



# fly the flyer

## In the steps of the Holocaust. Brian Johnson

On Friday 8th August, 50 of us sat down in St Michael's for a Friends-sponsored summer luncheon. Before the meal, grace was pronounced by Bishop Lindsay in even-handed words: May God bless King Charles and the Pope. The food was delightful and the service faultless. At £20 a head, including a glass of fizz the event was a veritable snip.

After we'd eaten, authoress Ainslie Hepburn spoke in promotion of her recently published book *In the steps of the Holocaust* which tells the story of members of an ordinary German Jewish family caught up in the cataclysmic European events of the 1930s and 1940s, ruthlessly tracked down and exterminated. From recently discovered family letters and meticulously researched records, Ainslie's book takes readers on a literary journey of her husband's grandparents Hermann and Henny Hartog. Living in Germany at a time of rapidly increasing Nazism and anti-Semitism, they recognised the dangers ahead and sent their daughters to England for safety. After Kristallnacht in November 1938, Hermann was sent to a concentration camp but released on condition that he and Henny left the country immediately. In the early days of the war in Europe, their progress towards England through Belgium and France was slow but almost successful until they were trapped by officers of France's Vichy government in 1942, transported to Auschwitz and murdered there.

After Ainslie had spoken there was an opportunity to ask questions but none were raised. There seemed a tacit recognition by all of the difficulty of finding appropriately even-handed words to explore Ainslie's thoughts on present barbarities in Israel and the Palestine State.



# John Leopold Denman and the Ditchling Artists

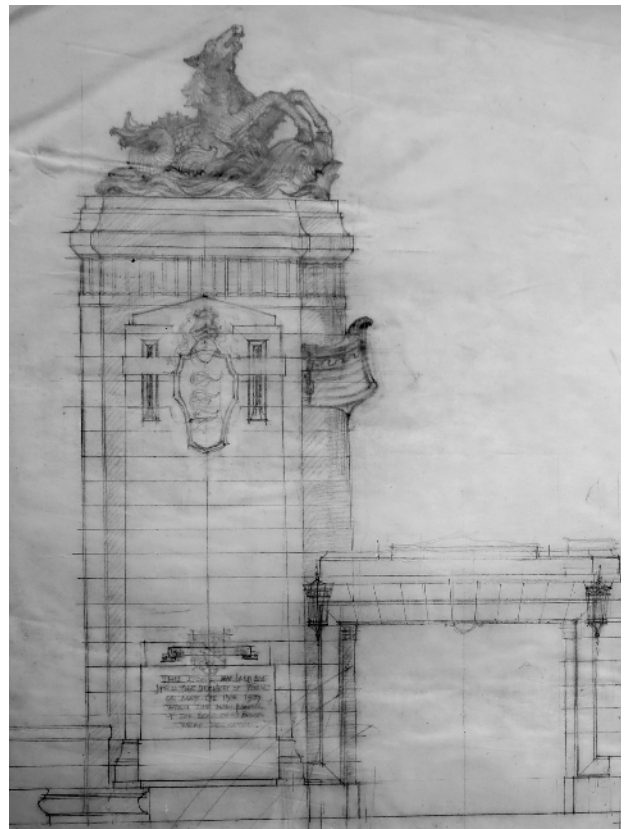
**Written by Kevin Wilsher and edited by David Robson**

During his time as Professor of Architecture at the University of Brighton, David Robson developed an interest in various key Brighton architects of the C19<sup>th</sup> including Amon Henry Wilds and Charles Busby. More recently he has extended this to include a dynasty of three architects called Denman who practised in Brighton from 1876 to 1982, constituting what he has called 'The Denman Century', and who established themselves as the most prolific and talented architects of their day. In his talk David focussed on the work of the second Denman, John Leopold, and particularly on his collaboration with three Ditchling-based architects: Louis Ginnett, Charles Knight and Joseph Cribb.

Like the Wilds and Busby, the Denmans have remained relatively unknown outside of Sussex, being regarded by the cognoscenti as mere provincials. But anyone who has travelled in to Brighton down the A23 will have seen the Pylons, built by John Leopold in 1923 to celebrate the city's new boundaries with its decorative panels designed by Louis Ginnett and cut by Joseph Cribb.

Samuel Denman (1855-1945) worked in and around Brighton from the 1870s through to the 1920s. His son, John Leopold Denman, joined him in 1919 and ran the practice until the mid-1960s. His son, John Bluet Denman, joined in 1946 and eventually took over from his father, closing the practise in 1982. Between them this trio of architects designed at least five hundred buildings, including pubs and churches, country houses, public buildings and entire housing estates.

In the late 1880s Samuel built a farmhouse for himself on the top of Fulking Hill and christened it Fulking Grange, though the locals knew it as Denman's Folly. This was later used as an isolation hospital and, finally, as a target for Canadian soldiers during the Second World War. During that same War, John Leopold built the Downs Crematorium above Brighton and fashioned it as an angel on the hillside, a sign to passing Luftwaffe pilots. During the 1890s Samuel reconfigured Lewes Town Hall and built the Hove Club in muscular Queen Anne style. In the latter he placed the fire-places under windows and wrapped the chimneys around them.



David showed a number of examples of John Leopold's collaborative work with the Ditchling artists. The Citizens' Permanent Building Society in Marlborough Place was built in 1933, and, after serving for many years as the Allied Irish Bank, is now Tutto restaurant. This building is Grade II listed and was designed in restrained neo-Georgian manner and incorporates a number of typical Denman features including a monumental hanging clock and ornamental downpipes. Three arched windows on the ground-floor incorporate voussoirs carrying relief portraits carved by Joseph Cribb to represent the various tradesmen who had built the building, including one of John Leopold.



The former offices and print works of the Brighton and Hove Herald were built in 1934 on a prominent site next to the Royal Pavilion. Designed again in elegant neo-Georgian style, the eight bays of the upper floors merge with the nine bays of the ground floor in a pleasing manner, and it also carries a hanging clock and carvings by Joseph Cribb. Having been occupied for many years by 'All Bar One' and suffering the indignities of planter boxes, loudspeakers and floodlights on its façade, it is now empty and derelict. Astonishingly it is not listed, though it belongs to Brighton Council. With its former printing hall, it would of course make a wonderful art gallery for the city that sadly lacks one.

David also described the vast Royal Masonic Girls School in Rickmansworth, which John Leopold designed in 1928, and which occupied him and his three artist collaborators for the next twenty-five years. Its stunning chapel, in particular, can be seen as their *gesamtkunstwerk*. Designed by John Leopold in a simplified byzantine manner, its barrel-vaulted nave contains large murals and stained glass by Louis Ginnett, whilst its magnificent reredos, gifted by John Leopold, was designed by Charles Knight and carved by Joseph Cribb.



David ended by suggesting that the Denmans and their artist friends deserved wider recognition for their unique contribution to the city and its environs and put in a plea that their surviving buildings should be better cherished and protected.



# **St Michael and All Angels Project**

## **A strategy for the long term development Of the Church Fabric**

### **An update by Fr John Blackburne SSC,**

Since my arrival at St Michael's, I have embarked on a journey of discovery concerning both the history and the architecture of our wonderful church. At a recent meeting of the Friends Committee, I shared my thoughts and the plans we have been developing as a parish on the future of the church and specifically our approach to the issues we are facing regarding the fabric

Anyone who visits or worships at St Michael's is taken up with the beauty and grandeur of the very special legacy that has been handed to us by our benefactors. Over the last year I have been focusing on the recommendations from our architects who produce for us a Quinquennial Report which sets out the immediate areas for attention as well as the longer-term recommendations for work on the fabric which will secure that legacy for the future. Although over the past few years minor projects have been completed, and the maintenance of the church has been attended to there are more fundamental areas of concern which are brought home to anyone who has an eye for detail or who attends during the winter months. With this in mind we have set our minds to developing a longer-term strategy which will address three key areas: maintenance of the current estate, conservation and repair and renewal.

To this end we have drafted a 'St Michael's Project' which sets out our strategic aim or vision for the future and the process for achieving it. Over the past year we have been visited by the diocesan architect, Emma Arbuthnot and Sophie Allen, the Church Buildings and Fundraising Officer who have helped us to focus on the necessary steps to put together a plan and begin to look towards fundraising. In May of this year we met with Tracy Manning, the Senior Conservation Officer of the Church of England to discuss the repair and conservation of some of the treasures that we hold, for example the Flemish altarpiece. In August we met with David John from Historic England who is the architect responsible for the London and South East Region and shared with him our thoughts and showed him the current state of the fabric with a view to enlisting their help with the project. We are still awaiting his thoughts following consultation with his colleagues regarding the best way forward.

From my perspective I think our priority should be the repair of the upper clerestory in the Burges church because this seems to me to be the main source of water ingress and one of the reasons the church is so cold and damp, and also the likely reason for the erosion of the stonework internally. Taking the advice we have received so far, we have been advised that if we want to apply for national funding for our project we will need to appoint an architect via a fair and open process. We are in the process of doing that at the moment and once we have completed the process I will be seeking an assessment including a full report on the fabric and costings before finalising a project and seeking funding.

I am aware that it seems at the moment that we are not very active in delivering projects that might improve things in the short term, but I am reluctant to embark on any major works before I can be assured of a long-term deliverable strategy that will secure our future. I will be discussing a proposal for a possible smaller scale project with the Friends Committee shortly having taken advice from Tracy Manning. In the meantime, I can assure you of our sincere thanks for the work of the Friends and the support you have provided over the course of the last year. The emergency repair of the hopper which was dislodged on the outside of the Burges church over the New Year and the analysis of the stone in the Bodley church were two vital projects as we move forward towards developing a strategic plan.

Thank you.

# Appearances: Memory, History

## A talk by Carol Dyhouse

### Sue Trimingham

Those of us who have ever agonised over what to wear will be relieved to know we are in good company.

Local resident and long term Friend Carol Dyhouse told a packed event organised by the Friends of St Michael in October that Virginia Woolf was horribly self-conscious and talked about 'frock consciousness'. So, it goes to show that self-doubt about clothes can affect the most gifted in other areas of life.

Carol, who is Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Sussex, was talking about her latest book, *Appearances: Memory, History, Clothes* and this time drew on personal experience as she looked for insights into the changing expectations of women over the years.

Many of us have vivid memories of how our mothers and other key women in our lives felt about appearance. My own mother thought putting on makeup or combing my hair in the street was plain 'common' and to this day I find it difficult.

Carol remembered being taught not to draw attention to herself and that white shoes were 'tarty'. Her headmistress thought lipstick the work of the devil and transgressing in the ways of appearance could only mean one thing – you would end up working in Woolworth. Obviously, a fate not to be considered.

History tells us that women who wanted to be taken seriously in the world of academia often felt they had to dress to impress and not for allure. There were a few exceptions but not many.



In the 1950s femininity was about being classy and fur was still acceptable. By the 1960s life was freer and *Honey Magazine* talked about Brain Bunnies at University who could be bright and wear mini-skirts. Biba modelled its hugely popular gingham dress on the clothes worn by the sultry Brigitte Bardot and there were some very strange mixed messages going on – women engineers portrayed in skimpy Bri-Nylon outfits. Just in case anyone forgot they were girls!

Then came the problem of what to wear at work if you wanted to get promoted, solved by the power demonstration of shoulder pads in the 1980s. Feminism destabilised what you could wear and Carol said she fought off the guilt to stick with makeup and perfume even if the sisterhood disapproved.

She remembered her grandmother as a smart dresser but that by the time her daughters came along, they were prepared to play with clothes.

As with so many things, clothes can be a political issue, linking the personal and social expression.

It was encouraging to see so many men in the audience and the whole issue of male clothes and their meaning must

# Future Events

## **Fish and chips social supper Friday 21<sup>st</sup> November**

St Michael's Hall. Doors 6.30pm. £20 (Friends & Guests)

Free welcome drink. Pay bar. Vegetarian option available if notified in advance.

Booking deadline Fri 14<sup>th</sup> Nov. Limited numbers.

Booking details in separate email to Friends to follow.

## **Saint Michael's Winter Fair. Sat 29th November**

11.00am-3.00pm in the Church and Hall.

## **Christmas wreathmaking workshops.**

St Michael's Hall

### **Thurs 4th and Fri 5th December**

6.30-8.00pm

### **Sat 7th December**

11.00am-12.45pm and 2.00-3.30pm

£55.00 to include all materials, refreshments and a glass of fizz (*if you wish to order a wreath the cost is £50.00*). Email Simon in the Parish Office to reserve your place or for further information [saintmichaelbrighton@gmail.com](mailto:saintmichaelbrighton@gmail.com) or text him on 07986 595179.

## **Icicles Party. Either Fri 23<sup>rd</sup> or 30th Jan**

In the Church