



David Maslen
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A very Happy New Year

to everyone - our clients, our business associates and all those in the local communities we cover.

The past year has seen the property market change from one extreme to the other. It began with a shortage of properties for sale and ended with the reverse. Over the years I have seen numerous situations like these, all short lived, with things soon back on an even keel. I'm sure 2005 will be the same.

2004 was a landmark year for Maslen Estate Agents. We opened our second office in Woodingdean and are already one of the most successful agents in the area. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who have wished us well.

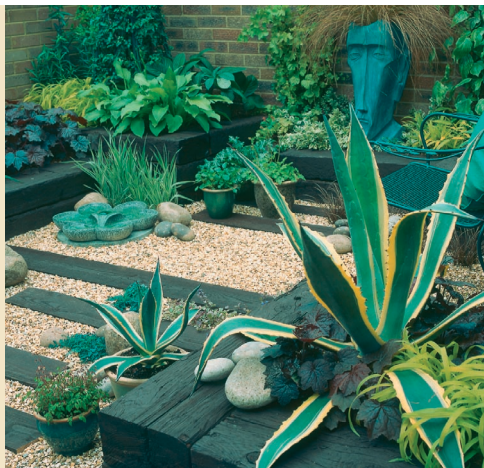
I would also like to thank all of our newsletter readers who have taken the trouble to tell us how much they enjoy receiving and reading a well produced publication.

Garden dreams or Garden schemes?

By Mike Griffin

With Christmas over for another year, perhaps you'll have time to put your feet up for a while and plan the year ahead.

Maybe you're reading this newsletter in the warmth of your home thinking - "in just a few short months I could be looking at the summer issue sitting in our lovely garden, enjoying the sun"... or will you?



Some people have got their gardens to that point where all they do is a little maintenance, maybe cut the grass, put in a few bedding plants and the rest of the time they just enjoy it. Most people however are reading this looking at a garden that at best, is not quite how they want it, and at worst is completely wrong. Maybe the previous occupants had a concrete fixation, who knows? If you are trying to sell your house but it just won't sell, could it be that your garden is letting you down? Now is the time to start thinking about those changes you want to make. Whether it is reshaping the lawn or building a water feature - up to a total redesign. If you don't, then come summer you still won't have done it or worse still, instead of enjoying the garden you will be out in the summer heat building it.

Winter is the best time to design and for some jobs the best time to build. Whether you are going to design and build yourself or in conjunction with a designer and landscape gardener - start now.

The process will vary a little depending on the scale of the change but is basically as follows:

- **Decide what you want to change and by when**
- **Produce a scaled drawing of the design**
- **Consider if there will be anything in the design that has to be custom built?**
This can affect cost and timescale greatly
- **Price everything carefully and check that the budget is realistic**
Always budget a third to a half more than you think. If the cost is more than planned then you are going to have to find the extra money or compromise the design
- **When the design and budget is finalised it's time to organise the build**

Start the changes now and with a little effort, by the summer, you could be enjoying and relaxing in your dream garden.

Mike Griffin Garden Design
Contact 01273 516318

Market Trends

The economic outlook is strong and despite interest rate rises last year they are still extremely low compared to those we have previously experienced. Unemployment figures are good and the economy is growing at a slower speed, setting a good tone for the year ahead. These factors have had the desired cooling effect on the housing market and we have seen a slight adjustment of property prices through the autumn and winter. However, I believe that the property market is stable and we will see renewed interest from buyers in the coming weeks. Providing estate agents give sensible marketing and pricing advice, and owners take heed then the property market will remain steady. If owners ignore the advice and are over optimistic the market will stagnate. At present there is a good stock of property for sale providing Buyers with a wide range of flats and houses in all price ranges. I predict that prices will start to edge upwards in the second half of the year.

What's on!

Some local events scheduled during the next few months

7 Dec/	Exhibition - Carol McNicoll: ceramics - Hove Museum
30 Jan	Dick Whittington Theatre Royal
9 Dec/	Brighton & Hove Albion vs. Watford - Withdean
16 Jan	Holiday on Ice 'Hollywood' Brighton Centre
3 Jan	Fairtrade Fair Friend's Meeting House
13 Jan/	Mozart's World: II Hanover Band - The Old Market
30 Jan	Sunday Coffee Concert Sorrel Quartet, The Old Market
15 Jan	Wedding Fair Brighton Racecourse
23 Jan	Palladian Ensemble Autograph Concert - Brighton College
23 Jan	Green Day - Brighton Centre
2 Feb	Art Deco Fair - Hove Centre
5 Feb	Basketball - Brighton Bears vs. Thames Valley - Brighton Centre
13 Feb	Modelworld - Brighton Centre
15 Feb	Brighton Science Festival University of Sussex
18/20 Feb	Brighton Library Reopens - World Book Day - Jubilee Site
25/26 Feb	15th Sussex Beer and Cider Festival - Hove Centre
3 Mar	Jumble Sale - 2pm - 4pm The Methodist Church, The Ridgeway, Woodingdean
10/12 Mar	Daniel Bedingfield - Brighton Centre
12 Mar	
22 Mar	

Please note: It is advisable to check dates, times and venue before travelling as each event is planned well in advance.

History on our doorstep

Brighton West Pier, now mostly derelict, was once a magnificent looking structure and epitomises the gilded era of Edwardian Britain. Designed by the famous engineer Eugenius Birch construction began in 1863. It opened three years later on 5th October 1866, having cost £30,000.



Brighton West Pier is 1,115ft (337.8m) long and originally consisted of a wooden promenade deck, where the Victorians could stroll at their leisure to see and be seen. In 1875 a central bandstand was added, and in 1883 a pavilion was built at the pier head - subsequently enlarged in 1885. 1886 saw the construction of landing stages that allowed paddle steamers carrying day-trippers to visit the town. The transformation from a promenade pier to a pleasure pier had begun.

In 1901 the landing stage was enlarged, and 1903 saw the conversion of the pavilion into a 1000 seater theatre. The last major building work was in 1916, with the removal of the central bandstand and the construction of a 1400 seat concert hall, having first widened the immediate decking area by 14ft (4.2m). This concert hall had survived intact until disaster struck in 2002/3. Brighton West Pier offered plenty of activities, both inside and out. Plays, pantomimes and ballet were performed in the theatre and the pier's own band played in the concert hall. In its heyday the pier was playing host to over 2,000,000 people every year.

Forced to close during the Second World War, for fear it could be used as a landing stage by the enemy, the West Pier had been completely transformed into the more familiar 'funfair' type pier when it eventually reopened. The theatre now had a restaurant on the first floor with a games hall beneath, the concert hall became a café, and the normal plethora of dodgems and ghost trains sprawled across the open decking. The popularity of the West Pier began to decline with the advent of the package holiday. Combined with mounting maintenance costs, the seaward end was

eventually closed in 1970, and permission for demolition was granted by the state, subject to local council approval. However, a determined campaign by local residents ensured that this demolition order was never carried out and in 1975 the Pier was closed completely.

Purchased for £100 in 1985 by Brighton West Pier Trust, work began on restoration but was forced to stop after suffering additional damage in the great storms of 1987 and 1988. Finally, after receiving a lottery grant in 1996 and 1998 it now looked like the Brighton West Pier may be saved.



Damage during the great storms

However, on 29th December 2002 the inevitable happened when, during a violent storm, a section of the sub structure collapsed from the area around the concert hall. Although not entirely lost the pier suffered considerable damage and once again, its future was left hanging (literally) in the balance. Further tragedy struck in the first few weeks of 2003, this time in the form of two separate arson attacks. Consequently, the pier's two unique pleasure buildings were severely damaged. More legal disputes ensued and subsequently the Heritage Lottery Fund decided to withdraw its support, despite a recommendation from English Heritage



Fire damage in 2003

that restoration should go ahead. Unfortunately, the future of the Brighton West Pier now hangs by a very slim thread. English Heritage have also withdrawn their support which, as far as we know, leaves the West Pier Trust to continue with the battle to save the Pier.

The pictures of the gale and fire damage kindly supplied by the Argus

Level 3 NVQ's for John and Ben



John Hill



Ben Hawley

Congratulations to John Hill and Ben Hawley on obtaining their National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in Residential Estate Agency

Upholding the company's philosophy of training and development for all staff members John and Ben have studied hard, often working in their own time to achieve the results.

John says "The course took us about a year to complete and has really built our confidence in handling most of the situations an agent will face. It has taught us to look for different ways of doing things, not only in terms of good communication and selling skills but also in familiar tasks such as property valuations, sales negotiation and professional liaison".

Chicken or Egg? Buy first or sell?

For homeowners wishing to sell their property and buy another, it's the classic dilemma - which do you do first, buy or sell?

There is probably no all-encompassing answer. Typically, people initially investigate the market to find out what they can buy for their money. Inevitably, during this research they fall in love with the 'ideal' property. As they have yet to sell, they find themselves in a weak position as purchasers, and are unlikely to have anything but an asking price (or even higher) offer accepted. After all, why should a vendor limit the sale of their property to the saleability of someone else's?

Even if terms are agreed, then what? You end up being forced to sell quickly, possibly at a low figure, so that you don't lose your new property. Annoyingly, once a property goes under offer, everyone seems to want it!

The difference between your expensive purchase and cheap sale could cost you as much as 20% more than the cost of the move in more controlled circumstances.

So be cool. Sell from a position of strength, and buy using the power of cash. A proceedable purchaser is a joy to the ears of an estate agent and their client.

As for that dream home - isn't it rather a coincidence that the perfect property just happens to be on the market at the precise moment you are looking? There is always another one around the corner, and it may even be better! And if you don't find a suitable property in time, then you are hardly likely to be homeless, as nobody is going to force you to sell until you are ready - it is entirely your decision.

We aim to reduce the pressure of moving for our clients in many ways, but our answer to the chicken and egg scenario is emphatic ... the chicken!

Did you know?

Lewes Road

- 1: Brighton's first piped water supply was provided to a few privileged customers in about 1834 from a well and pumping station in Lewes Road in what is now Saunders Park. The supply was only available for two hours per day, which of course was most unsatisfactory.
- 2: The lower-end of the Bear Road where it joins Lewes Road, was an important economic area of the town in the early 20th century. It was the site for 'Reasons' electric works (later the more famous Allen West), a diamond cutting company, a custard powder factory and a dental supplies business. Nearby, the water pumping station, Cox's Pill factory, an abattoir and the railway coal yards all provided abundant employment.
- 3: With a length of 3.46 miles from Waterloo Place to the Falmer boundary, Lewes Road is the longest continuously-named road in Brighton, and replaced the downland Drove Road and Juggs Road over Newmarket Hill.
- 4: During the 1910's a small number of engineering factories were established on the eastern side of Lewes Road around Coombe Road. Further development came in the 1920's with the Moulsecomb estates. Today the section from Elm Grove to Upper Lewes Road is now a shopping area with the Sainsburys store occupying a prominent position.
- 5: Fairlight School was opened on January 27th 1873, under the charge of Miss H. Weekley, for children up to 7 years old. She began teaching in a room of the 'Lewes Road Congregational Church'. The name 'Fairlight School' became popular and has continued until the present time.
- 6: The first developments along Lewes Road were the almshouses and the barracks. The Level was laid out in 1822 and in the 1820's Richmond Terrace and Hanover Crescent were developed. The road north of The Level up to the borough boundary at Bear Road was developed in the 1860's.

BRIGHTON - NEWS IN BRIEF

£10 million sea defence scheme is almost complete

A joint project to rebuild the sea defences between Brighton Marina and Ovingdean is drawing to a close. The £10 million scheme, co-ordinated by Brighton & Hove City Council and civil engineers Volker Stevin, has involved the reconstruction of over a mile of sea defences originally built in the 1930s.

Major work has been undertaken on the old sea wall, which was in a very poor state of repair. During the summer months boulders weighing up to 10 tonnes were brought in by boat. Now that the scheme is nearing completion, the Undercliff Walk will re-open at weekends (except for a stretch behind Asda). This will allow finishing works to continue during weekdays. A temporary path via the Marina is planned to connect both ends.

A new cafe, toilets and chalets at Ovingdean will be provided in the New Year.

Councillor Gill Mitchell, chair of Brighton & Hove's environment committee, said: "This has been one of the largest coast protection schemes along the south coast. Engineers have had to contend with strong tides to replace the sea defences, splash walls and promenade."

The whole project is expected to be completed by the end of March 2005.

New skills in the neighbourhood

Residents in neighbourhood renewal areas of Brighton & Hove are set to become handy about the home and craftspeople about the community.

Initially twenty-seven people signed up to a free DIY course, provided by Brighton & Hove City Council, to help develop new skills to tackle general household maintenance.

Councillor Juliet McCathry said: "The main aim of the course is to provide people with the skills to do jobs that they normally would pay someone else to do".

The course programme covers;

- Painting and decorating - how to create special paint effects and make sure that the wall paper hangs straight
- Plumbing - Fixing a dripping tap and stopping the overflow from running
- Tiling - how to tile walls and floors and replace old and damaged tiles.

The project, developed in partnership with Adult and Community Learning and Neighbourhood Renewal, began in November at the following venues:

- Bevendean Primary School, 10-12pm
- Hollingdean Community Centre, 12.30-2.30pm
- Millwood Centre, Nelson Row, 4.30-6.30pm.

This year the course will also be running in Hangleton & Knoll and eventually will be operating throughout all of the neighbourhood renewal areas.

The new Jubilee Library in Brighton

Opening 3 March 2005: World Book Day

A Library for the 21st Century, the focus of a vibrant new city square

Brighton's new Jubilee Library is a £14 million landmark building and will be the focus of a new city square. It is part of an innovative and ambitious £50 million PFI (Private Finance Initiative) regeneration scheme in central Brighton, described at

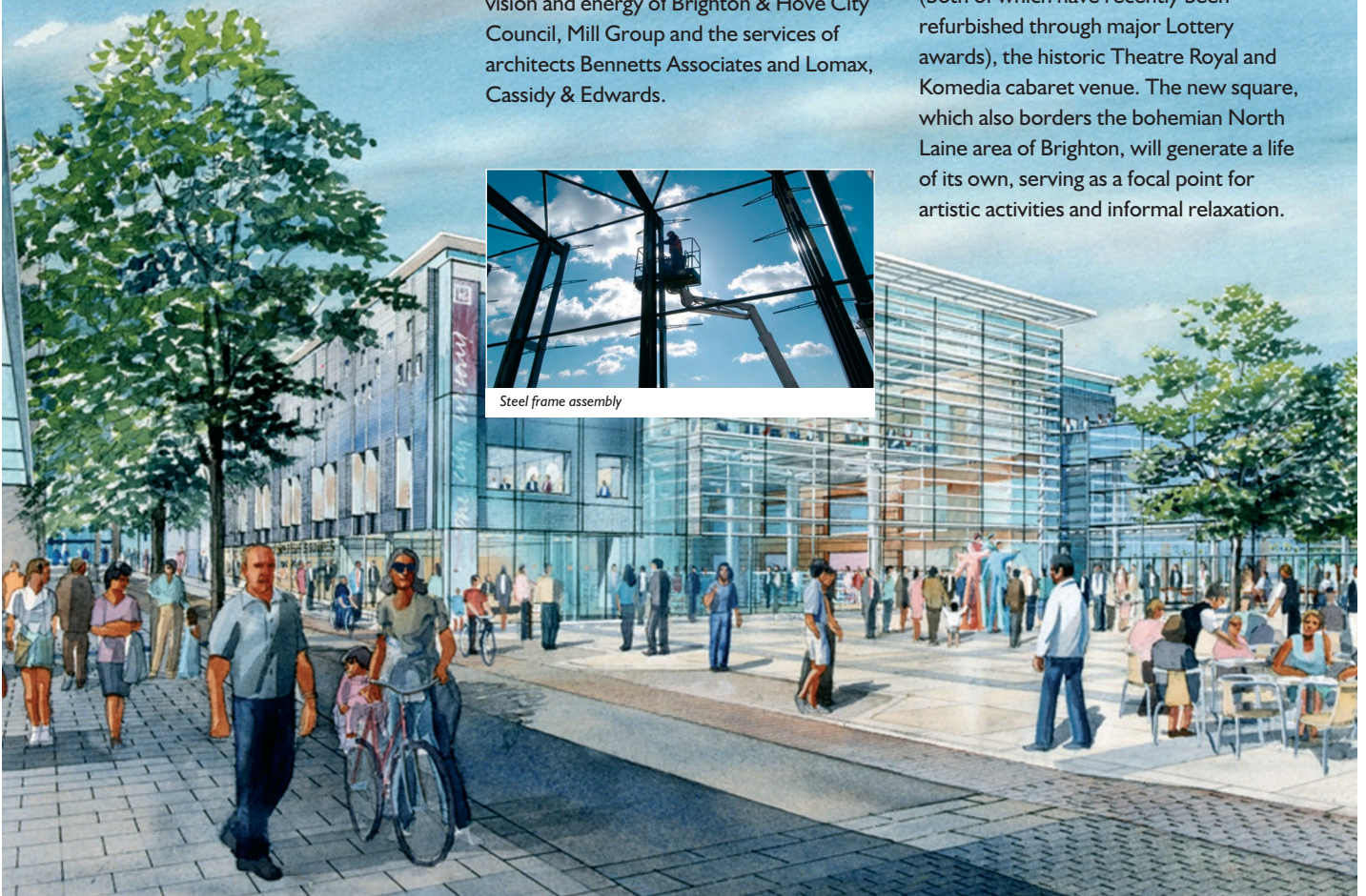
design stage by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment as having the potential to become 'an exemplar of design in PFI projects'. This scheme is transforming a major site, largely derelict for half a century, into a vibrant space for contemporary urban living, with a mix of retail, leisure, hotel, office and residential facilities.

The project has been realised through the vision and energy of Brighton & Hove City Council, Mill Group and the services of architects Bennetts Associates and Lomax, Cassidy & Edwards.

This innovative, modern library, a large public building of unusually high quality, will be one of the most energy efficient public buildings in the country. It has been the catalyst for the other elements of the regeneration, attracting investment into the surrounding area. The library extends Brighton's cultural quarter, focused on the Royal Pavilion, Brighton Museum & Art Gallery and the Dome (both of which have recently been refurbished through major Lottery awards), the historic Theatre Royal and Komedia cabaret venue. The new square, which also borders the bohemian North Laine area of Brighton, will generate a life of its own, serving as a focal point for artistic activities and informal relaxation.



Steel frame assembly



New kit for Woodingdean under 9's Football Club



David Maslen Estate Agents are pleased to report that, as part of their involvement in the community, they have sponsored the Woodingdean under 9's Football Club' by supplying new strip. David is pictured here with most of the team in their new kit.

The Woodingdean After School Club

The Woodingdean Inclusive After School Club is for children with and without special needs aged between 5 and 16 years. It runs from after school to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday, during term time. Each session is held at the Woodingdean Youth Centre and costs £7 (concessions available, discounted first session).

Children have the opportunity to socialise with others through play activity.

For more information or to arrange a visit please call Zoe on 07841014268.