



SEAHORSE



Number 21

March 2009

Newsletter of the Friends of the Midland Hotel, Morecambe

10th ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Welcome to the tenth anniversary edition of *Seahorse*. Was it really all those years ago that a dozen or so of us met in the old sun-lounge of the Midland, all concerned about the deteriorating state of the hotel? But what could we do? The building didn't belong to us – in fact, nobody was quite sure who it belonged to following the death of Les Whittingham, the last owner, and the problems involved in settling his estate. We decided to start a group with the aims of letting people know what was happening to the building and publicising its architectural importance, both locally and nationally – and when it was sold we hoped we might work with the new owner to help the Midland have a successful future. A few days later we met again, drew up a constitution, appointed officers and advertised our existence locally. In July 1999 we issued our first newsletter to around 30 members and from then on the rest, as they say, is history.

It's been a long journey - often difficult, sometimes depressing and frequently frustrating – but in the end well worth it. To see the Midland restored and up and running once again is wonderful. Thank you all for your continued support, particularly in the difficult times. I pass the hotel most days and it is very gratifying to see the car park full and people going in and out. Under the management of Matt Redhead and his staff the Midland has been transformed over the last few months. The problems associated with its opening period have been sorted out and both residents and visitors are now assured of a warm welcome.

It was good to be able to hold our AGM in the hotel and my thanks to those of you who were able to attend. As it was our tenth anniversary the chef baked us a celebratory cake (complete with candles) which members enjoyed with their tea and coffee after the meeting.

Now, we have decided that you all need a night out and what better place than the Midland. Following the success of last year's Friends' Weekend (despite the weather!) we have decided to host another do. This will be on Friday 19th and Saturday 20th June, with a sit-down meal and entertainment on the Saturday evening. By then the hotel will have been open for just over a year and we thought it would be lovely to celebrate this. Numbers will be limited so book early (see details enclosed with this newsletter). There will be live music, a raffle, Deco walks and other events. We don't mind what you wear but we thought it would be nice if you could come in some sort of 1930's attire. Anything goes – from formal black tie/tails and evening gowns to striped blazers, bathing costumes or anything in between! I look forward to seeing you in June.

Sue Thompson

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Midland Hotel was held at the Midland Hotel, Morecambe on Friday 6th February 2009. 69 members attended.

Before the main business of the AGM took place, Sue introduced Matt Redhead, Manager of the Midland, who addressed the meeting and gave a brief account of some of the problems he had overcome since the hotel opened its doors in June 2008 and the situation to date. He said that the hotel was now running well and that he was very pleased with its progress. After a short talk Matt invited questions from the floor and an interesting question and answer session followed covering various aspects of the daily running of the Midland. Sue then thanked Matt for both his attendance at the meeting and his hard work at the hotel.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting had been included with the Newsletter which followed the AGM as well as being posted on the website. Copies were also available at this meeting if members wished to see them. The minutes were certified by the secretary as being a true and accurate record of the last meeting. Their acceptance was proposed by Ann Hutton and seconded by Peter Llewellyn.

Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Chairperson's Report

Sue welcomed everyone to the meeting and pointed out that as well as it being the first AGM in the hotel since its refurbishment, it was also the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Friends of the Midland, making it a special occasion.

She said that someone had asked 'What was the role of the group now that the hotel was open?' In reply, Sue defined the word friend as follows: 'A person whom one knows well and likes, a supporter or ally'. She compared this definition with the activities of the group over the last ten years and said it was up to us to continue supporting the hotel over the coming years, promoting it to our own friends and colleagues and using its facilities whenever we could. The Friends had waited a long time for the Midland to return as a functioning hotel but we must remember that it is a business. The words 'Use it or lose it' came to mind. We need to encourage people to patronise the hotel long term. Some will pop in for a coffee with a view while others will plan all types of celebrations. Sue believed that there would be a Friends group for the foreseeable future. As individuals we spread the word to other people about the hotel and, if ever we were required as a group to assist in its future survival, we are here and ready. We were never going to fade away once the hotel opened.

Sue then described the special edition postcards and greetings cards that the committee had commissioned to commemorate the re-opening of the hotel, stating that they were available at the meeting and could be ordered by post or email at any time. Also on show were prints and cards of a new painting of the Midland by Patricia Haskey-Knowles, a well-respected local artist and member of the Friends.

Sue said it was the committee's intention to hold another 'Friends Weekend' sometime in June (depending on room availability). Details would be published in the next newsletter due out at the beginning of March.

She also mentioned that the hotel had a special '2 for 1' deal at the moment on cocktails served in the Rotunda between 3pm and 9pm on Fridays and urged members to take advantage of this facility if they could.

She concluded by thanking members for their attendance and for their continued support.

Treasurer's Report

Barry presented the end of year figures to the meeting which showed a balance of funds of £187.98. He pointed out that although the balance appeared small it did not include money from subscription renewals (just over £1,000) which had come in during the ten days since the date of the bank statement included with the report. Funds, therefore, were still healthy.

The main sources of income were membership fees and renewals and the sale of commemorative plates. Expenditure was made up of costs for the production and postage of the newsletters, special edition postcards/greetings cards and plates, website hosting and the room/refreshments for the AGM. The 'Friends Weekend' which was held in July had more or less been self-supporting with a small surplus left over.

Membership stood at 578 before renewal.

Barry then submitted the accounts which were proposed by John Hutton and seconded by Steve Swithin. Steve proposed a vote of thanks to Barry for all his efforts in connection with the Friends and everyone showed their appreciation with a round of applause.

Election of Officers

The serving officers were asked if they were willing to stand again for a further year and all indicated that they were. The Secretary asked if anyone else wished to be considered for any of the posts. No other names were forthcoming and it was therefore unanimously accepted that the existing officers stood in post for a further year.

The officers for 2009 are therefore as follows:

Chairperson	Sue Thompson
Vice Chairperson	Jane Wright
Secretary	Ian Thompson
Treasurer	Barry Guise
Membership Secretary	Lesley Guise

Committee members are Pam Brook, Neil Byers, Kate Drummond, Stephen Jones, Steve Swithin and Peter Wade.

Any Other Business

Howard Rogerson asked if it would be a good idea to fund raise to donate pieces of art to be displayed at the hotel.

Sue took the idea on board but mentioned that the hotel design team had in fact created their own works of art as well as displaying reproductions of early photographs on various walls within the hotel.

Ken Bolton asked Matt if the hotel intended to produce a brochure.

Matt replied that a brochure was already in production and to 'watch this space'.

Howard Landey asked what was happening in the area immediately adjacent to the hotel.

Sue replied that there was a tidying up operation in progress. The Harbour Bandstand had been demolished and the old go-kart track, which had become an eyesore, was being grassed over as an open space. On its seaward side a new RNLI station was under construction which will house the rescue hovercraft. The structure would not be intrusive to the views from the hotel and would provide a much needed home for a vital rescue craft. The proposed development of the rest of the promenade was still under discussion by Lancaster City Council and Urban Splash. Modifications were being made to the original planning application with public consultation being sought at a later date. Urban Splash had not escaped the effect of recent economic problems and their implications for the building industry but hope to weather the storm.

Ron Sands noted that the seahorses at the front of the building had been illuminated when the hotel re-opened in June but after a short period one had failed and now both were off. He asked if there was a plan to illuminate them again.

Matt replied that there had been a problem with the lighting but due to general opinion he had decided to switch them off permanently.

Steve Swithin asked if there was a possibility of introducing special rates for members and their guests when using the restaurant during week days and off-peak times, thus increasing usage of the food facilities.

Matt replied he was already considering something along those lines which he would soon publish.

Sue added that there were set menus in operation in the restaurant already at certain times. A phone call to the hotel would usually obtain information on what was available.

There being no further matters to discuss, Sue introduced Patricia Haskey-Knowles who gave a short talk to the meeting about the painting she had produced which depicted the hotel after refurbishment. Prints and cards were on show at special discounted prices for members.

Barry then asked Matt to draw out the winning ticket for the quiz competition included with the last newsletter. The winner was Sue Lovell.

The meeting was then brought to a close. Coffee and tea was served and Sue cut a celebratory cake, complete with lit candles, which the hotel chef had baked to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Friends of the Midland.

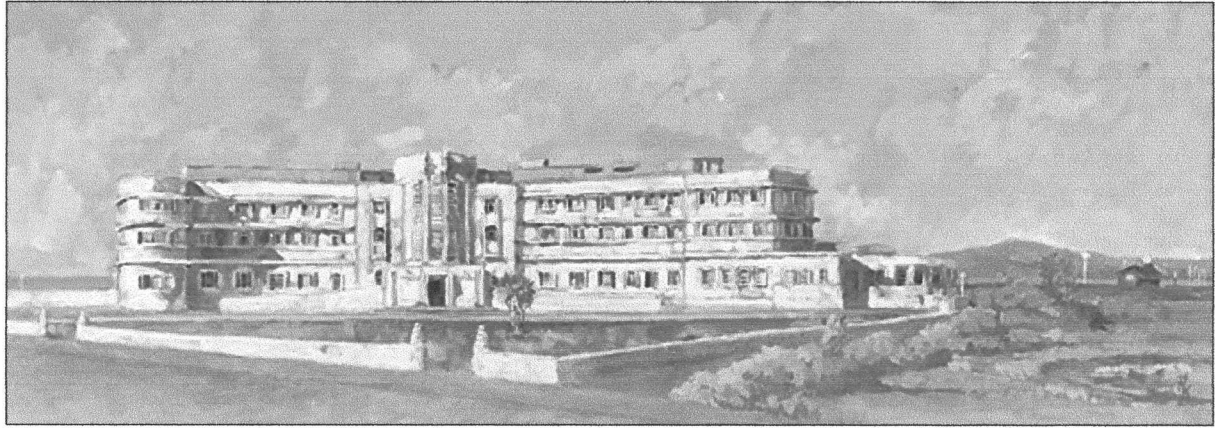
Ian Thompson



Sue cutting the Friends' 10th anniversary cake

MIDLAND HOTEL ORIGINAL PAINTING, PRINTS AND CARDS

Those of you who attended the Friends' AGM will have seen the new painting of the Midland Hotel by local artist Patricia Haskey-Knowles. The black and white reproduction below hardly does it justice, so if you have access to the Friends' website click on Members Area to see a colour version of the original. Pat says 'As a member of the Friends of the Midland Hotel I was very excited to be asked by the committee to paint this magnificent Art Deco building and wanted to convey the brilliance of the architecture and the beauty of the backdrop.'



The Midland Hotel by Pat Haskey-Knowles

Pat has produced a series of prints and cards of the image which she is offering to members at a reduced rate – see below for details.

Original Painting £1,495.00

The painting is double mounted and framed in an elegant bevelled elder-wood moulding with a limed insert. The image size is 28" x 9.5" and the outer dimensions are 21" x 39".

Giclée Prints are available on paper and canvas in the following sizes:

Mounted Prints on Somerset Velvet fine art paper

11.5" x 4" £25.00 + £2.50 p&p

28" X 9.5" £85.00 + £10.00 p&p

Giclée Prints on museum grade canvas stretched on a box frame

40" x 14" £150.00 + £15 p&p

56" x 20" £200.00 + £20 p&p

Bespoke sizes are also available – contact Pat for details and prices.

(Giclée Printing is a method of reproducing fine art images. All prints are produced using the latest professional pigment inks on the highest quality paper. Each print conforms to the Fine Art Trade Guild Specification and should be light fast for a minimum of 100 years. However, it is advisable not to hang prints or any artwork in strong direct sunlight.)

Greeting Cards £1.50 **Postcards** 80p

The prices listed above are at a special discounted rate exclusively for Friends of the Midland Hotel and a percentage of each sale will be donated to the Friends.

For sales and/or questions about the painting, prints and cards please contact...

Patricia-Haskey Knowles

Telephone: (01524) 853425 Mobile: 07718020568

E-mail: pat@phk-art.co.uk

Website: www.phk-art.co.uk

GILL, HILL, MODERNISM AND THE MIDLAND

Eric Gill's two sculpted seahorses on the façade of the Midland Hotel give it a focal point of interest, an appropriate contrasting decorative feature for a seaside hotel on an otherwise very plain elevation. Although he took the Midland commission and completed many other famous pieces of work on public buildings such as the BBC headquarters and the offices of the London Underground, Gill never really approved of this use of sculpture. While working on the latter he wrote to a friend 'I am at present doing some big but unimportant sculptures on a building in London – architectural fal-lals merely but valuable experience. The building is good and plain - iron with plain stone facing - we are quite out of place.' Gill's biographer Fiona MacCarthy described him as having many doubts, both moral and artistic, about the whole idea of surface decoration on a building. However, Gill was willing to compromise as big public commissions paid generously and he needed the money. Despite his misgivings, Gill's sculptures often possess a graceful simplicity and directness of line and form that seem to fit well with modernist buildings.

This raises the question 'How modernist was Gill?' – or, for that matter, Oliver Hill for whom Gill worked at the Midland Hotel and who had been brought up under the influence of Lutyens and the Arts and Crafts movement. While he enthusiastically embraced modernism during the Thirties, Hill was by no means averse to designing buildings in other styles. Gill made no claims to be a modernist and yet he is linked to modernism through his association with others such as Hill. Both came close to something that could be called modernism but somehow their work is perceived as not quite the genuine article. Perhaps they were too English.

So what was this modernism that Gill and Hill so nearly attained but not quite at the Midland Hotel? Clearly the building has some of the relevant components with its steel frame, flat roof, plain almost austere white exterior and extensive use of glass on the seaward side. However, questions arise about the brick infill, the rendered exterior finish and the almost symmetrical plan. In his book *Twentieth Century Houses* (1935) Raymond McGrath discussed the new possibilities for the design and construction of buildings opened up by steel, concrete and plate glass. A steel frame offered the opportunity for new forms of building as walls lost their support function and could be clad in lightweight materials suspended from the frame, like plate glass, which in turn meant considerably lighter interiors. The spans made possible by steel girders could give larger rooms and enable space to be more flexibly utilised. But McGrath believed that however much the right components were apparent in a building, what was required for true modernism was a different way of thinking about the possibilities of the new materials and then following this through to conclusions about their rational use in design and construction. To achieve this aim McGrath thought that England needed a new breed of architect – the architect/engineer – who could merge the two disciplines which, by the mid-Thirties, had experienced very little crossover. In his view, English architects who had adopted the new materials and construction techniques but compromised them by mixing old and new fell short of true modernism. In comparison he cited the work of differently trained architect/engineers from continental Europe exiled in England such as Eric Mendelsohn and Serge Chermayeff whose buildings made a significant impact on the architectural scene of the Thirties.

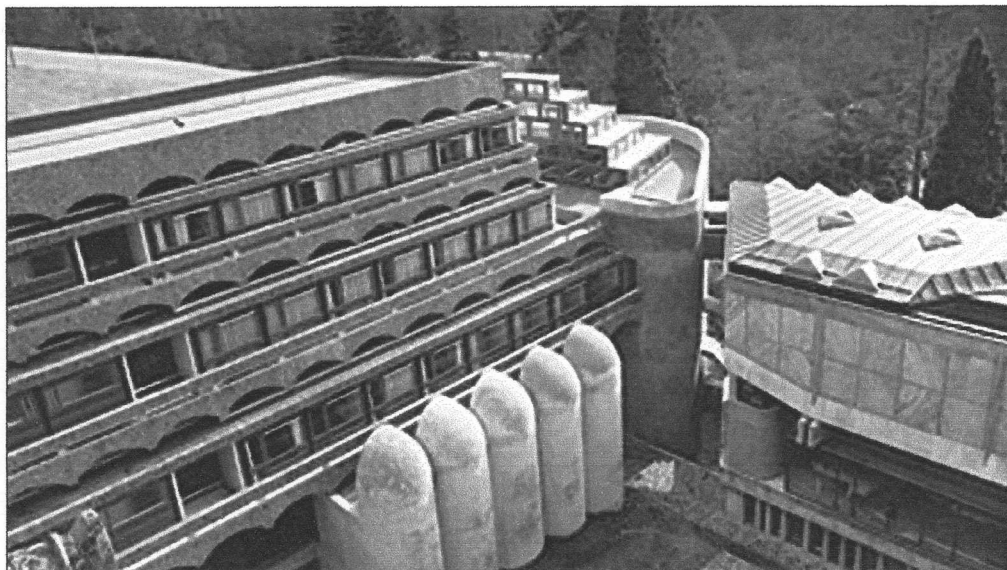
We tend to be a nation of pragmatists rather than theoreticians and so when a theory doesn't quite fit what we expect or want, then it's usually too bad for the theory – it gets reshaped to fit. Some writers, such as Alan Powers, do not believe there was a monolithic modernist approach to architecture that can be used as a template against which aspirant buildings can be assessed, stating that the notion of an undivided modern movement is nowadays universally accepted as a myth. It is all too easy to think of the architect as the authoritative powerful expert who tells his clients what it is they need and brooks no argument but that is rarely the case. Often a client has specific requirements to which the architect must adapt. In his discussion of Oliver Hill's varied work, Powers acknowledges the influence of the client on the buildings Hill designed and constructed. However, Hill's willingness to take on board his clients' wishes, switching from modern to traditional if necessary, was not simply a reflection of this influence but also a reluctance on his part to turn down profitable commissions solely on the grounds that they didn't match someone's theoretical ideal.

There is no doubt that many modernist architects were prepared to compromise, to listen to clients and adapt their designs and construction methods accordingly. But does this affect the integrity of their buildings and how they are regarded? Powers suggests that we need to adjust our views of the period to include such eclectic figures as Hill and Goodhart-Rendel and to do this requires a fundamental revision of the concept of modernity. He believes that 'a superficial analysis of style is too easy, and only the experience of the actual buildings begins to reveal the thread binding them together.' So it's alright to like the Midland, compromised or not, modernist or not. Many of us will happily go along with that.

Mike Stone

Mike Stone lives near Glasgow and writes to say that Urban Splash has crossed the border into Scotland. The company is interested in saving St Peter's College, a dilapidated Catholic seminary erected on the banks of the River Clyde in the 1960s. While not *Art Deco* in style, it is regarded as an iconic building in Scottish architectural circles (it is A-listed) and certainly one which offers Urban Splash quite a challenge.

Located in woods near the village of Cardross, the seminary - a three-storey concrete ziggurat flanked by silo-like chapels - is in a sorry state and while the exterior still looks impressive the inside was gutted many years ago. It was designed by two young architects Isi Metzstein and Andrew MacMillan, both admirers of Le Corbusier, and has echoes of the Swiss architect's Ronchamp Chapel and his monastery at La Tourette, while the towering side chapels, five on each side, resemble the cowls of cruise ships. The interiors were panelled in solid wood or veneer, harking back to the style of Charles Rennie Mackintosh, and leading the critic Brian Dillon to the view that 'In sum, St Peter's was both of its time architecturally and sufficiently eclectic and traditional not to startle the diocesan authorities too much - although students at the seminary were apt to refer to it as "the spaceship".'



Part of St Peter's seminary showing five of the chapels.

Commissioned by the Archbishop of Glasgow in 1958 and completed in 1966, St Peter's only functioned as a teaching college for 14 years, a victim of declining numbers and a Vatican decree that trainee priests should be schooled in the community. Since it closed in 1980 the seminary has gradually become derelict, subject to the effects of the weather and vandalism. In June 2007 the World Monuments Fund placed St Peter's on its register of buildings at risk although this did little to slow its decay. Following a survey by Avanti Architects, the Church said it would be willing to sell the seminary to Urban Splash for 'a nominal sum' so that it can be saved and redeveloped for commercial purposes. A spokeswoman for Urban Splash said the company wanted to bring the building 'back to life' possibly as a health or sports centre with additional residential buildings in its grounds and was working with leading Scottish architect Gareth Hoskins on a development plan for the site.

AN UNUSUAL INTRODUCTION TO ART DECO

From my house, it's a brisk ten minute walk to the Midland Hotel. My journey to get to it, however, started fifteen years and 12,000 miles away at a remote bay on the South Island of New Zealand. My introduction to the delights of *Art Deco* started there with a naked lady. Not a graceful *Deco* statue but a real live one. I think I'd better flesh that one out a little, if you'll pardon the expression.

In 1994 I took a year off to travel the world with my bicycle. On the ferry from North to South Island, New Zealand I met an American cyclist who was going in the same direction, so we tagged along with each other for about ten days. Late one afternoon we were looking for a place to pitch our tents for the night and stumbled across a small campsite. In a moment of extravagance we couldn't resist the offer of an inexpensive, rustic cabin for a couple of nights. The location was superb, overlooking a beautiful and remote bay, of which there are many in that part of the world. In the campsite's tiny outdoor bar that evening we got talking to an attractive lady (as you would!) who was spending her annual holiday there.

Next morning, taking a stroll along the water's edge, we came across a lone beach towel spread out on the sand, with the previous night's lady swimming nearby. She waved and then emerged from the sea wearing nothing but a smile. In conservative rural New Zealand this came as something of a surprise - a very pleasant one I should add, as this was a very fine example of the female form indeed. We had stumbled, inadvertently, upon a naturist retreat. However, nudity wasn't compulsory so my English reserve was neither compromised nor frowned upon. My shorts stayed on, much to my relief. Judy Southerwood, the pretty dark haired lady, occupied the next cabin, so during the next couple of days my American companion and I came to know her quite well. She asked where we were headed after leaving the campsite. My plan (if you could ever call it such) was to slowly wend my way around the South Island of New Zealand before tackling the North Island on the way back to Auckland. Next stop Fiji.

Judy informed me that she lived in Napier and worked for the local newspaper, followed by a typically hospitable Kiwi offer to stay at her house if I was passing that way. At the time the name of Napier meant nothing to me but I thanked her for the offer and tucked her address away in my pannier. My American companion and I split up a couple of days later. He went one way and I went the other. There was much to see and do - if you've never been to New Zealand you really don't know what you're missing. It is spectacularly wonderful, particularly at a cyclist's pace. This is neither the time nor place to digress into traveller's tales. All I will say is that it was an experience I will always treasure.

Some two months later I was checking my route back to Auckland and noticed that I had to pass through Napier, situated as it is on the east coast of the North Island. I dug out Judy's address and gave her a call. Fortunately she remembered me, was pleased to hear I'd survived the rigours of the South Island and immediately repeated the invitation to stay. As I mentioned earlier, I knew absolutely nothing about Napier; it was simply another place on the map. It didn't stay that way for long! I met Judy at the The Daily Telegraph Office, one of Napier's many magnificent *Art Deco* buildings. With the weekend approaching, Judy was only too pleased to show me the local sights.

What I learned from Judy was that in 1931 this area had been devastated by a massive earthquake and fire. Most of the older brick buildings of Napier and nearby Hastings had been virtually flattened and reduced to piles of rubble, the survivors being mainly new buildings of reinforced concrete. Two frantic years of reconstruction saw both cities rebuilt. The result is that much of their architecture dates from the narrow period from the late 1920s through to the early 1930s - the peak years for *Art Deco*. I had never seen anything quite like it and I was blown away by several things: the immense destruction that had taken place at the time, the incredible fortitude and determination of the New Zealanders, the unique style of the designs and my complete ignorance of all of it. I stayed with Judy for a few days, during which I embarked upon both a leisurely cycle ride around both cities (a good means of seeing any place for the first time) and participated in a guided *Art Deco* walk around Napier.



*Ornate entrance to the Rothman's Building, Napier
(my bike on the steps)*

Art Deco Clock Tower, Hastings



The author outside an Art Deco shopfront

According to Dr. Neil Cossons, past president of the British Museums Association, 'Napier represents the most complete and significant group of *Art Deco* buildings in the world and is comparable with Bath as an example of a planned townscape in a cohesive style. Napier is without doubt unique'. Tell me about it. I was hooked, instantly. I was impressed when I discovered later that Napier has an *Art Deco* Trust which promotes and protects the city's architectural heritage.

After a few days of Judy's kind hospitality, it was time to leave. I had other places to see, more hills to climb and the exotic South Pacific beckoned - as did the USA and Canada, although they were still months and many thousands of pedal revolutions away.

By a strange twist of fate, nine years later, I ended up buying a house in Morecambe, one of our family holiday destinations in its 1950s heyday. I viewed many properties but the moment I walked into one particular house, I knew I had found a new home. It was built in 1933, still retains many of its period features including a now rare, original 1930s-style garage. This was virtually derelict when I bought the house and needed extensive repairs, especially to its double wooden doors. They hadn't been opened for twenty years and were virtually falling off their rotting hinges. I wished to preserve the original look and engaged a local joiner to help restore them. I could see he didn't relish the job and he asked why I didn't simply remove them and fit a 'modern up and over' door. Jokingly, I replied that the garage was a significant feature of the house and when restored would undoubtedly become a popular tourist attraction. How little I knew!

Shortly after the work was carried out, a group of people, led by the inimitable Peter Wade, stopped outside the house. My joke was in fact no joke at all as, unbeknown to me, I had purchased a house that was a regular feature of Peter's *Art Deco* walking tour of Morecambe. I subsequently discovered that it was built by A. Robinson & Sons, one of Morecambe's prominent building firms from the 1920s through until the 1970s. Not only that, it was designed by Bernard Robinson, one of Alan's four sons, as the Robinson family home. I invited Bernard (he was 91 at the time) to return to the house he grew up in. After seventy years absence his memories were understandably vague but he did remember that the garage was built before the house and the company used it as an office whilst the house itself was constructed.

On a regular basis, on Saturday afternoons and Bank Holidays I see Peter stop at my gate with his latest flock of *Art Deco* enthusiasts and point towards my garage (how glad I am about the doors!), the copper covered turret and the weather vane that sits atop it. I keep meaning to join Peter on one of his tours but after my visit to Napier I can't help but think how sad it would be to be reminded yet again of how much of Morecambe's *Art Deco* heritage has been lost. As soon as I heard about the Friends of the Midland Hotel I became a member and am pleased to serve on the committee. You can imagine how thrilled I am to see the hotel finally restored and re-opened. I dare say I'd be a bit more thrilled if there were a few naked ladies on the beach but my luck's not *that* good! Who would have thought a stranger on a remote New Zealand beach would lead me to the Midland? Ah, happy days...

Steve Swithin

Christmas Quiz Result

Congratulations to the winner, Sue Lovell of Cardiff, who will receive one of Patricia Haskey-Knowles' prints of the Midland Hotel.

Congratulations, and commiserations also, to Chris and Sue Brett, Anna Ludlow and Keith Pritchard, who had the same number of correct answers but no luck when the winning name was drawn 'from the hat' by Matt Redhead at the AGM.

We hope all who entered enjoyed the quiz. Perhaps there could be some different competitions in the future – ideas welcome!

WEDDING OF THE YEAR

Knowing of my interest in the Midland Hotel, a neighbour recently showed me a cutting from the *Visitor* newspaper of November 1938. The article was entitled 'The Wedding of the Year' and described the marriage of his cousin Eileen Waddilove at St Laurence's Church in Morecambe and the subsequent reception at the Midland Hotel. Kenneth Waddilove, the bride's future husband was Eileen's distant cousin (helpfully removing the need to change her surname) who, the *Visitor* informed its readers, was 'a member of the Provident and Clothing Supply Co. Ltd' - a successful textile company in Baildon, Yorkshire.

The family's wealth meant that no expense was spared on the wedding which, for some reason, attracted the interest of hundreds of people and caused unexpected problems for the local police. While the Waddiloves were well-known in the area, it was, nevertheless, surprising that such a large number thronged the streets around the church, pushing and shoving to get a glimpse of the bride. Two hours before the ceremony women had started to take up positions near the church door. As Miss Waddilove entered the church on her father's arm the crowd surged forward and police had difficulty in holding it back. Once the wedding guests had been seated the public were allowed into the building which was soon packed. Every seat was occupied and there were insufficient hymn books and service sheets to go round.

The *Visitor's* reporter devoted several paragraphs to detailed descriptions of the bride's wedding dress and those of the four bridesmaids, the bridegroom's mother and the bride's mother (all specially created by Simonett of Bradford), the flowers decorating the church and the choice of hymns. After the service the happy couple emerged to the cheers of an even larger crowd which parted to allow them to reach their wedding car. Due to the crush of people lining the route, the short journey to the Midland Hotel took much longer than expected, the car's progress being reduced to a crawl at times in order to safely negotiate the mass of sightseers.

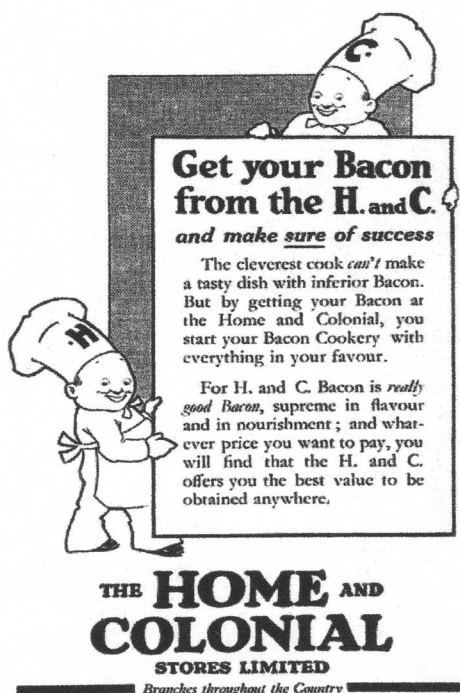
Outside the Midland another crowd had gathered to welcome the bride and groom. A canopy had been erected over the hotel steps on which a crimson carpet had been laid. Flowers and foliage lavishly adorned the foyer from where Cecil Hodgkinson and his Orchestra greeted the newly-weds with the strains of Mendelssohn's Wedding March. A luncheon and reception for around 100 people then followed. Most had travelled from the Midlands and the South, as well as from Yorkshire and were staying at the Midland as guests of the bride's father. The whole of the hotel had been booked for the two days of the wedding celebrations - an indication of the financial standing of the Waddiloves. Afterwards, the bride and groom slipped away quietly to a secret honeymoon destination 'somewhere in the South'.

Barry Guise (with thanks to David Jowett)

ECONOMIC COOKERY 1933

While the more affluent could enjoy wining and dining at the splendid new Midland Hotel, many of the population of 1933 were in the grip of what today might be termed 'a recession'. The BBC (in conjunction with the Home and Colonial Stores Ltd.) helpfully broadcast a series of talks entitled *Economic Cookery*. In the week of the hotel's opening, while the honoured guests savoured the delights of melon, shrimps, salmon, roast lamb, strawberries and liqueur ice cream, washed down with a selection of fine wines, the housewives of Britain were being instructed in the art of making jellies and jams from windfall apples and green gooseberries.

There was a slightly different approach to what was deemed healthy compared with the present. In the talk on *Packing the School Lunch*, mothers were advised that 'butter or dripping or suet should form some part of the meal' and apples were suggested merely as giving 'the schoolboy or schoolgirl something to bite and chew'. An advertisement included in the booklet to accompany the radio programmes declared not only that 'children love Lyle's Golden Syrup' but that 'it is good for them'.

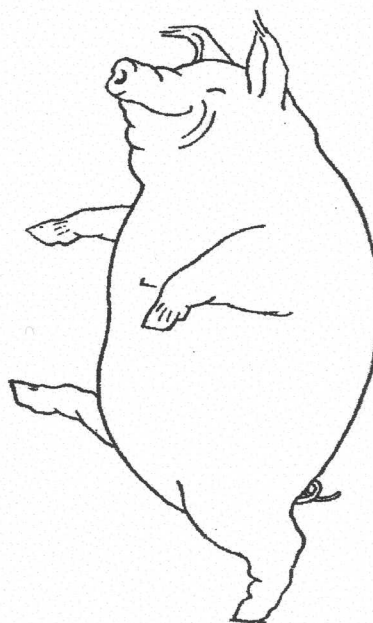


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Many of the talks and recipes in the 1933 season dealt with making the most of a pig, so with apologies to our non pig-eating readers and those of a more sensitive nature (who should look away now) two little items are reproduced here.

A Novel Pork Roast

Take half a pig's head. Remove the brain; put to soak in salted water in a basin. Wash the head well, using a handful of salt in the water. Cut away the end of the snout and the ear. Drain all the water away and, with a sharp knife, score across the skin of the head. Wipe dry and brush on $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful of salad oil; this helps keep the rind from hardening. Place in a meat pan; cook in a moderate oven for 1 hour. Baste frequently with bacon dripping. Make a simple pastry with $\frac{1}{2}$ lb of self-raising flour, 2 oz of suet, pinch of salt and water to mix. Roll out $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick and use it to cover the pig's head. Score the pastry with a knife, without cutting quite through it. Place in the oven and cook for $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour. Baste about 4 times. Serve with gravy and apple sauce.

(The pig's brains can be put into boiling salted water and simmered for 20 minutes. When cold, they should be dipped in egg and breadcrumbs and fried or they make a delicious sandwich filling with pepper and salt and chopped watercress.)

Brawn

If you roast one side of the pig's head, then make use of the other side for making brawn. It's not much trouble. Soak it first in strong salted water, then have a large saucepan ready and cover the head with warm water. Put an ounce of mixed pickling peppers, in a muslin bag, and a teaspoonful of salt in the water; add the ear cut from the other side of the head (see roasting). Bring to the boil; boil fast with the lid off for 10 minutes. Skim, then put the lid on the saucepan and simmer until tender. A small head takes about $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Place on a plate; remove all the bones. Chop the meat very small; skin the tongue and cut into pieces about an inch square. Sprinkle all liberally with black pepper; add a little nutmeg grated with salt to taste. Grease a basin or a cake tin; fill to the top with meat pieces and 2 tablespoonfuls of the stock from boiling the head. When the basin or tin is quite full, put a saucer on the top and press down with a heavy weight until cold. The brawn will be ready next day. The cost of a pig's head is about $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 5d. a lb. [3p to $4\frac{1}{2}$ p per kg].

Bon Appetit !

With acknowledgements to Mrs. Arthur Webb and the British Broadcasting Corporation

ANOTHER OLIVER HILL PAINTING

Mention of Oliver Hill's paintings in the last edition of *Seahorse* and the inclusion of his view of Battle reminded me of a colour plate of another of his paintings in a book I have from 1947 (*The Londoner's England* by Alan Bott, Avalon Press & William Collins). The plate (number 88 on page 189) is of Arundel in West Sussex. The style is somewhat sketchy and the colours rather drab, dominated by the muted green of the foreground meadow and set beneath a sky of scudding cloud. The greys and greens are relieved only by dabs of brown and occasional cream picking out the houses of the town and suggesting fleeting patches of sunshine. In his accompanying text, Alan Bott notes that 'The view is northward from the River Arun, across meadows to coloured roofs, that are dominated by the vast Roman Catholic church of St Philip Neri' and 'Right of the picture, on the brow of the hill, is the parish church of St Nicholas.'



A view of Arundel by Oliver Hill

The book, an assembly of 'contemporary water-colours and drawings', includes works by Ruskin Spear, Claude Muncaster and John Piper, among many others. For the author, it was 'an excuse for reviving, from the limbo of lost intentions, the project of a book on London; but with the labour halved, since half the number of pages would be filled by artists.' The book was based on an exhibition, also called *The Londoner's England*, organised by Sir Charles Tennyson and T.A. Fennemore (Chair and Director of the Central Institute of Art and Design). Alan Bott noted that to fulfil its title, the 'exhibition would need thousands of subjects ... But this exhibition had the gist of it...not just the showplaces...but a blend from the... byways ...and beyond them, in the Home Counties'. Bott justified this wider view because 'the motor-car and motor-coach, together with increase of population and the growth of dormitory towns, have multiplied by four the province of South-East England which is familiar to Londoners. Brighton, Southend and the High Streets of some country towns are as much a part of the Londoner's England as Trafalgar Square.'

Oliver Hill is one of only two contributing artists credited with the letters RA (Royal Academician) after their name. The other is Henry Rushbury. RAs are professional artists (painters, sculptors or architects) elected by fellow RAs. They are allowed to exhibit up to six works in the famous Summer Exhibition as well as take part in smaller exhibitions, and may be called upon to teach or lecture at the Academy. However, unlike Rushbury who was elected an RA in 1936, Hill is not listed among the RAs on the Royal Academy web site nor does his name come up on a site search. It's possible that RA was here confused with RIBA.

Peter Wade

WADE'S WALKS 2009

This year's programme of guided walks in and around Morecambe, Heysham, Lancaster and the Lune Valley features the usual mix of established favourites and new departures. All the walks begin at 2pm and are priced at £2.50 per person.

Echoes of Art Deco

April 10, 11, 12, 13, 25; May 4, 25, 30; June 27; July 25; August 29; September 26; October 31.
Meet: The Platform opposite the Midland Hotel.

In Search of Turner's View

June 6; August 1; October 3.
Meet: Bus turnaround, Heysham Village.

A Perfect Landscape: Artists' impressions of the Lune Valley

July 4; September 5.
Meet: Car park, old railway station, Halton-on-Lune.

Poulton-le-Sands and Old Morecambe

June 13.
Meet: Morecambe Police Station.

Dinosaurs, helium and scientists

June 20.
Meet: Queen Victoria's statue, Dalton Square, Lancaster.

Heysham Village and Heysham Head

July 11.
Meet: Bus turnaround, Heysham Village.

Eric's Morecambe

July 18.
Meet: Eric Morecambe statue, Morecambe Promenade.

Hest Bank – Mawson's Garden Village

August 8.
Meet: Level crossing, Hest Bank.

Sunderland Point and Sambo's Grave

August 15.
Meet: Information board, Causeway End, Sunderland Point.

Lancaster's Lost Observatory

August 22.
Meet: Entrance, Ashton Memorial, Williamson Park, Lancaster.

A Date with Dame Thora

September 19.
Meet: Post Office, corner Victoria Street & Market Street, Morecambe.

Watch out for special walks during the Friends' weekend (June 19-21) and tours of Morecambe's 1932 Town Hall on September 12 & 13 as part of this year's Heritage Open Days.

Special tours of Morecambe's Midland Hotel followed by cream tea will be held on the afternoons of March 26, April 30, May 28, June 25 and July 28 priced at about £8 per head. The tours start at 2.30pm in the hotel with tea served from 3.30pm. Places must be booked through the Midland Hotel (telephone Lauren Haigh on 01524 428371).

For details of the above walks or to arrange walks/talks at other times, please contact Peter Wade on 01524 420905.



The landward side with a Jaguar and other cars on the forecourt.

Two views of the Midland Hotel circa 1954



The seaward side with a couple in deckchairs on the patio. Note the size of the TV aerials.

With Easter soon upon us, readers of *Seahorse* may be interested to know what the management of the Midland Hotel was offering its customers for their holiday entertainment in 1953.

This advertisement appeared in the *Visitor* newspaper on April 1st of that year.

MIDLAND HOTEL, MORECAMBE

ANNOUNCES

EASTER PROGRAMME

THURSDAY, APRIL 2nd

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC by Frances Neaum Trio during Dinner, from 7.30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 3rd

AFTERNOON TEA—Orchestral Music by Frances Neaum Trio from 3.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 4th

MORNING COFFEE—Orchestral Music by Frances Neaum Trio from 11 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

SUNDAY, APRIL 5th

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC by Frances Neaum Trio from 7.30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

MONDAY, APRIL 6th

AFTERNOON TEA—Orchestral Music by Frances Neaum Trio from 3.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.

SPECIAL EASTER DINNER DANCES

SATURDAY, APRIL 4th—Dinner Dance. Music by Cyril J. Burnett, 7.30 p.m. to 11.45 p.m. Formal Dress.

EASTER MONDAY, APRIL 6th—Dinner Dance. Music by Cyril J. Burnett, 7.30 p.m. to 1 a.m. Formal Dress.

May we respectfully request your
EARLY RESERVATIONS FOR TABLES

Tel. No. Morecambe 2591

The advertisement below appeared in the 1960 edition of a prestigious hotel guide called *Signpost*. However, the publishers obviously didn't update the information very frequently as the 'proprietors of the Devonshire Arms' had actually acquired the Midland eight years earlier and were on the point of selling it at the time the 1960 guide was published!

MORECAMBE, LANCS., MIDLAND HOTEL

Telephone: Morecambe 2591-2-3

London 243, Blackpool 28, Kendal 21, Lancaster 3½, Leeds 70,
Preston 26, Skipton 44.

(For position see map on page 6, square C.6).

F licence; golf; tennis; dancing; bathing; boating; riding; children welcome; night service; twelve private baths; lift; razor sockets; T.V.

THE proprietors of that notable hotel the Devonshire Arms at Bolton Bridge north of Ilkley have now acquired this magnificent ex-Railways Executive hotel. It was built at immense cost before the war and the finest craftsmen and most noted designers were employed in its construction. The spiral stairway is an attractive and impressive feature, so too is the Eric Gill mural work. In another sphere let me introduce you to the new sun lounge and great dining room both of which overlook Morecambe Bay and then let me tell you that the adjoining kitchen, fitted with the latest culinary equipment, is a model of what a big kitchen should be. The food, its presentation and wide choice conform to the general top line standard of the place, while in that gay, beautifully appointed cocktail bar there is a choice of refreshment to suit both connoisseur and casual drinker. Bed and breakfast from 37/6, daily from 50/-, weekly from £17.10.0.

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