

WHAT WENT WRONG?

Has the sun already set on the Western Harbour Arm?

THE INTERVIEW

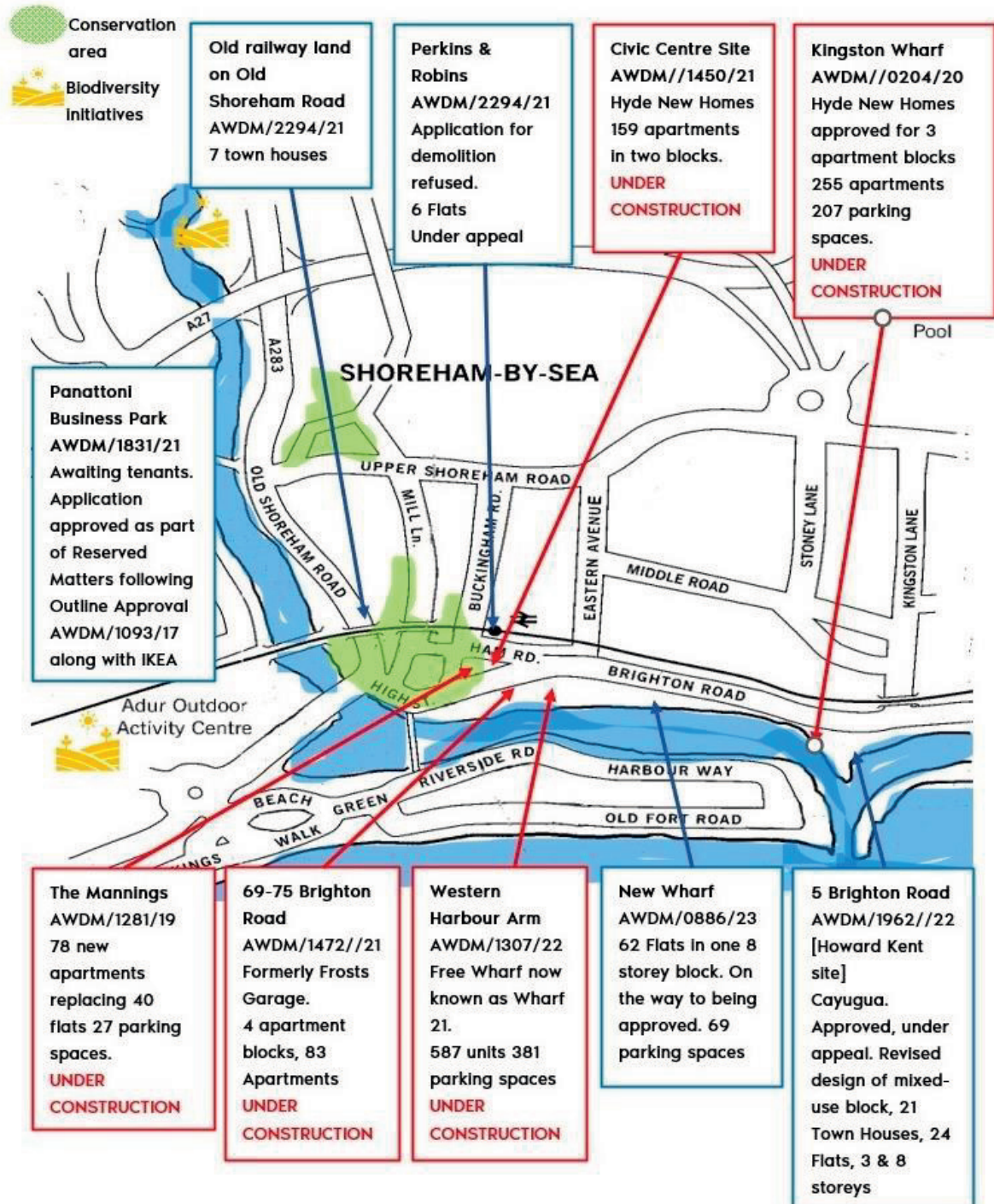
Jeremy Gardener:
Labour's vision for
Shoreham-by-Sea.



THE NUMBERS GAME
The National Planning
Policy Framework

PHOENIX RISING
If it's good enough
for Lewes

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SHOREHAM BY SEA



Please contact the Editor if you know of anything that should be included. If you wish to look at a planning application, go to: <https://planning.adur-worthing.gov.uk/online-applications>



Dear Members,

Welcome to your new-look *Journal*.

As well as a re-design, we have aimed to upgrade the content. Each edition will take a deep dive into a hot topic.

This month, it's the new housing rising up along the Western Harbour Arm. As our featured poem on page eleven suggests, Shorehamites have been living with this particular "elephant in the room" for some time now.

Now the elephant has reached, well, elephantine proportions. It's not something we can avoid anymore.

Which is why we lead this edition with an exclusive interview with Jeremy Gardner, the Leader of Adur District Council. Jeremy wants to use the current consultation on the Local Plan to learn the lessons of the first stage of the development of the Western Harbour Arm.

Because we need a new vision of development for Shoreham. Our article on the Phoenix in nearby Lewes offers an alternative model of sustainable development, and an example of a genuine regeneration project that adds to the quality of life for all local residents.

We can do better!

On a personal note, I'd like to thank my colleague and fellow Committee member Christina Robinson for handling the production of *The Journal* so brilliantly.

We sincerely hope you enjoy this edition of *The Journal*.

Richard Bingham

Richard Bingham

Join us

Shoreham is changing – and fast. Local people need to have a say in how the town develops. That's why The Shoreham Society exists.

- The Society is an independent voice for all who care about the town of Shoreham-by-Sea. Its remit covers planning, conservation, development, the local economy, environmental issues and general local interest. It's strictly non-political and free from commercial interests.
- Members receive free copies of *The Journal* biannually as well as the *Quarterly* update which together keep members in touch with what's going on in the town. They are also first to know about our popular series of talks on local issues.
- Attending an AGM, volunteering at events, or even becoming a member of the Committee – there are many ways you can get involved.

To find out more, and to sign up, visit www.shorehamsociety.org.uk

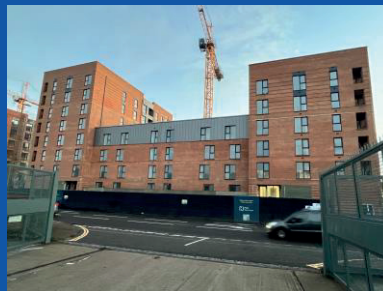
THE SHOREHAM SOCIETY ON-LINE

Our website and social media are the best way to get a flavour of the range of things The Shoreham Society does. Here are some highlights available via the QR code:



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Photography: Colin Day

The Vision Thing

Richard Bingham sits down with Jeremy Gardner, Leader of Adur District Council, to talk about the failings of the Western Harbour Arm... and what can be done to put them right.

“When we took office we kept looking for a piece of paper headed ‘A Vision for Adur.’ We never found it.”

“We have ended up with a number of large, tall buildings with very little in between them. “That’s how Jeremy Gardner sums up the Western Harbour Arm so far.

“There was a strategic plan,” he continues, referencing the Joint Area Action Plan. (JAAP) for the Harbour Arm agreed with Brighton and Hove City Council in 2019. “But between the plan and the implementation, there’s been a lot of mistakes.”

It was the JAAP that contained the following commitment: “to enhance and activate the harbour for leisure, recreation and tourism”. That has not happened at the Western Harbour Arm.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Gardner blames the lack of strategic direction

on the previous Conservative administration. “When we took office, we kept looking for a piece of paper headed ‘A Vision for Adur.’ We never found it.”

HOUSING TARGETS

The developments along the Western Harbour Arm have been a smash and grab by a Council desperate to hit its housing targets.

Those targets are not going to go away. In fact, they’re going to get tougher.

“The new National Planning Policy Framework,” Gardner tells me, “will increase Adur’s annual new homes target from 449 to perhaps 545.”

That increase is on top of a

projected shortfall against target of 3,107 homes by 2032, which is when the current Local Plan expires.

Like the other coastal towns of Worthing and Brighton, the current population of Shoreham is jemmied in between the South Downs National Park to the north and the sea to the south. Development land is scarce, especially in a town with Conservation Areas.

“There is a local housing crisis as well as a national one,” insists Jeremy. “There are already 900 people on the Council waiting list. Increasing numbers of local people are facing homelessness and are being housed in temporary accommodation, too often miles away from Adur.”



According to Gardner, the solution is to build more affordable homes, and in particular to build more Council housing. Yet the problem with the latter is Right To Buy.

Why would Councils build new homes for social rent when the resulting properties can be sold off immediately at a big discount? When I ask Gardner if he would like to see Right To Buy abolished – as it has already been in Wales and Scotland – he immediately answers, “Yes.”

DESIGN FAULTS

What about the buildings themselves?

Car parking is one issue. “The previous administration accepted a lower level of car parking for the new flats. We can’t just wish cars away. But we can incentivise people to not use their cars to commute if we provide more buses between Worthing and Brighton.

“During the election,” Gardner continues, “we knocked on a lot of doors. We asked people what they liked about living here and what they didn’t like. What they liked was the

sense of community. What they didn’t like was the congestion.”

The Western Harbour Arm aims at a high density of new homes by offering flatted developments. The overall impression created by the buildings to date is of massing that is heavy and cumbersome. At Wharf 21 that is attenuated a little by the curves of the building. The Hyde Homes development closer to Kingston Beach, meanwhile, has a step down to its central block, again aimed at relieving the massing.

But these are sops. The buildings remain dull and uninspired. The materials are largely unrelieved: bathroom tiles clad Wharf 21, sand-coloured bricks smother the Hyde Homes building. Neither add much to the waterfront, just as neither do much to create a new neighbourhood, or add new amenities for the benefit of the town.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Is it just too late to do anything?

Gardner doesn’t think so. “There are still four large sites offering potential

for development,” he tells me. “Kwik Fit, EMR metal recycling, The Whale car wash and Calor Gas. We’re committed to using the consultation process around the revisions to the Local Plan to make any new developments actually improve the quality of life of new and existing residents.”

The Labour administration is promising a new vision for Adur. In particular, Gardner is looking to square the circle between protecting the environment, improving biodiversity, and building. That’s a tall order, but he is sincere in inviting all of us to use the consultations on the Local Plan to contribute to that vision. It’s time to get involved.

WHO IS JEREMY GARDNER?

Jeremy Gardner is an elected ward Councillor for St Marys and Leader of the Council. He is the first Labour leader since the founding of Adur District Council in 1974.

Jeremy was born in Belfast but moved to Shoreham in 1976 to begin a career in journalism. A cub reporter for The Shoreham Herald he worked out of the newspaper’s office at 33 East Street (where the Health Food shop is now).

Like many journalists, Gardner subsequently moved into Public Relations, working his way up to the position of Head of Communications and Engagement for the NHS in East London.



The Numbers Game

To solve the housing crisis, the Labour government’s proposals for a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) includes a target for 370,000 new homes per year... But will they ever be built?

Most of us walk, drive or ride past large building sites. But have you ever wondered why, on so many of those sites, the workers seem to have downed tools and disappeared?

Why would a developer not want to get the thing built?

Often it’s because they know there are other new homes coming on stream in that particular area. So they’ll delay completion until the market is more favourable, and prices go up.

You’d probably do the same. You wouldn’t put your home on the market at the same time as three or four of your neighbours put theirs on, too. Because the price would go down.

GAMING THE MARKET

And that’s the point. Developers have an interest in restricting supply. For them, the housing crisis isn’t a crisis at all. It’s business as usual.

It is easy to blame the “blockers” – as Kier Starmer now calls nimbyists – and to excoriate the planning system for delaying much-needed developments.

But what’s needed are measures to force the six big housebuilders to stop land-banking: buying up sites but delaying building them out until the market price is juicy enough to meet their insatiable hunger for a whopping 20% profit margin.

Without these measures, the Labour housing targets will not be worth the paper they’ve been written on.



HOMES FOR SOCIAL RENT

Housing has become an asset bubble. The way to deflate that bubble is to build more homes.

And if the developers are not going to be coerced into building them, that leaves the government. That means homes for social rent. (Council housing, to you and me.) Encouragingly, the new NPPF envisages targets for new social rent properties.

But why would a Council want to build a home that, under Right to Buy, can be sold in short order to tenants, and then on to private landlords? Would you build a house that you have to sell at a discount of up to £136,400?

In the UK as a whole, some 70,000 new social rent homes were built between 2012 and 2021. During the same period, however, a further 210,000 existing homes had fallen victim to Right To Buy (RTB) - a net loss of 140,000 social rent homes.

In Scotland and Wales, RTB no longer exists. But in England, it continues to hamstring Councils, many of whom want to build.

That’s why, in his interview in this edition of *The Journal* Jeremy Gardner calls for the abolition of RTB.

BROKEN

The housing market is broken. It’s not fit for purpose. The NPPF proposals are full of the sound and fury of targets.

The big homes developers regularly insist on a profit margin of 20%. Yes, development is a risky business, but most other sectors would kill for a profit margin like that.

The new NPPF does not go far enough.

Without more radical change – reining in the power of developers to game the system, ending Right To Buy - they will once again signify nothing.



A Call To Action

Barb O’Kelley, Chair of Adur Residents’ Environmental Action (AREA), explains how the campaign on the Western Harbour Arm has gone so far.

Photography: Colin Day

I meet Barb O’Kelley at Toscas on the High Street. It’s a sunny day and the windows are open.

Every now and then, our conversation is interrupted by the rumble of a construction lorry. A waft of exhaust fume sours the taste of my coffee.

It’s not altogether inappropriate, though.

ENVIRONMENTAL FEARS

It was the noise and pollution in the High Street that was the original inspiration for Adur Residents Environmental Action (AREA), the pressure group formed seven years ago. Since then, AREA has broadened its campaign out from measuring pollution levels to wider environmental issues. Working in partnership with The Shoreham Society, this has included trying to improve the new developments along the Western Harbour Arm.

“The main thrust of our campaign,” Barb tells me, “is to get more green spaces included in the developments, green spaces that are essential for the mental and physical health of the new residents.”

INFRASTRUCTURE WORRIES

There are other concerns, too. The under-provision of car parking for the new flats, for example, will mean overspill parking in the town centre.

And, of course, where there are cars, there is traffic. In 2014, Adur commissioned Parsons Brinckerhoff

to report on the A259. Even then, said the consultants, the A259 was at capacity. “How much worse will the traffic be when the Western Harbour Arm has all been built out?” Barb asks.

At that moment, another construction lorry trundles past.

But it’s not just traffic. Barb explains how local GPs have been told to expect up to 9,000 new residents on their lists in the course of the next few years, adding to the mounting pressure on an already-stretched service.

A NEW START

Not all is doom and gloom, though. There are signs that the new administration is looking to reset the relationship with campaigners. “From our recent meetings with Councilors,”

“We believe there will be serious engagement with the public on the Adur Local Plan. We urge all residents to take the opportunity to contribute and help plan the future growth of Adur.”

Barb tells me, “We believe there will be serious engagement with the public on the Adur Local Plan. We urge all residents to take the opportunity to contribute and help plan the future growth of Adur.”

We pay for our coffees and head out into the sunshine...and the traffic.



IF IT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR LEWES ...

Photography: Human Nature

A low rise development of 700 new homes, 30% of them affordable. A walkable neighbourhood built to the highest environmental standards. Sounds like pie in the sky, right? Well, no. Because it's taking shape right now, and just a few miles east of us in the County Town of Lewes.

The Phoenix scheme by developer Human Nature received final planning permission in February of this year. Work on site has already started.

Nimbyists often defend themselves by saying they want new development, but the right kind of new development. Well, here it is. Moreover, in many ways, the Phoenix development is very similar to the Western Harbour Arm. Like the Western Harbour Arm, The Phoenix stands on the edge of an historic town and features an extensive river frontage. It's a large, brownfield site, formerly derelict industrial estate that was first ear-marked for regeneration in 2007.

That, however, is where the similarities end.

THEY HAD A CUNNING PLAN...

The development along the Western Harbour Arm has comprised a series of individual sites with no master planning. For the Lewes site, in contrast, Human Nature drew up a master plan that laid out the entire 7.9 hectares. They have now employed no fewer than 12 different architects, thus ensuring a pleasing variety of smaller buildings. Unlike



Adur and Worthing, Human Nature have also retained strategic control of design. A building code commits each architect to the required quality of build and level of sustainability.

The code includes design stipulations such as the use of pitched roofs and gable ends to create a more interesting roofline, and the avoidance of overlooking.

DESIGN SOLUTIONS

Most importantly, the master planning of the site incorporates solutions to a wide range of key problems - problems that have not even been addressed at Shoreham.

The Phoenix is situated on the flood plain of the Ouse. To mitigate the risk of flooding, the existing flood defences will be reinforced with a concrete pile wall along the length of

the development. Included in the masterplan are swales - shallow drainage channels - and rain gardens. Heavy rainfall can therefore soak away rather than sit on concrete.

The situation in Shoreham is different. Not only has most of the riverside been concreted over, Adur and Worthing will now have to negotiate S106 contributions for the much-needed new sea defences with a number of different developers.

We may well find ourselves underwater by the time these hardball discussions are completed and the wall is finally built.

In Shoreham, there has been no strategic planning about car parking. Underground car parks have been provided for the owners of new properties along the Western

Harbour Arm, but they will not provide enough spaces for all the flats. Overspill street parking will be inevitable.

At the Phoenix, on-site car parking is concentrated in a multistorey car park next to the A2029. Residents will, however, be able to use temporary parking bays to drop off their shopping. On the rest of the site, priority will be given to pedestrians and cyclists.

WHITHER REGENERATION?

The Western Harbour Arm boasts about being a regeneration project. As with other recent developments this means little else than a ground floor given over to commercial units.

One can't help forming the impression that these empty units are the price the developers are

prepared to pay in order to pitch their "regeneration" project to the Council. How many of the promised jobs ever materialize?

In contrast, the Phoenix is a genuinely mixed use development, one that creates places for people to live, work and play. A total of 3,279 square metres of business, employment and flexible workspaces is promised. These include a hotel, a health centre, a community canteen, workshops, a playground, a nursery and a skateboard park.

At Lewes, the intention is to build a walkable neighbourhood. We should always be sceptical of artists' impressions, but the ones produced for Human Nature indicate how building around medium-rise courtyards creates social green spaces. Not the windswept plazas appearing in Shoreham.



The Phoenix is a genuinely a mixed use development, one that creates places for people to live, work and play.

A WASTED OPPORTUNITY

The Phoenix reveals in stark detail what a wasted opportunity the Western Harbour Arm has been so far. Yes, there are different landowners along the harbour arm. Yes, that makes it more difficult to provide strategic answers to some of the development problems posed. But it's not too late to draw up a masterplan for the remaining sites, together with a design code that stipulates the rules of the game for future developers.

That way, we could have a vision for a sustainable new community. And new amenities to improve the life of the town. We could put Shoreham on the map.

After all, if it's good enough for Lewes, then why isn't good enough for Shoreham?

It's not too late to draw up a masterplan for the remaining sites, together with a design code that stipulates the rules of the game for future developers.



WHAT IS "SHARED OWNERSHIP"?

Photography: Colin Day

At Wharf 21 on the Western Harbour Arm, 2 bedrooomed apartments priced at £395,000¹ are available on a "shared ownership" basis. But what does it all mean?

Under Shared Ownership, the purchaser pays just 25% of the total value of the property. At £395,000 that comes to £98,750. The deposit required by the vendor is only £4,938.

Shared ownership is attractive to first time buyers who cannot raise the deposit to buy outright. A 10% deposit on the full price of £395,000 comes to nearly £40,000, well beyond the reach of most first time buyers.

So shared ownership allows first time buyers who can't access the Bank of Mum and Dad to step onto

the fabled housing ladder. For many people in the south, and especially in our part of the south, it is the only way of escaping insecure, expensive rentals. And owners can increase the proportion of the property they own as time goes on.

SO FAR, SO GOOD. BUT WHAT ARE THE DOWNSIDES?

First, a lot of "shared ownership" properties are new builds. Although the quality of build – not the swish freebie washing machine but the building itself – does not always warrant it, the premiums buyers pay for these properties mean that the starting figure is higher than it would otherwise be.

Looking at property website Right Move¹, for example, there is currently a 1970s, purpose-built two-bedroomed apartment on Ravens Road for sale at £325,000. You lose the view of the river but the flat is a lot more spacious and puts you closer to the railway station and town centre.

The second downside is that the mortgage is not your only commitment. In addition to a monthly mortgage payment of £563, owners pay the developers a monthly rental of £679 plus a monthly service charge of £168. That's a total of £1,410 per month.

On Right Move, a two bedroomed flat in Emerald Quay currently rents for £1,400. So the shared ownership option seems to offer more security and a slice of the property price action.

Under the terms of the government's Homes for England contract, rental increases in Shared Ownership properties are capped at CPI inflation plus 1%.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THAT SERVICE CHARGE?

There is, however, no such cap in increases in service charges. In March of this year, The Guardian newspaper reported on steep and sudden increases in the service charges for shared ownership properties. For instance a primary school teacher living in a shared ownership property in Brighton sold to her by Clarion Housing. In the current year her service charge will be increased from £349 per month to £417 per month. That's an increase of almost 20%.

The hoarding outside Wharf 21 promises "Freedom". One can't help wondering, though, whether the real winners of this latest scheme – as with Help to Buy – will be the developers themselves.

Shared Ownership (25%)

Buying a property worth £400k

- + 5% deposit
- + 20% mortgage
- + 75% rent & service charges



£5k

£95k

£???k

The Back Page

In each edition of *The Journal* we will be introducing you to a member of the Committee. We will also be featuring some of the fantastic creativity that make Shoreham-by-Sea such a great place to live

Meet the Team



NAME

Phil Hamerton

WHAT DO YOU DO FOR THE SHOREHAM SOCIETY?

I am Membership Secretary, a post taken on in 2006

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN SHOREHAM?

I lived in Brighton from the age of four. Moving briefly to Hove. I've now been in Shoreham for nearly 50 years!

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT LIVING IN SHOREHAM?

Speaking as a relative newcomer (!), Shoreham-by-Sea has so many things to offer. Not the least of which is a very good selection of pubs - although the numbers have dwindled over the years. Transport connections are so convenient, too.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING ABOUT SHOREHAM, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Quite a boring answer, but put a bypass around the airport (A259 to A27) to relieve the congestion along the High Street. This was mooted several years ago - although those darn warehouses are in the way now!

WHAT WAS THE FIRST RECORD YOU PURCHASED?

Ramsey Lewis Trio, 'The In Crowd' (1966)

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF

I retired after over 40 years of a very varied career with the Ambulance Service on the day before my 71st birthday. Married with two children, each of which are married with two children, all of whom live locally. I'm a trustee and Membership Secretary of four charities including the Shoreham Society and am an active volunteer as well as trustee of the Volk's Electric Railway Association. I also run the Brighton Railway Rifle Club located in the old goods tunnel under Brighton Station.

WHAT DOES THE JOB OF MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY INVOLVE?

Essential components of this role are:

- keeping up-to-date records of all members
- communicating effectively with members
- analysing membership profiles and trends
- distributing our publications
- managing queries from members and the public
- managing renewals and processing payments...and chasing up stragglers!

Creatives' Corner

Resident author Dick Dixon and his partner, the French artist Reine Mazoyer, have worked together since 2013.

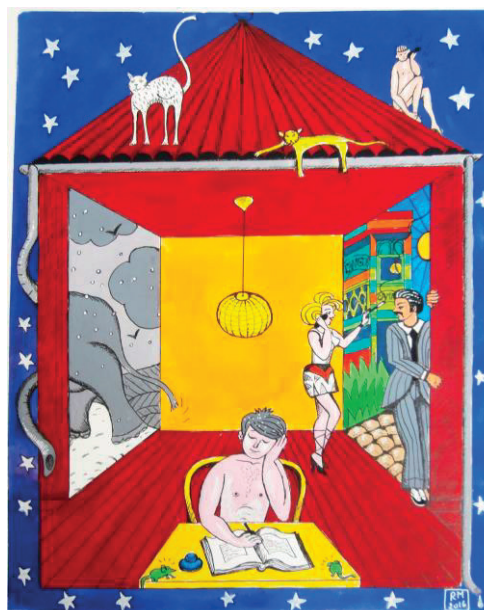
THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

The elephant in the room
Has gone for a walk;
Well, you can't coop them up in the house!
He just rose from the floor,
Sucked open the door,
And squeezed out, just like a mouse.

The elephant in the room
Has left a vast space;
I shall miss his great trunk before long.
I hope he's not lost,
Or peppered with frost,
And nobody sees that he's gone.

The elephant in the room
Is worrying me;
How could I have let him escape?
The neighbours will moan,
And play hell on the phone;
In extremis, I must crush a grape.

The elephant in the room
Is not my concern,
It has suddenly occurred to me now.
Though inviting attention,
Never once was he mentioned,
So why would he furrow my brow?





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THE SHOREHAM SOCIETY ON-LINE

Our website, is the focal point of the Society's communications. With topical news stories, an archive of our Journals and email newsletters, useful planning resources and reports, connections to many local community and voluntary groups, all our event information and ways to join the Society and contact us, it has everything. No wonder over 1000 people a month look at it!

