



Gosport Society

Registered as Charity No. 289942

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Newsletter – Autumn 2015

FROM THE CHAIR

As this is my first report, I know you will forgive me if I start by thanking my Committee for being such a support through my initiation as Chairman. Each member does a first class job and their contributions are of great importance to the daily running of our Society. I am not going to mention individuals by name, except that your Committee unanimously appointed a new Honorary Secretary to the Society – Diane Furlong who has now taken up her duties. Diane works very closely with me and I am grateful for her personal assistance. Nor am I going to comment on individual Committee members' activities. I will leave them to provide their own input to this Autumn Newsletter.

I would like to turn to other matters. Very close to my heart is the subject of conservation where it affects the history and the physical wellbeing of Gosport's past. I am deeply concerned that, since World War II, the authorities have failed to take advantage of the enormous amount of history and artefacts that exist within our town. Many of you will remember the damage the war inflicted on Gosport. This was further aggravated by our Local Authority authorising the demolition of many other historic buildings in order to take advantage of the war repair funding. This trend might have enabled people to update to the modern style of that time but it also showed an unfortunate lack of foresight.

It is often forgotten that Gosport, in history, was a defended town – with bastions, rampart and moat, extending to the defence of Priddy's Fort at Hardway – within which was a feast of historic buildings extending back to Medieval times. We have never actually taken advantage of this historical infrastructure to improve the wealth of Gosport. Unlike many other towns and cities which have used their history to create tourism and business, Gosport has lacked the ambition of properly conserving and enhancing all the historic assets, to preserve them for future generations and to pass on our historic knowledge. Consequently, these historic assets are now in a parlous state. *English Heritage*, in its annual survey, places the remains of our historic town as 'at risk'.

You will ask: *What can we do about it?* I feel this is a matter for all of us to consider urgently. Recently, the owner of Trinity Vicarage, which lies next to Bastion No 1 owned by our Council, initiated a plan to set up a Trust with the aim of saving this very important site (See Howard's report). Is this a way forward for all our historic sites within the town (the St George Ramparts, the Rum House, the Tank House, the Remains of Queen Victoria's Railway station, etc)?

We are fortunate that Gosport has one of the best Conservation Officers in Hampshire. Surely it would be possible to set up a Committee directly involving the Local Authority to work out a plan for the future preservation of our historic assets and artefacts.

Members, please give this your earnest consideration and bring your thoughts and ideas to your Committee. This is an urgent and serious request.

Paul Hutton-Dunton paulhuttondunton@yahoo.co.uk

HONORARY TREASURER

I am pleased to report that the Society's finances are in a healthy state. The 2014/15 Income and Expenditure Report was officially inspected and reported at the Annual General Meeting held in the summer.

Susan Blower gosportsociety@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP and HONORARY SECRETARY

Although twelve members have not renewed this year for various reasons, we had three new members joining recently and others at the last Meeting expressing an interest. Membership currently stands at one hundred and fifty eight.

At only £11, subscription to the Society is fantastic value offering eight lectures and lots of social opportunities throughout the year. So, to keep our activities vibrant, do encourage friends to come along – and join! The speakers/topics we have had recently and those booked for the coming year promise to be varied and interesting, and Meg's report on forthcoming social events reveals a real up-turn in this aspect of Gosport Society's programme.

Once again – please update me on any changes to your contact details, especially if you have a new email address. I will always start the heading with *The Gosport Society*, so you know the mail is from me.

Diane Furlong furlong44@hotmail.com

PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

Since the April Newsletter, the Planning sub-Committee has inspected fifty-seven applications, some of which are outlined below. (LB = Listed Building; CA = Conservation Area; LL = Local List)

Royal Hospital Haslar

Application No 14/00492/LBA Royal Hospital Haslar

Phase 1 of the development to refurbish the main hospital building for retirement apartments and a health centre, etc, was given permission at the Regulatory Board on 15th September, 2015. Once the list of conditions has been agreed/ accepted, the development can commence.

Application No 15/00117/DETS Royal Hospital Haslar (LB and Listed Park in CA)

Phase 2 gives details of access, landscaping, layout and scale for:

- demolition of three buildings - Galley, General Stores Block and Albert Block
- conversion of Canada Block and the construction of two buildings to provide ninety-three retirement apartments
- conversion of G Block to provide eight residential units
- the construction of a sixty-bed care home, with ancillary leisure facilities and associated works to include car and cycle parking etc.

We have already inspected the Outline application for this development, which included plans for Phase 2, and asked various questions at a recent Liaison meeting. Subsequently we raised no objections to the application.

The Terrace Royal Hospital Haslar and No's 11 and 12 Residences

We continue to receive applications concerning these privately owned residences for internal alterations, in order to equip the buildings for modern-day living.

Royal Clarence Yard

15/00153/FULL The Slaughter House Royal Clarence Yard Weevil Lane (CA and LB)

Change of use of the Slaughter House to (Class A3) restaurant/café and (Class D1) including Church, crèche and meeting place. This is the second application from the Baptist Church, now holding services in two of the workshops in Coopers Green RCY. We believe the proposal will safeguard this listed building from structural deterioration and provide a use for the Church and the community. We had no objections.

15/00154/FULL Royal Clarence Yard Parking Strategy

We were mainly concerned about access/exit of large vehicles through the Ceremonial Gate in Weevil Lane; however, this application has now been approved with conditions.

HMS Daedalus

15/00118/LBA Westcliffe House Chark Lane Daedalus Lee-on-the-Solent

We did not object to the repair and redecoration of this Listed Building.

15/004000/FULL 136 High Street Gosport (CA), previous Post Office site.

Alterations to facilitate the change to Pound World store. We were only interested in this application because of the Inscription, on the left hand wall of the entrance, commemorating the Congregational Church, which once stood on the site. The Inscription was saved by a sharp eyed parishioner who returned it to the United Reformed Church in Stoke Road.

15/00388/FULL Land to the rear of 3-11 Elmhurst Road Gosport (CA)

Demolition of existing outbuildings and external fire escape and construction of five three-bedroom dwellings, access and car parking

We objected to this second application on the grounds that the access/exit into Elmhurst Road will cause problems of parking for other road users, and may not be wide enough for refuse/fire services, and the loss of rear gardens in Elmhurst Road.

15/00165/FULL Former Cordite Magazine Britannia Way Gosport

We objected to this second application with the same reasons as the first application namely the effect on the SINC site. This application is now the subject of an appeal. Appeal reference No. APP/J1725/W/15/3130206

A further application has been registered to develop the second cordite magazine on this site into a residence – 15/00499/FULL Cordite Building no. two. We have yet to respond to this.

15/00423/ADVT Gosport Borough Council application for Interpretation Boards for Stokes Bay Central, Hardway and Falklands Gardens depicting the history of D Day. We had no objection providing the details were checked for historical accuracy.

GOSPORT SOCIETY LIAISON MEETINGS

Our quarterly Liaison meetings continue with GBC Officers from Development Control and Conservation. This report concerns meetings held on 16th June, 2015 and 15th September, 2015.

Daedalus Conservation Area Gosport

The Homes and Communities Agency owns this site, having recently sold the airfield site and its surrounding land to Fareham Borough Council. Three potential developers for the Conservation Area development have been interviewed, and a decision is expected shortly.

Historic England (previously English Heritage)

We were advised that HE is currently assessing the Royal Naval Cemetery, Clayhall Road, to see if there are any monuments or buildings worthy of Listing. The following appear to be under consideration: The Cemetery Chapel and some monuments: HMS *Euridice*, HMS *Boadicea*, Submariners monument, HMS *Thunderer* and the World War I L55 submariners screen.

Baptist Church Stoke Road

The building has now been sold on to a new developer who will use the permitted plans for eight flats to continue the development. Southampton City Archaeologists have been contracted to carry out a survey of the building. We have been asked to supply any historical information we can find and this request is being dealt with.

Five Alls public house Forton Road

We were made aware of the historic interest of the building and provided with a list of facts. If any members have historic details please email/phone Gosport Society.



Hasleworth Castle

Details were given of the development of this Tudor Castle, in particular the possibility that its design mirrored Calshot Castle. It is highly likely that it was one of Henry V111's Device Forts.

LOCAL PLAN 2011 – 2029 INSPECTOR'S REPORT

The Inspector's final report can be viewed on GBC website under the above heading.

The Inspector found the Local Plan sound identifying only two Major Modifications which have now been rectified:

- MM1 Employment Policy to be removed from the Gunboat Yard area of Qinetiq and to be included in the mixed use Policy for Fort Blockhouse.
- MM2 Paragraph referring to housing to be replaced to include further reference to PUSH South Hampshire Strategy, to be reviewed in 2016. The Inspector acknowledged the shortage of land in Gosport and if housing numbers recommended in the review could not be fulfilled in Gosport, surplus numbers would be allocated to other districts.

The Inspector upheld the Open Space Policy for the following sites: Stokesmead Field, Clayhall Road, Brockhurst Gate, Fareham Road and Former Cordite Magazine, Britannia Way. The Open Space Policy was contested by the developers at the Local Plan Enquiry.

GB Full Council meeting, 14th October, 2015 agreed the Local Plan 2011-2029 be adopted including the two main modifications. Go to GBC website for Appeals and Planning Applications
May Bumford

PUBLICATIONS and MARKETING

The third booklet in the Society's popular *Trails* series is now in preparation. It is entitled: *Faces and Facades: Putting People in their Places in Gosport*. The focus of this publication will be on six men and six women who have made a significant contribution to public life in Gosport. Current names under consideration for inclusion are: the artist, Martin Snape; the musician, Nat Gonella; the marine engineer, Edmund Froude; the philanthropist, Mary Ann Samuel; the health care benefactor, Mary Tyrell – and numerous others. If you would like to contribute a 'name' for consideration for entry into this publication, then please do so. No need to do the biographical research – the Society will do that. Ideally, there should be an existing physical location in Gosport (building, garden, workplace, etc) directly associated with the named person. Such locations should be capable of easy visitation on foot from the Gosport Ferry Terminal or by short bus ride. Some historic sites have Blue or Green Plaques on wall display. It is hoped to combine some of these 'plaqued' buildings into photographic collages in the new publication. Nomination to me please either by phone or (preferably) email.

PS Members are reminded that packs of old photos of Gosport and sets of illustrated notelets are available free. These are put out on the table at the Wednesday talks in the Discovery Centre. Alternatively, phone or email requests will result in prompt delivery to your homes! Do please act on this offer as the Society must soon divest itself of remaining stocks.

Louis Murray lms62@ymail.com 02392 551128

HERITAGE: Blue Plaques

The *Castle Tavern* has been selected for the first award in our new Blue Plaque project. This building has been chosen because it is the oldest still standing on the historic site of Fort Charles and Camper & Nicholsons which certainly deserve commemoration for posterity. Delivery of the plaque is expected in mid-November and it is intended to present it soon afterwards.



This building
is on the site of the fort
built by order of King Charles II
in 1678 as part of the Gosport Lines.

In 1782 there was a beer house within the
abandoned fort, run by Thomas Whitcomb.
Later he moved to The Castle Tavern which he
built adjacent to the outer south western wall.

From 1824 to 2005 the site of the fort was occupied by
world famous yacht builder Camper & Nicholsons.

A gun platform from which the Parliamentarians
bombarded the Royalists at Portsmouth into
surrender in 1642 was nearby.

Gosport Society
2015

Bastion No.1

This is the section of the ramparts by the moat alongside Haslar Road. Owned by the Council and open to the public, it is unfortunately little frequented and in need of restoration.

The owner of the old Trinity Vicarage, adjacent to the site, is keen to assist in achieving this and in promoting the use of this important part of the town's heritage for a variety of activities.

He plans to create a Trust entitled *The Friends of the Ramparts* to take over the ownership and running of the area. It is hoped the other section of existing ramparts in Weevil Lane would be included in a second phase.

The Society welcomes this initiative and encourages support from all those interested.

Howard Bennett mail@howardbenett.plus.com

FROM OUR LEE CORRESPONDENT: Daedalus Report

Most locals will be aware that the former HMS Daedalus site extends over both Gosport and Fareham Borough Councils' jurisdiction. The whole area has been awarded Enterprise Status which earns it government money for infrastructure support and development as well offering attractive business terms for qualifying enterprises; details of the Enterprise Zone input and progress can be found at <http://www.solentez.co.uk/>

The area that is within Lee-on-the-Solent (thus Gosport BC) for planning consent is all the land south of the airfield, the hovercraft slipway and *Seaplane Square* including the Hovercraft Museum. A developer, *Tidebank*, has been identified for *Daedalus Park*, a business and employment area intended as seven two-story steel frame business units that will be constructed on land between the new Barratt homes *Seacrest Gardens* toward the airfield up to the perimeter road; these will be user-ready units for occupiers to rent. The buildings are about the same height as the adjacent new-build houses. A planning application, 15/00247/FULL has been submitted and approval is anticipated soon.

The other, much larger, site in Gosport's area being marketed as the *Waterfront Area* is the remainder of the former Daedalus accommodation, offices, hangers and *Seaplane Square*, including the Hovercraft Museum site, all of which went out to offer last year. Bids for this complex site including its conservation area and listed buildings were reduced earlier this year. Fortunately, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) are holding out, together with Gosport, for a policy of selling the complete site for mixed development – housing, industry and leisure – and working to obtain acceptable development proposals from interested parties.

Certain demolition and site clearance works outside the conservation area have been completed and various repair works commissioned by the HCA. These include approved works within the conservation area to make the whole site safe as well as buildings watertight and more attractive for sale. The Hovercraft Museum volunteers are trying to undertake some finishing works to enable reopening the museum. This is being frustrated by post-completion leak repairs and ongoing defect rectification. It is hoped the Hovercraft Museum will remain 'in situ' but its long term future will depend on negotiations with the future site owner.

Work on the improved east-west road, which almost marks the boundary between Gosport and Fareham, is a Hampshire County Council project and expected to start soon. This will give access to all the Gosport construction sites using the new junction by the CEMAST College. An intended link with Stubbington Lane on the seafront near the seaward end of the runway, while planned, is not expected to be completed until the main Waterfront site is developed.

Fareham Borough Council completed their purchase of the airfield earlier in 2015, and their plans and developments progress. Following the opening of the CEMAST and Innovation Centres, new-build Industrial Units on the east and north development sites materialise. In addition, a strategy for the overall development of the airfield site has been published and can be viewed on: <http://www.fareham.gov.uk/business/daedalus/intro.aspx> Most Gosport residents are likely to be interested in the development of public access and long term proposals to increase flying operations.

Brian Mansbridge, Committee member of both Gosport Society and Lee Residents' Association
<http://www.leeresidents.org.uk/>

AIR RAID PRECAUTION (ARP) BUNKER

On The Avenue in Alverstoke in front of Alverstoke Junior School, there is an Air Raid Precaution (ARP) Bunker left from World War II. In 1937, the Air Raid Precautions Act was passed by Parliament just in case the prospect of war became a reality. Following the start of World War II, the ARP Bunker was built between December 1940 and February 1941. In 1941 the ARP organisation had its name changed to the Civil Defence Corps which lasted until the end of 1968 and, from the end of the war until then, the bunker was used as the base for Gosport's Civil Defence Corps.



During the war, the Bunker was an important location, being the control centre for both Fire Brigade and ARP Wardens during air raids. The ARP Wardens had many responsibilities including issuing gas masks and organising the building and maintenance of Air Raid Shelters (Anderson and Morrison). They carried out 'Black-Out' drills for putting lights out and closing curtains and then patrolled the streets during the 'Black-Outs' to check that people were complying. During an air raid, they would provide emergency controls, rescue casualties and put out fires until officials and emergency services arrived, as well as reporting the incidents to the Control Centre and fires to the Fire Control. Post air raid they would sound the 'All Clear'. They worked closely with the Police, Observer Corps and Woman's Voluntary Service.

During World War II, air raids on Gosport killed one hundred and eleven people, destroyed five hundred houses and damaged eleven thousand others.

Since 1968 when the Civil Defence no longer required it, the Bunker has been unused except for a period by the Scouting movement. The design of the building has been a limiting factor in how it can be utilised and the Grade II Listing has compounded this further.

In October 2011, the Historical Diving Society (HDS), an all-volunteer registered charity, approached Hampshire County Council (HCC) seeking use of the ARP Bunker to house its reference library and some items not on display in the museum at No 2 Battery.

HCC agreed, pleased to see the building revitalised, and eventually offered the freehold of the Bunker which, in August this year, was handed over to the HDS.

Since occupying the bunker, the HDS has cleaned and repaired it where necessary internally and has worked hard tidying up the outside to make it more presentable. A local resident has volunteered to plant a wild-flower garden at the front over the coming winter, so hopefully, by next summer, the building will be much more pleasant to the eye.

The Bunker will be opened to the public each year during Heritage Open Days, so a long-unused, inaccessible building will be part of the Gosport community once again.

Kevin Casey, Member of both GS Committee and Museum Officer for the Historical Diving Society <http://www.thehds.com>



MORE WARTIME MEMORIES!



Oh what a horrid smell – not to mention the off-putting noise – but there we were in the nearest school collecting our gas masks and being shown how to use them. Could we really breathe in them? Breathing out caused a ‘raspberry’ as the air escaped through the sides! The masks were mainly of rubber with a filter on the front and straps to go over the head. A neat little box was provided with a string to hang over the shoulder and they were to be taken with you - always. Of course, they were no good for babies but this was soon rectified. A special cover was designed to fit over prams.

It was 1939 and we were ‘at war’. There were so many new things to get used to. Tank traps, pill boxes and other items appeared – to deter the enemy should they invade. A double row of holes across main roads where square wooden staves would be inserted to stop any vehicles proved a nightmare to cycle over, badly rattling you and your trusty bike and shaking the lamps off. I was fined five shillings in court for ‘showing no front light’ after just crossing a trap which had caused this!

Stokes Bay was lost to us for the war with huge screens erected so we could not see what was taking place there. We lost our precious beach huts which were all removed and temporarily ‘parked’ in Privett Park. Some became garden sheds, the rest – a bonfire?

Many things changed even before bombing started. Residents moved out to the country, Government offices relocated from Portsmouth to Fareham and I cycled each day from Beechcroft Road to The Avenue in Fareham to a requisitioned new house, to work from 9am to 7pm weekdays plus Saturday mornings.

When daylight raids were on, I would be dodging the ‘ack ack’ shrapnel as I pedalled down the Gosport Road. We could see the ‘dog fights’ taking place over Lee-on-the-Solent and once a parachute coming down. Was it one of ours or theirs? We had to stay in the office, in turns, to ‘firewatch’ during night raids, sleeping when possible on a camp-bed

I had to take a sandwich for lunch but what to put in it? Everything was rationed. My dear mother was in despair. I said ‘baked beans’, I did not like baked beans but... We were saved by the Americans who kindly introduced us to peanut butter (an acquired taste), so I queued at Boots in Fareham for one jar! In summer we grew tomatoes in the office flower bed and had them grilled on toast for lunch (no butter of course, and no sugar for our tea).

So many military wartime remembrances recently, but for me, the recollections of daily life.

Joyce Upperton

MY GOSPORT ALLOTMENT

Some forty-five years ago I decided to take an allotment and I’ve had the same one ever since. It is one of the Church plots bordering Little Anglesey Road but mine is tucked away between the old railway line and Ewer Common.

When I took the site on all those years ago, it was in such a wild and overgrown state that my young family came to ‘help’ and, indeed, the many holes they dug did turn some soil. Both children and holes have long since moved on but the main reason I’ve kept the allotment going so long is its proximity to my house – just across the Common – that and the horse field to the South which has always provided a plentiful supply of manure!

When I started, I was struck by the generosity of my fellow tenants who all gave me plants before I’d dug enough ground to put them in! Most of the allotment holders were old Dockyard men and capable of mending anything from gates to pumps. Back then, we learnt the virtues of self-sufficiency and ingenuity, which, in the case of the pump, proved invaluable.

The soil, being rather sandy on a gravel base, in dry weather, needs water, the source of which is a well dug in 1904 to a depth of eighteen to twenty two feet. Early in my occupancy, I actually met one of the men who dug it – a Mr Chandler who died aged one hundred in about 1972. In 1976, a wonderfully sunny and dry summer, the well actually dried up and we were drawing salt water coming up through the gravel from the creek at high water.



Shortly afterwards, the pump for the well started to give trouble and, although I was fortunate in finding a replacement – a lovely Victorian job – in a second hand shop in Stokes Road, it needed a new leather valve. Of course, I couldn't find one, so (remember that need for ingenuity) I took a leather tongue from an old sailing shoe and cut it to shape. A fellow tenant took it back to his kitchen to boil it for ages. Apparently, the smell was terrible but it did the trick – at least for a while. Later, someone found the proper washer valve on the internet and now the

water flows splendidly. As an aside, when I bought the pump, two other old allotmenters, said they would share the cost with me but both died within two weeks. (What some people will do to avoid paying up!) This meant I was the sole owner so I now proudly say, 'It's my pump!'

Bonfires on the allotment have always been a pleasure to me, and one evening, some years back another gardener and I had a truly enormous joint fire. We had it going really well and were standing with our forks at the ready, drinking beers and exchanging tales, when we heard a fire engine and saw flashing blue lights down the railway line. Then, through the hedge walked two firemen, helmeted and in full gear – honestly! They saw us and laughed but wouldn't stay for a beer. Now no fires are allowed between March and October, outside which dates you may light a fire but only after 6pm.

I still love my allotment. Crops have been good and I am able to supply friends with fruit and vegetables as they arrive in too great a volume all at once. I need the physical exertion and I enjoy the tranquillity. Once through the gate, it is so peaceful and the birds singing in Spring is super.



But nothing stays the same for ever. Badgers and foxes are now a nuisance, digging away looking for worms rooting out the crops. When I started all those years ago, most fellow enthusiasts carried on from year to year, even if out of necessity, and mostly the allotments were clean and tidy. Now changes in tenancies occur quite frequently. An early flush of enthusiasm tends to tail off, the weeds fight back and soon there is a change of tenancy again.

Even I find myself thinking that, at twelve rods (a bit bigger than the standard ten), my allotment is rather a lot for an old man! Then I see my granddaughter picking raspberries from the canes my wife gave me for my birthday and I remember back through all the happy years spent tending the earth and I hope to carry on for a long time yet in my own quiet little corner of Gosport.

Adrian Knight

A rod is approximately 5½ yards, reputedly the distance from the back of the plough to the nose of the oxen! 12 rods is the size of the penalty area on a football pitch or a tennis court – a lot of digging! (Ed)

SOCIAL PROGRAMME



Following my appointment as Social Secretary, agreed unanimously by the Committee, I am pleased to report (as of 20th October):

Friday 30th October – A **Conversazione** starts the season in style. Held at the Officers' Mess, Fort Blockhouse, an historic venue with beautiful views overlooking Portsmouth Harbour, it includes drinks, small eats and a brilliant young pianist, Matthew Eglinton.

Friday 22nd January (not 23rd as in your programme) – an **informal supper** at the historic Bakery in Royal Clarence Yard, with jazz singer, Katie Rogers, as accompaniment, should be a really jolly evening to look forward to in the New Year. As it is around *Burns Night*, we will be lit by candles with a smattering of tartan (ladies - a tartan sash, maybe?) The price of a ticket (tba shortly) will include the entertainment, a welcoming glass of mulled wine and a two-course supper. Further wine and soft drinks will be available to purchase. Tickets at our next meeting Wednesday 11th November and thereafter from my home (14 Orion Avenue. PO12 4GL).

These future events will also be at historic venues:

Friday 25th March – **An evening of Gosport History** at the Diving Museum. No 2 Battery, Stokes Bay. This will take the form of refreshments, a tour of the museum and individual members recalling aspects of Gosport's history. Tickets for this will be on sale in February.

Thursday 19th May – An all day **visit to the Bishops Palace and Wells Cathedral**. Details will be circulated in March when tickets will be available.

If anyone has any ideas for future social events or would like to help, please contact me.

Meg Hutton-Dunton meghuttondunton@yahoo.co.uk 02392601531