duplicity and Inaction" (not my words) nothing was done.

It took years of patient pressure from the Burtons' St. Leonards Society to achieve the necessary repairs to the Tomb, but still nothing came of the agreed landscaping and conversion of the site to a memorial garden. James Burton's descendents supported the scheme all along, but the chief impediments have been:

1. The dangerous condition of the cliff edge

(which is why James Burton did not build there in the first place) and

2. The legal complication of a site owned by the Church authorities, the Diocese of Chichester, but used by the Local Authority.

If 1992 (30 years on!) sees the completion, it will be a great Triumph of Enthusiasm over Bureaucratic Inertia (my words).

Quin Williams

Chairman - Burtons' St. Leonards Society

We invite correspondence/articles for inclusion in our next issue. Please submit to the Editor.

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