



James Burton
1761-1837



Newsletter Summer-Autumn 2018



Decimus Burton
1800-1881



These photographs were taken on 6th June 2018 following the unveiling of a plaque commemorating James Burton. The house, on the corner of Guilford Street and Lansdowne Terrace, Bloomsbury, is one of many designed and built by James on the Bedford and Crown Estates in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. James and his wife Elizabeth lived here for three years, in their first family house built in Bloomsbury. It is now owned by London University. The plaque was unveiled by Guy Fearon (descendent of Jesse Burton, 12th child of James and Elizabeth), the mayor of Camden and Elizabeth Nathaniels of the Burtons' St Leonards Society, currently completing a biography of Decimus Burton (10th child of James and Elizabeth). The occasion was in part based on research done by Elizabeth at the Hastings Museum.

The others in the photograph below are Dr Chris Jones of the Tunbridge Wells Society, and Christopher Maxwell-Stewart, who founded the Burtons' St Leonards Society in 1967 (and current Chair), holding a bronze plaque of James in the possession of the Society. The fortune which James made from his London constructions was invested in creating the New Town of St Leonards between 1826 and 1837. In their final years James and Elizabeth lived in Allegria overlooking St Leonards Gardens. They both died in 1837 and were buried in the pyramidal tomb in the graveyard on West Hill Road.



On Saturday September 22nd a visit will be made by coach to Mabledon and Tudeley. Cost £20 including a sandwich lunch to members, £25 non-members. There are still a few places remaining. If you are interested, please contact Christine Francis, on (01424) 421207. The visit will commence at 10 am from Upper Maze Hill with arrival at Mabledon, near Tonbridge, at 11. After visiting the extensive house and grounds we will continue to Tudeley at 3 pm to view the Chagall windows. Expected arrival back in St Leonards by 5.30 pm.

The main part of Mabledon House was built by James Burton in 1804. Decimus was brought up there. James sold the house in 1828 to John Deacon (of Deacon's Bank in London) who commissioned Decimus to extend it. This work was carried out in 1829-31. A further wing was added in 1870.



Below: one of the twelve stained glass windows by Marc Chagall at All Saints' Church, Tudeley, near Tonbridge



St Leonards Parish Church (1961) at Undercliff. Principally the work of Adrian Gilbert Scott, it is a Grade 2 listed building. The original church by James Burton was destroyed by a German flying bomb in 1944. The condition of the church has been a major concern of the Society for some while. It is now disused as a result of structural problems relating mainly to its direct abutment on to the cliff behind it.

The flank walls and adjacent cliffs have a long history of instability which the bombing aggravated and there is no evidence that stabilisation measures were taken before erection of the present church. Its plan is wider than that of the Burton church with the consequence that its walls are much closer to the flanks of the quarry. The Church Commissioners have formally declared the church redundant but there cannot be a viable future for any building sited within this former quarry unless its flanks are stabilised.



Solutions to these problems and possible future uses for the building will be the subject of consideration by the Society beginning with a **talk on Sunday 30th September by the architectural historian, Alan Powers: "Redundant 20th Century Buildings - Rubble or Resurrection"**. Royal Victoria Hotel (£2.50 members, £5 non-members) at 4 pm.



Other talks and meetings

Sunday October 28th – “The Harold and Edith statue - is it worth saving?”

A debate led by local artist Alan Rankle.

Royal Victoria Hotel (£2.50 members, £5 non- members) at 4 pm.



The statue in West Marina Gardens has been the subject of much recent discussion. It depicts Edith Swanneck lamenting over the slain king Harold but has been subject to extensive erosion.

Sunday November 25th – Annual General Meeting in the South Lodge commencing at 4 pm. A short talk will follow about the curious history of the **Lion and the Unicorn** on Robertson Terrace, Hastings. The meeting is free to members. Wine, cordials, tea and coffee will be available.



The lion at the western end of Robertson Terrace and the unicorn at the eastern
These early 19th century statues are by sculptor James George Bubb.

Wednesday 19th December

Details of our Winter Celebration can be found on page 6.

THE DECIMUS BURTON SOCIETY

(Decimus Burton, FRS, FSA, FRIBA (1800-1881))

A meeting took place at the Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly, on 14th May 2018 to set up a Society to *research, appreciate and champion* the works of this eminent architect. Decimus was a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries for some fifty-three years, hence the choice of this venue for the meeting. An illustrated talk on Burton and the range of his works was given by Dr Philip Whitbourn, former chief architect of English Heritage and author of the only authoritative monograph on Decimus Burton to date.



After the introduction by Paul Avis there were presentations by Chris Jones from the Tunbridge Wells Civic Society, who has recently been awarded a D.Phil from Oxford for his work on the Calverley Estate, and by Elizabeth Nathaniels, who is writing a biography of Decimus Burton. The audience included architectural historians, archivists and owners of Burton properties and at least one descendant of the Burtons.

Burtons' St Leonards Society visit to Tunbridge Wells

Burton enthusiasts descended on Calverley Park for a talk by Dr Chris Jones (see above) on June 28, followed by an exploration of the park. Thanks to Dr David Wright, we were invited inside his house in the park and were able to see glimpses of the long view beyond the front hedge which Burton would have had in mind. Chris Jones's talk was a tour de force. He explained why and how the houses as well as the new town were built and gradually developed into what has become the upper part of Tunbridge Wells.

Calverley Park consists of twenty-four villas arranged in a quadrant, their varied designs forming a homogenous whole. The Park and adjoining property, which together formed the Calverley estate, were acquired in the 1820s by John Ward. Development of the villas and their associated landscape setting, to designs by Decimus Burton, was complete by 1839. The Ward Estate is now the property of the trustees of the Calverley Park Association.



A round-up of events by ‘Decima’

May and June this year brought an abundance of interesting events for admirers of Decimus Burton’s work, whether as architect, landscape gardener, town and estate planner or designer of works in glass.

The World’s largest Victorian Glasshouse and a ‘World under Glass’

Early May was dominated by news of the re-opening of the Temperate House at Kew, after a five-year restoration by Donald Insall and Associates, under the direction of lead conservation architect, Aimee Felton. Newspapers trumpeted the success of this ‘king of glasshouses’ and ‘glistening cathedral’, dubbed ‘breathtakingly beautiful’ by Sir David Attenborough at the opening ceremony.



On June 12, members of the Victorian Society had the rare treat of being guided at Kew by Aimee and her colleague Michael Shippobottom. The most important part of the day took place in the gleaming cream and white Temperate House. This was followed by a visit to the hot damp heat of the tree-crammed, curvilinear Burton Palm House with its endearing Loch Ness monster of a twisted palm-like, Eastern Cape giant cycad – the venerable, leaning inhabitant in Kew since 1775!.

Decimus Burton at Kensal Green

The Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery, under the Chairmanship of Dr Jenny Freeman (Lady Freeman), hosted a talk by Philip Whitbourn on the works of Decimus Burton. This was held in a hidden-away room in the Dissenter’s Chapel on June 20. Before the meeting, Decima was grateful to be met and shown the Burton tomb by the Chief Guide and Trustee of the Friends, Henry Neal-Vivian. It contains the remains of two of Decimus’ siblings, Jesse who died in 1844 and her brother Henry. Decimus himself was to be buried there 40 years later.

See also *Decima’s* item on James Burton and Brightling Park on page 6.

Memories of James Burton in Brightling Park

Another event held on June 16, in celebration of Humphry Repton's work at Brightling Park, recalled James Burton. Repton had designed the gardens in the elder Burton's Russell Square and later visited James at his country estate in Mabledon. Brightling Park and follies were designed by Repton for 'Mad Jack Fuller', more formally Squire John Fuller, MP for Sussex (1801-12). A patron of the arts and sciences, he was also an enthusiastic builder of follies, of which the Pyramid in the churchyard at Brightling is a good example. At 25 feet high, it seems from the perspective shown almost to dwarf the church.

A mere 12 miles from Hastings, it is more than likely that James was influenced by the outsized pyramidal tomb which his contemporary, Fuller, had designed for himself. James was to design a more modestly sized version for his new town at St Leonards a few years later.



'Mad Jack' Fuller's tomb at Brightling



The Burton family tomb on West Hill Road

Wednesday 19th December

**Winter Celebration commencing at 6 pm in South Lodge. All members will be very welcome.
Wine and canapés.**

The Society occupies South Lodge (West). The premises have undergone considerable improvement in recent times and the highly informative exhibition has been extended and professionally remounted.



Hastings & St Leonards Society

An Open Meeting will be held on 19th October. at the **Hastings campus of the University of Brighton, Room 204, Priory Square Building** (via Priory Street or Havelock Road) on the possible **proposal to apply for World Heritage Site Status for Hastings and St Leonards**

A brief introduction to the proposal was given by Julia Hilton at the Open Meeting in April. It was agreed that the Society would facilitate further discussion.

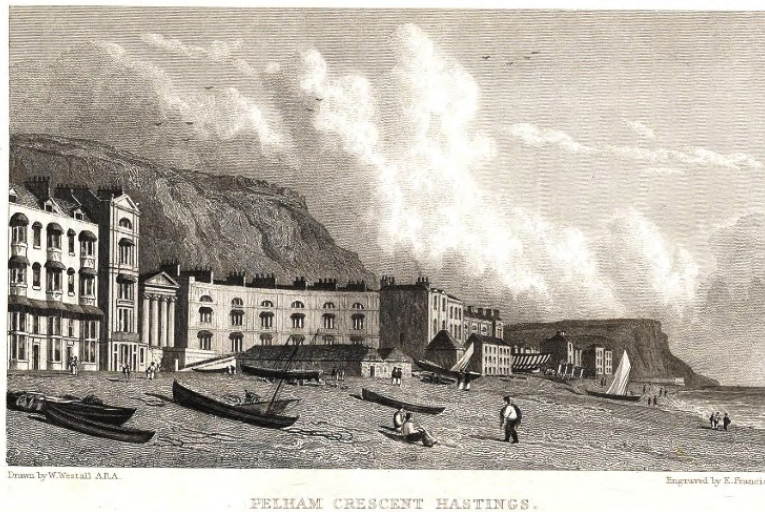
Heritage Open Days took place earlier in September including a guided tour of St Mary in the Castle and at Emmanuel Church in Vicarage Road. There was also a tour of Hastings Town Hall with Borough Council's Kevin Boorman, and a short walking tour of Hastings Town Centre with a leader from the Hastings & St Leonards Society.

Georgian Weekend for Hastings Week

The Hastings & St Leonards Society, in association with the Burtons' St. Leonards Society, has arranged a Georgian Weekend as a contribution to Hastings Week.

Friday 5 October, 2pm, at Hastings Museum, John's Place, Bohemia Road, Hastings, TN34 1ET 'Hastings and St Leonards, 1789–1837', a lecture by Elizabeth Nathaniels, detailing how Hastings and St. Leonards became important during the late Georgian period.

Saturday 6 October, 11 am, meet at St Mary in the Castle café area, Pelham Place, Hastings sea-front (TN34 3AE) Guided walk (part 1), looking at local Georgian architecture.



Pelham Crescent in an engraving of 1830 by Edward Francis after a drawing by William Westall

Sunday 7 October, 11 am, meet at South Lodge (West), Maze Hill, St Leonards-on-Sea, TN38 0BA (lower end of St Leonards Gardens). Guided walk (part 2), looking at local Georgian architecture.

The aims of the Society, which acts as an umbrella group for local amenity and similar organisations, are to

- encourage enthusiasm for and pride in the town,
- celebrate its spirit and the beauty of its natural setting.

Benefits for members include regular news, priority booking for lectures and trips, and discounts for certain publications. <http://hastingsandstleonardssociety.org.uk/>



Membership of the Society

£15 per person per year or £25 per couple

Membership application details may be found on the Society's website:

www.burtonsstleonardssociety.co.uk

The Society was registered in 1970 but conservation efforts leading to its foundation began in the 1950s. Our campaign, backed by various organisations such as the Civic Trust and the Georgian Group, resulted in the designation of Burton's St Leonards as a Conservation Area by the local authority in 1969. Our aims are to:

- encourage high standards of architecture and town planning in St Leonards on Sea and prevent unsympathetic development
- stimulate interest in and care for the beauty, history and character of the area of St Leonards on Sea and its surroundings
- encourage the preservation, development and improvement of features of general interest, in particular the contribution made by James and Decimus Burton to the architecture and town planning of St Leonards on Sea.

The Society keeps a vigilant eye on local planning applications, especially those affecting listed buildings, and on alterations to such buildings made without planning consent.

For more information, please visit our website at:

www.burtonsstleonardssociety.co.uk

For further information, eg on specific events or for advice on architectural or planning matters, please email: info@burtonsstleonardssociety.co.uk

Or contact the Society's Secretary, Christine Francis, on (01424) 421207



Note for existing members

If you are paying your membership subscription through your bank at an old subscription rate, we shall be very grateful if you would amend this to the current rate(s) shown above.

Email

If you have an email address which you think we may not hold, we shall be glad to have it. It will not be communicated to others except with your express consent. Use of email saves us a considerable amount of time and of money in printing and postage, and means that we can ensure that members receive communications as rapidly as possible.

Although this Newsletter is produced principally for members of the Society, please feel free to send it to others who may be interested and feel encouraged to join.