



# Gosport Society

Registered as Charity No. 289942

President: The Mayor of Gosport

Vice-President: Lesley Burton

Chairman: Roger Mawby, 25 Anglesey Road, Alverstoke, Gosport PO12 2EG, 02392 502855

Hon Treasurer: Sue Blower, Police Lodge, 4 Flagstaff Green, Gosport, PO12 1GG, 02392 50179

[www.gosportsociety.co.uk](http://www.gosportsociety.co.uk) email: [gosportsociety@gmail.com](mailto:gosportsociety@gmail.com)

## Newsletter - Autumn 2013

### From the Chair

I would like to thank you, the members, for your continuing support of the Society.

This year we welcomed David Taylor to the Committee following his election at the AGM. I am sure that David will bring fresh ideas to the Committee and help take the Society forward.

The remainder of last year's Committee was re-elected and all of them deserve my thanks for their willingness to continue on the Committee. While not elected to the Committee, Liz Mitchell has continued to produce the minutes of Committee Meetings. The Society is lucky that Liz is willing to do this task for another year and for this the Committee is extremely thankful. Without her it is unlikely that we would be able to satisfy the Charity Commissioners' requirement to maintain a record of the working of the Society and, importantly, decisions on spending money.

The Planning Sub-Committee - May, Adrian and Howard - have, as ever, been active in reviewing Planning Applications. You can be sure their critical look at plans always aims at protecting the urban environment, especially in the case of Listed Buildings and the various Conservation areas in the town. With some planning applications, the Committee has felt it necessary to submit a formal objection to what is being proposed. We know our Sub-Committee's views are always taken into account by the Planners when deciding the outcome of an application.

The National Government's initiatives to reduce bureaucratic delays in the planning process have meant new planning policy documents flooding out of the Town Hall, the most important being the *Local Plan* that shows how and where the Town housing stock will grow. Reviewing new Planning Policy Documents keeps the Planning Policy Sub-Committee - of Joyce, May and me - busy.

Members are often asking me about progress at Gilkicker and Haslar. It seems that the Contractor who was proposing to convert Fort Gilkicker into apartments has had a change of heart on the financial viability of the whole project as there are not enough people willing to pay what is rumoured to be about £1,000,000 for an apartment with a stunning views of the Solent!!

An outline planning application for the Haslar development was submitted in May and is still under consideration by the Town Hall Planning Team. *Our Enterprise*, the original company behind the project, has been replaced by the large Dublin building company, *Harcourt Developments*. The Developer and the planners are meeting almost weekly to resolve the outstanding issues preventing the submission of the application to the Council for consideration.

Although the Training Camp at Browdown has been sold, little is known about the new owner's plans for the site which has significant constraints on its future use.

This summer, Louis Murray, our Marketing Manager, wrote an information guide entitled *A Gosport Trail*. It was aimed at tourism and detailed a walk to see the important sites and buildings in the town. It has been a great success and, as the first print run was used up very quickly, a second print run was ordered. The Committee had decided not to charge for the first print but agreed to charge a £1 for the second. So far, having to pay for the guide does not seem to have put people off. Louis is intending to produce a further two trail leaflet leaflets, again aimed at the visitors to Gosport, in 2014.

2014 is the One Hundredth Anniversary of the start of the First World War and the Committee is hoping to publish a book on Gosport's role in this war. Louis has offered to act as the Co-ordinator for its production and would like to hear from any Society member who has

family memories of this war or may, sadly have lost a relation in it. Photos illustrating the part Gosport took in the First World War, would also be welcome. Please contact Louis whose contact details are shown in your programme and at the end of his piece in this Newsletter. This book seems, to the Committee, to be a natural companion to the earlier Society publication - *Gosport Goes to War* - which covered Gosport's role in the Second World War.

The last Newsletter mentioned that the Committee was thinking of moving the Wednesday evening talks back to the *Discovery Centre* as *Explosion* was difficult for some members to get to. The Committee has decided that, from April 2014, all talks will be held in the *Discovery Centre*. So please come and support them. Details of the 2014 Wednesday evening talks will be shown in the programme to be published in the New Year; the programme will also include a reminder of the change of venue. (Incidentally, I did not intend to suggest, in my last report, that the future of the whole of the *Explosion* Museum was at risk— only the building in which we hold our meetings.)

In past years, the Society has undertaken various coach trips and, thanks to Mary Knapman, one has been organised - to London - for 2014, to take place on the 10<sup>th</sup> May. Mary and Pam will be selling tickets for this at the Wednesday evening talks. We shall visit the refurbished *Cutty Sark* and have a trip down the Thames as far as the Barrage. On the river we shall see the changes to the old Docklands areas.

Thanks to Maggie Feist and her team, the Society will be holding the Annual New Year Social Evening in the Alverstoke Parish Centre on the 11<sup>th</sup> January. I know that, at £12 a ticket, Maggie will lay on a delicious array of food and I will ensure a plentiful supply of wine and soft drinks. These evening are always fun and, because of limits on the numbers, you are asked buy your tickets early. Tickets will be available at the Wednesday evening talks in November and December. If you want a ticket and cannot come to these two Wednesday evenings, please contact me.

I know it is a bit early, but may I take this opportunity to wish you and your family a Happy Christmas and the very best of fortune in 2014.

**Roger Mawby** (25 Anglesey Road; 92502855; [roger.mawby@btinternet.com](mailto:roger.mawby@btinternet.com))

**Don't be disappointed - buy your New Year Social Evening tickets early!**

### **Honorary Treasurer**

Gosport Society finances remain in good shape. The books were audited by Doreen Pladdys and key points reported to the Annual General meeting in June.

Funding support was given to a recruitment drive which, sadly, had little impact, and to the first print run of the Gosport Trail which was hugely successful. The second print run will be self-funding. The Society is also hoping to sponsor four or five chairs for Broderick Hall.

There has been a delay this year in registering for Gift Aid because of changes at Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, but George and I will persevere in order to claim the due rebate. I would like to reiterate the benefit to the Society of (tax-paying) members Gift-Aiding subscriptions which is simply done by filling in a form available at the Wednesday talks or from George or me.

**Sue Blower** ([gosportsociety@gmail.com](mailto:gosportsociety@gmail.com))

### **Membership Secretary**

Membership currently stands at one hundred and seventy four, down on recent years, so, if you know of anyone who might be interested in joining, please encourage them. As previously requested, also, let me have any changes to personal details – address, email, etc. Email is now such a convenient (and free) form of contact that I am keen to make sure I have yours!

**George Blower** ([gosportsociety@gmail.com](mailto:gosportsociety@gmail.com))

## Planning Sub-Committee

The Planning Sub-Committee regularly inspects applications for Listed Buildings (LB) Conservation Areas (CA) and Buildings of Local Interest (Local List - LL). We also monitor the weekly list for other applications, especially with reference to trees. Since the last Newsletter in May, we have inspected fifty six applications. Some of the important applications are outlined below:

**Former Royal Engineers' Depot, Weevil Lane (CA):**

Conversion of existing stores building to one two-bed dwelling and single-storey side extension. Permission has recently been given for this application which completes this excellent small development of mews-style cottages.

**No.2 Battery Stokes Bay Road (LB):**

Display of one external exhibit - an LR3 submersible on land to the side of *No.2 Battery*. The application has now been given permission and the exhibit is 'in situ'. The *Diving Museum* is well worth a visit.

**Fort Gilkicker, Fort Road Gosport (LB and SAM):**

Renewal of planning application to extend the time limit for the implementation of planning permission for the restoration of the Fort and conversion to twenty six dwellings, residents' stores and Interpretation Room. We had no objection to this application.

**The Fox Tavern, 83 North Street Gosport (LB and CA):**

Listed Building consent has now been granted for installation of three CCTV cameras. The tenants and brewery are very keen to improve the image of the *Fox Tavern* - Gosport's oldest public house still in use. The outside has recently been repainted and the windows are to be repaired.

**7A Stoke Road (CA):**

Part demolition of 7A Stoke Road, (corner of Stoke Road and Henry Street) extensions and alterations and part conversion to form one one-bedroom and four two-bedroom houses and one one-bedroom flat. This is the third application for this site and by far the most suitable with a row of small, two-storey terrace houses and one flat in Henry Street, with some car parking. The shop fronting Stoke Road is to be retained and refurbished. We had no objection to this application.

**31, 35 and 37 (hangars) Seaplane Square, *Daedalus*, Lee-on-the-Solent (LB and CA):**

Repairs to buildings and removal and replacement of cladding and rainwater goods. We had no objection to this application.

## Liaison Meetings with Gosport Borough Council Officers

**Royal Haslar Hospital (LB.CA and Listed landscape):**

Gosport Borough Council Officers have set up fortnightly meetings with the developer to discuss the results of consultations and resolve any outstanding issues. They are very positive about the outcomes of these meetings, and the progression of the application. Consultation responses can be viewed at the end of each application on the planning website:

[www.planning@gosport.gov.uk](mailto:www.planning@gosport.gov.uk) No.12/00592/LBA and 12/00591/OUT. English Heritage is concerned at the proposed demolition of the Zymotic buildings and is not yet convinced by the developer's argument for demolition. Gosport Society's objections and concerns have been posted on our website on the News page. The demolition of the Pathology Laboratory and the Zymotic buildings are two of our main concerns.

**English Heritage – Gosport's Military Heritage:**

English Heritage recently appointed Oxford Archaeology to review undesignated military buildings/structures in Gosport for possible listing/scheduling. The Conservation Officer and English Heritage were also involved in the review and we hope to receive some feedback shortly.

**Bury House, Bury Road (LB and CA):**

The Conservation Officer had a meeting with Hampshire County Council to progress a grant bid for extension improvements to *Bury House*. The approximate date of the building is 1720 – one of Gosport's oldest buildings. The panelling inside the building is to be recorded by Gosport's Conservation Department.

### **Royal Clarence Yard (LB's and CA):**

With regard to the question of Interpretation Boards recording the history of the site, our Chairman was asked to contact the Conservation Officer in writing, and this would then be discussed with the developer at a future meeting. The developer also has a responsibility to produce an Archaeological Study for the site from their own archaeological investigations. Car parking issues on the site appear to be preventing the proposed final phase of the development. A new car parking strategy will be informed by Gosport Borough Council's recently proposed *Car Parking and Design* documents.

We were informed that the reservoir had been cleared and restoration works had started. There is a possibility that eventually the reservoir will be open to the public with controlled access. Gosport Society is to put this site forward as a candidate for *Heritage Open Days* next year.

### **Alverstoke/Anglesey/Stokes Bay/Stoke Lake Conservation Areas:**

Progress remains dependent on being able to fund the implementation and fit into current workload; however a meeting will be held to set out a future programme of work.

### **Land at Alverstoke Village Showroom and 1-3 Green Road (CA):**

The Conservation and Planning Officers have been in discussion with the developer who is now proposing to build eight houses on the site. We have just received details of this application No.13/00387/FULL which can be viewed on Gosport Borough Council website (see email address above).

### **May Bumford**

## **Marketing and Publications**

A second print run of one thousand copies of *The Gosport Trail* booklet has been completed. Following free distribution of the first edition, this second print run is offered to retailers and members at 0.50p per copy to offset printing costs. This price should cover the projected shelf life of the publication (2/3 years from September 2013). The Recommended Retail Price (RRP) is £1.00

The digitisation of seven of our commercial books by *Hampshire Records Office* was completed recently and the CD record will be placed with the print archives of Society publications. On request, the CD is available for copying to members' discs and hard drives. As part of the book stock reduction strategy, the revised prices to retailers and members are as follows:

<b>Title</b>	<b>Price to Retailer/Society Member</b>	<b>RRP</b>
<i>Soldiers of the Queen</i>	£3.00	None
<i>Wings Over Gosport</i>	£3.00	"
<i>Haslar – Royal Hospital</i>	£2.00	"
<i>Go Ahead Gosport</i>	£2.00	"
<i>Leisurely Gosport</i>	£3.00	"
<i>Feeding the Forces</i>	£1.00	"
<i>D Day – Our Greatest Enterprise</i>	£2.00	"

Please email me at [lms62@ymail.com](mailto:lms62@ymail.com) should you wish to purchase copies direct. Deliveries can usually take place within two days.

Our retailers have all been contacted about new pricing and with advised discretion to make 'offers', clearance sales, and/or 'buy one, get one free', etc.

The stocks of old Gosport photographs and notecards of old Gosport are also offered to retailers and members at £0.50 per pack with no Recommended Retail Price (RRP).

Plans to develop the Society publication base continue for 2014. These include: a second pocket guide in the *Trail* series; promotion and relaunch of the *D Day* book on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Normandy landings; a Gosport centenary volume marking one hundred years since the commencement of WW1 (in association with local museums).

**Louis Murray** ([lms62@ymail.com](mailto:lms62@ymail.com))

## **Gosport in the Great War** (what a story to tell)

As Roger has said, to mark the centenary of the start of the Great War next year it is intended to produce a Gosport Society publication commemorating the part played by Gosport in this momentous conflict. Much has been written about the events in the town during the Second World War but we are less aware of those during the life changing period of 1914-1918. When the war commenced we were the greatest Empire in the world as demonstrated by the awesome sight of the 1914 Grand Fleet Review off our shore at Spithead.



Gosport's contribution to the war effort must have been as great as any town in the land. We victualled and armed the Navy; we pioneered flying training at Grange. Royal Naval Air Service seaplane training was based at Lee; Haslar was one of the largest military hospitals; our barracks were major transit depots for troops embarking for France at Southampton. The Royal Marine Light Infantry were based at Forton; the Royal Engineers developed Anti-Aircraft Searchlights at Stokes Bay; HMS Dolphin was the principle submarine base; Browdown camp was a vital training area, etc. etc. What a story there is to tell!

Louis Murray has agreed to coordinate work in the production of the book and a vast amount of research is required. Would you all please help by contributing in any way you can with ideas, photographs, anecdotes, or information about memorials and places connected with the First World War.

**Howard Bennett** ([mail@howardbennett.plus.com](mailto:mail@howardbennett.plus.com))

## **Heritage and Conservation**

On another subject, a reminder that it is time to think about next year's *Green Plaque Award* for restorations completed by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013. Any nominations please? **Howard**

## **Prefabs** (a reminiscence)

The Second World War was over at last, but not the rationing and shortages, the main one being of houses. Many young people had married in the war years and, with no hope of setting up homes, were having to stay with parents or share with strangers. No new houses had been built, and thousands lost to bombs or fire - but hope appeared at last with the magic word – 'prefabs'! All the local authorities were to provide 'prefabs' and there was a rush to put names on waiting lists.



In Gosport, the first appeared at Bridgemary, where eventually I was fortunate enough to be allocated one, and moved in with toddler Roger, baby Helen soon due.

The prefabricated dwellings were wonderfully designed and of several types. Mine was made of metal. It was completely fitted out, all in metal. There were two bedrooms, the larger one with cupboards, wardrobe, and sets of drawers, all metal. The bathroom had cupboards and drawers as well as a white 'suite'. There was a good size living room and a kitchen which had a complete unit along one wall with built-in cooker, washing machine and refrigerator as well as cupboards and drawers, sink unit and work-top. There were thousands of homes before the war that did not even have a bathroom or indoor toilet, let alone a fridge or washing machine. The metal construction did have one unexpected feature: after a hot summer day, it cooled with several loud metallic bangs!

Each home was provided with a garden, washing line and useful shed which appeared to be made of left-over bomb shelter parts! All the 'furnishings' were particularly appreciated as everything - curtain material, floor coverings (linoleum), utility furniture, were rationed or in short supply.

The prefabs were little marvels, expected to last ten years but still in use for twice as long in many areas. They were considered sub-standard and were gradually replaced with brick housing, but they had set design standards of better living for all.

### **Joyce Upperton**

*(The photograph is of the opening ceremony for the first prefab, taken in 1945 at Elson)*

### **Must go and dig!** (a few notes on allotments)

An allotment is land set aside, or allotted, to the public to 'grow their own' produce. Having an allotment is a very British hobby (or necessity) though now allotments are springing up all over the world.

Allotments have probably been in existence since Anglo Saxon times but it is possible to trace the allotment, as we understand it, back to the *Enclosure Acts* of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: the first one is believed to have been established in 1795 at Long Newton on the Gloucester Wiltshire border.

In the 1830s, unemployment was at an all-time high and many labourers and their families were on the brink of starvation. After a series of riots, land was made available by landowners, farmers and the Church, for use as allotments. The allotment movement took off and, over the next forty years, the number of sites grew to nearly a quarter of a million and covered fifty nine thousand acres.

The most important of several Acts during the nineteenth century was the *Allotment Extension Act* of 1887; this was the first attempt at legislation providing for public possession of allotments, with compulsory purchase of land if necessary.

At the outbreak of the First World War, the number of plots grew from six hundred thousand to one and a half million, although, after the war, many sites returned to their original use.

*Dig for Victory* during the Second World War saw allotments become common again in towns and villages as local open space was dug up for the growing of food. Here in Gosport, Ewer Common, parts of Walpole Park and Privett Park were turned into allotments and there were other sites all over the Borough, utilising any spare piece of land. By 1943, one million tons of produce came from gardens and allotments.

*Dig, dig, dig and your muscles will grow big* was part of a slogan of the time; and for the children, this advice came from 'Potato Pete':

*Those who have the will to win  
Cook potatoes in their skin  
Knowing that the sight of peelings  
Deeply hurt Lord Woolton's feelings.*

(Lord Woolton was the wartime Minister of Food.)



After the war, the 1959 Allotments Act decreed that four acres of land be set aside for allotments per one thousand head of population. I doubt we ever had that here in Gosport!

In the 1970s, the television programme, *The Good Life*, gave a spur to the idea of renting a plot to 'grow your own' and there was an increase in the demand for allotments, the standard size of which is about two hundred and fifty square yards (ten poles in Anglo Saxon terms). A 'reasonable amount' of rent is due and a tenancy agreement signed (though an earlier threat in one – distant – parish that anyone who 'digs potatoes on Sunday shall immediately forfeit the same' would be most unwelcome as Sunday is the busiest allotment day of the week!)

There are seven Council sites in Gosport, plus the Rectory site in Little Anglesey Road which is Glebe Land and belongs to the Church – a full and interesting history of which is in the book *An Alverstoke Alphabet* which is available at the Parish Centre and other outlets.

We have lost several sites since the war: those at Clayhall to housing; the areas behind the *War Memorial* Hospital for the new extension - and no doubt others that I no longer remember. With one thousand and forty four plots in the Borough now and five hundred and eighty six people waiting for one to become available, there is a suggestion of halving the size of the plots to accommodate more would be 'Allotment Gardeners'.

Talking of which, I must go and dig!

### **Adrian Knight**