



Gosport Society

Registered as Charity No. 289942

President: The Mayor of Gosport **Vice-President:** Lesley Burton
Chairman: Roger Mawby, 25 Anglesey Road, PO12 2EG; 02392 502855; roger.mawby@btinternet.com
Vice-Chairman: Paul Hutton-Dunton; paulhuttondunton@yahoo.co.uk
Hon Treasurer: Sue Blower, Police Lodge, 4 Flagstaff Green, PO12 1GG; 02392 50179,
Membership Secretary: George Blower, as above
Marketing & Publications: Louis Murray; lms62@ymail.com
Archivist: Howard Bennett; mail@howardbennett.plus.com

Newsletter – Spring 2015

From the Chair

The Society AGM (the *Discovery Centre*, 10th June) will be my last as your Chairman. After five years, I have decided it is time to hand over to someone else and I am very pleased to tell you that Paul Hutton-Dunton, our current Vice-Chairman, has agreed to stand for election as your Chairman for 2015/16. I am sure that Paul has the drive to take the Society forward and I encourage you to attend the AGM and support him and his Committee through his first twelve months as Chairman.



As Vice-Chairman, Paul took on the task of creating a Social Programme for 2015/16 which has been agreed at Committee and will be included in next year's Programme Cards. The success of the social events depends on membership support so I do hope you will reward Paul's efforts with your participation.

Another Committee change comes with George Blower standing down as Membership Secretary. Diana Furlong has agreed to stand for election at the AGM and then take over from George. George has been a brilliant Membership Secretary as well as the initial point of call for requests which have come in via the Society Web Site. I want to take this opportunity to thank George for his hard work on behalf of the Society.

It was with great sadness that I had to tell you that Brian Pladdys had died. A dedicated supporter of the Society, Brian was a Committee member a Chairman could always count on, never reticent to volunteer to help. He ran the Society Social Programme for many years and, with Doreen, organised the Social Evenings in the Parish Centre, the Annual Dinner and very successful coach outings. On top of this he was our Web-Master and Membership Secretary. The Committee decided to hold its Annual Dinner at the end of January. I booked the Golf Club and sorted out menu options only to hear from a Club-member that the caterer had left and catering was being done by an in-house team. This was three weeks before the Dinner! My worries increased when the in-house Chef told me she had not been catering long and had previously been selling double-glazing! As it turned out, the food and service were excellent and I am sure the members who came to the dinner agree it was a successful evening.

The Society considers Interpretation Boards to be very effective in providing location-specific information to the public. However, we have for some time been concerned at the poor condition of many of the boards following years of neglect. Howard Bennett, the Committee Member overseeing Heritage and Conservation, carried out a survey of the boards in the Borough the results of which were sent to the Council. After some time, we established that *Street Scene* is responsible for their maintenance and the Society has agreed to support a committee to address the upkeep of the boards. If there is a particular board you are worried about or think one should be added somewhere, please contact Howard Bennett or me.

The proposed pop concert at Stokes Bay, first revealed by an article in the *Portsmouth News*, came as quite a shock not least for the suggested numbers expected to attend it. While not against the use of the Common at Stokes Bay for this type of event, I was concerned about the impact on the Gosport residents of the increased vehicular traffic and about the management of camping on the Common. Having met with a Councillor, I was pleased to learn that approval to run the event at Stokes Bay had been rescinded. However, it still left a question in my mind as to how the initial approval had come about.

The Committee is following progress of the plans to build houses on the QinetiQ site in Fort Road. Currently the proposal is for eleven very large houses, each between 3,750 and 4,250 square feet with an expected purchase price of over £1m but the Committee believes there is a risk that the number will increase at the Planning Application Phase. The probability of selling houses at over £1m is questionable it being a similar figure to that spoken about for the apartments at Fort Gilkicker. My concerns expressed to local Councillors that the proposed design of the houses is not in harmony with the existing properties in Fort Road and the Crescent have been passed to the Town Hall Planners. I have also stressed the importance, in the re-development, of improving safety for both pedestrians and cars using Fort Road.



There have been many expressions of concern about the closure of the Haslar Sea Wall Road, damaged during storms last year. *Our Heritage*, owners of Haslar Hospital site and responsible for the Sea Wall Road, closed the road as the damage was considered to be a health and safety risk. I am pleased to tell you that the CEO of GBC has written to a complainant that the road will be repaired soon and will be open for traffic again. It will provide an excellent viewing spot for the *America's Cup* in July, and fishermen will be able to resume 'normal service' once again. Another area of interest to the Committee is the Immigration Removal Centre which is forecast to close in May and be handed back to the Prison Service. Originally barracks for the military stationed at Fort Monckton and Fort Gilkicker, nevertheless, none of this group of buildings has any English Heritage Listing, so the site is clearly 'ripe' for re-development and its future will be included in the regular Liaison Meetings we have with the Town Hall Planners. *Please do not hesitate to contact any member of us if you have any particular local concerns.*
Roger Mawby, 25 Anglesey Road; 92502855; roger.mawby@btinternet.com

Honorary Treasurer

Nothing new to report really. I am beginning the process of finalising the 2014/15 accounts ready for the annual inspection in the next few weeks and in preparation for the AGM in the summer. I report to Committee meetings regularly, providing information on current balances at the bank and the balance remaining in the Project Fund.



The Project Fund is a ring-fenced fund within the overall funds of the Society. Expenditure is agreed by the Committee. During the last year contributions have been made towards the purchase of community children's furniture and the renovation of the St George Barracks lamp post. The cost of producing the *Curious Encounters* publication was also funded as was investigation for the WW1 Book Project that the committee is planning as part of the Great War commemoration.

Gift Aid springs to mind this time of the year when we are collecting in your subscriptions. Please do consider this if you are a tax payer as the Society receives reimbursement from Inland Revenue in the region of £300 annually, dependent on the number of members.

Susan Blower gosportsociety@gmail.com

Membership Secretary

Numbers remain stable, though we have lost one or two members and gained a few new ones. A renewed request: wherever possible, please provide an email address to save postage costs and, if your email or any contact address has changed, do keep us informed.

After a long stint as Membership Secretary, I now hand over to Diane Furlong who, I know, will do a great job.

George Blower gosportsociety@gmail.com

Planning Sub-Committee

The Planning Sub-Committee inspects applications for Listed Buildings (LB) Conservation Areas (CA) and buildings on the local list (LL). We also monitor the weekly planning list for other important applications including those for trees. Since the last report in the November 2014 Newsletter, the Planning Sub-Committee has inspected forty-three planning applications. Several are outlined below:-

Haslar Applications

14/00491/DETS (details related to this application) and **15/00492/LBA** (Listed Building Application) **Royal Hospital Haslar, Haslar Road, Gosport**

This is the first phase of development including demolition of the cross link, and restoration and refurbishment of the main hospital building for retirement apartments and health facilities. In connection with this development, eight modern buildings will be demolished.

We did not object to these applications but the finer details of the restoration and other details have yet to be submitted to the Planning Office.

We have also inspected five applications in respect of the Terrace and Officers' Quarters where owners are beginning to refurbish the Listed Buildings prior to occupation. No Objection.

14/00536/FULL Building no. 40 Seaplane Square, Daedalus, Lee-on-the-Solent (CA)

This is an Admiralty 'G' type hangar. The proposed plan is to build a structural support frame to the south western elevation which will strengthen the whole frame. There will be minimal impact on the scale of the structure externally, and it will not harm the building. No objection.

14/00606/VOC (Variation of Condition) **St George Barracks (South), Mumby Road, Gosport, (CA)**

Amendment to approved opening times of vehicle and pedestrian gates to the site including permanent closure of North and South gates with controlled resident access only. We objected to the original application which appeared to show that the resident entrance nearest to the High Street would be closed. However this proposal makes clear there will be a controlled resident access. No objection but with reservations about the site becoming a 'gated' community with no public access.

15/00083/FULL The Bun Penny, 36 Manor Way, Lee-on-the-Solent (CA)

Single storey rear and single storey side/rear extensions and re-siting of outbuilding. Proposal to provide a new single storey function room/dining room extension, a new cold room to replace the existing and to relocate a shed. No objection.

14/ 00621/FULL 11 Elmhurst Road, Gosport (CA)

Demolition of existing outbuildings and construction of four two-bedroom and four three-bedroom dwellings, with access and car parking.

This is a small area of land at the rear of 5-11 Elmhurst Road adjacent to the back alleyway. We objected to the loss of the rear gardens, the design of the proposed two terraces, and the proposed density of dwellings.

Gosport Society Liaison meetings with Gosport Borough Council Officers

Since the last Newsletter, the Liaison Group has attended two meetings at the Borough Council offices. Some of the points discussed are outlined below:

Royal Arms canopy, Stoke Road

The Conservation Officer has contacted the owners of the building about the poor condition of the canopy but as yet has had no reply. The ground floor space is still advertised with no responses to date.

Conservation Area Stokes Bay - proposal

Major sites currently remain the priority. However, the Conservation Officer has been drawing together the background information. We will keep this on our agenda for further meetings.

Guard Houses Haslar, Road

JSASTC (Joint Services Adventurous Sail Training Centre) has leased this site in Haslar Road from the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) for a period of twenty-five years. They are now responsible for maintaining the Listed Buildings, which are on the 'At Risk' Register.

English Heritage

We were advised that the organisation is now divided into two parts: the property management teams which will retain the name *English Heritage*, and the planning, listing and research side which will become *Historic England*. Website address: www.historicengland.org.uk

Daedalus

The Homes and Communities Agency has sold the area based in Fareham, mainly the airfield, to Fareham Borough Council. HCA still owns the Gosport side of Daedalus, mainly the Conservation Area, and has marketed the site, with some response from developers.

Trust Maritime Archaeology

Our attention was drawn to a website which contains new information about Gosport's role in WW2 and especially the D- Day build up: www.maritimearchaeologytrust.org/solent70

Anti-Tank Traps

The historic importance of these tank traps just north of Fort Brockhurst was discussed and Gosport Society is to consider these, and other buildings, for possible listing in due course. There are seven small tank traps on the land at the rear of the Fort at risk of being demolished for new development. However, Gosport Conservation Officer has told the developer not to damage or remove the tank traps.

Planning Applications and the weekly list can be inspected at: the Planning Office, third floor, Gosport Town Hall and at <http://publicaccess.gosport.gov.uk/online-applications-17/>

Local Plan 2011-2029

The Local Plan Inquiry was held over two days, the first day being important for Gosport Society in that four developers were objecting to policies in the plan publication version:-

Kenzington Ltd – Munitions Site, Britannia Way, Gosport

Millngate Gosport – Brockhurst Gate site, Fareham Road/Heritage Way

Abbey Developments – Stokesmead Field, Clayhall Road, Gosport

All the above objected to the Open Space Policy imposed on these sites.

Starvale Development – Gunboat Yard Haslar. Mr Ian Knight for Starvale Developments requested GBC to remove the Employment Policy from the Gunboat Yard area of QunetiQ, Haslar Road. GBC agreed to this request and the Gunboat Yard site is to be included in the policy for Fort Blockhouse (see Local Plan 2011-2029 held in the Local Studies Centre). An interim report from the Inspector is expected in April with a final report in June

War Memorials

There are two lists for recording memorials. The *Imperial War Museum* memorials online, contains forty-two Gosport memorials, and the *Memorials Trust* contains twenty memorials, with duplications on each list. Money is available for restoration of WW1 memorials. Two Gosport memorials most in need of restoration are: *Clarence Square School*, WW1 & 2, situated in the summer house in the grounds of Northcote House, Bury Road and *SS Comrie Castle* situated in Haslar R N Cemetery, Clayhall Road. We asked if GBC has a nominated member responsible for War Memorials but the Conservation Officer had no knowledge of this issue. I am continuing to upgrade the recorded information mainly to fill in the gaps and record any other memorials.

Where is Medieval Gosport?

The Conservation Officer raised the issue of the few buildings positively identified in the town centre as being of medieval/early modern original (pre-1670's). Future archaeology will be crucial in establishing the precise layout of the town and whether it was indeed just a 'small fishing village' or a more established town. He has asked for Gosport Society members to look out for early images of the town which may contain evidence for medieval/early modern buildings to add to the limited information available. The historic layout of the town was detailed by De Gomme in the 1670's. The Local Studies Centre hold copies of this and other early maps.

May Bumford

Marketing and Publications

The Gosport Society continues to sell publications through the following retail outlets: *Waterstones* (Fareham); Gosport *Discovery Centre*; the *Sea Chest* (Lee-on-the-Solent); the *Book Shop* (Lee-on-the-Solent); Gosport Tourist Office (Gosport Ferry Terminal). Members are encouraged to purchase books, gifts and other merchandise from these outlets. They have all been loyal supporters and purchasers of Gosport Society publications over a number of years. Please note that the Tourist Office in the *Westbury Manor Museum* in Fareham (a former stockist of Society publications) has closed and *Tourism Southeast* has relocated its functions to the Gosport Tourist Office. Further rationalisations of this type are likely to the shops in the local museums of the Royal Navy Trust.

The following items are free to Society members:

- *Curious Encounters in Gosport Parks and Gardens : Short Walks with a Difference*
- *The Gosport Town Trail*
- Old Gosport Notelets and Envelopes
- Set of fifteen photo-illustrated postcards of old Gosport.

Should you require copies please contact me either by phone or e-mail

Louis Murray lms62@ymail.com 02392 551128

Heritage and Conservation

Green Plaques

As it is two years since we made a Restoration Award I am delighted to announce that in 2015 we have found a worthy recipient: Rowner Cottages, now renamed *Church Cottage*.

The owners, Mr and Mrs Stickland, have achieved wonders in a very difficult task to rescue this pair of dilapidated cottages and have taken great pains to incorporate contemporary materials and to retain historic features. It has been a long process but at last the building has been restored to its 'former glory'. Structural work is complete and internal fitting-out is aimed to be finished in time for occupation in August.

The date for the unveiling ceremony of the Green Plaque will be arranged for late summer and announced nearer the time.



Blue Plaques

The Council awarded eleven of these between 1990 and 2001 but has since discontinued owing to a lack of resources. Gosport Society has resolved to carry on this commendable work in the Borough and complete the commemoration of buildings/structures which have a historic significance either in their own right or because of their association with important people or events.

This will be done in accordance with the principles recommended by English Heritage and in stages once we have selected the most worthy buildings, the criteria for which will be that they must be still existing, visible from the public way, and of special historic interest.

I believe that this is a worthwhile and appropriate project for the Society to undertake, is much appreciated by local people, celebrates Gosport's great history and performs an educational and conservation role. The Council Conservation Officer applauds our involvement and we shall of course seek his advice regarding suitable sites.

If any member of the Society has any suggestions for other Blue, or Green Plaques, please contact me.

Howard Bennett mail@howardbennett.plus.com

Gosport Memories: The Rugby Club

When as a boy in 1946 I saw a group of men playing rugby on a field in Jellicoe Avenue, I had no idea that nearly seventy years later I would still have connections with, and membership of, what was to become Gosport and Fareham Rugby Club. In fact it has been quite a large part of my life. I joined for the 1952-53 season and have been a member ever since – now a life member.

We had an old army Nissen hut as a club house when I first joined, with holes in the floor, in Gosport Park. As we did not have a hut license, we gave pints away, and proffered a beautiful copper rugby ball collecting box (no doubt Dockyard made), with a reminder of the current cost of beer, for donations.

The bath at the back of the club hut had been dug by the players and had a floor of corrugated concrete; an outside boiler had to be stoked up by the members. Both teams bathed together which helped to iron out any differences set up in the game just finished. The water became like Brown Windsor Soup and when we got out our butts were corrugated!

By 1961, the club had moved into the old cricket pavilion in Gosport Park and this made a very pleasant but cramped club house. We soon got permission from the helpful Gosport Council to extend the eastern end and the extension was opened by the then Mayor, Councillor Mrs Behrendt. This club house was a friendly place after a game with a log burning stove and an 'old farts' corner.

Some eight years later we dug a trench from the club house across the grass to the dell (where the old cycle track used to be) and round it to install lighting for evening training. The digging was done on what turned out to be one of the hottest days of the year – very thirsty work; the dell is now our fourth pitch.

I played for the Firsts until my forty-fourth year and then dropped down one side after another, playing my last game for the Veterans at fifty-seven.

During my Presidency (1981-91) we had a new club house built, the one in Gosport Park now; it is not very beautiful, but because of frequent break-ins we were not allowed to have any windows on the ground floor! This is now in full swing and has great facilities as many of you will know. Lunches are held at the club for every home league match and are always well attended. The annual Captain's Lunch is very popular with players coming from far and wide.



The Club has grown enormously and now runs three, sometimes four sides. It has provided several county players over the years and a considerable number have gone on to play in higher standard rugby – many returning to help in the running of their old Club. The establishment of the Mini section has been very valuable, with small boys growing into Colts and going on to First Team status, they have been the life blood of the Club in recent years. Local schools seem to play very little rugby these days. We have always had good support from local Naval establishments, quite a few Naval personnel prefer playing for a civilian club, but as the Navy shrinks so do their numbers at the club. I feel I have had a great innings (wrong game!) with the club, and have made and kept many good friends, some who joined long ago with me, and others I have met along the way. I am still proud of my connection with Gosport and Fareham Rugby Club which has retained its place in London 1 South League and, though saddened that they recently lost the final of the Hampshire Cup to Havant at the last minute, will continue to follow their progress with interest. May they continue to thrive!

Adrian Knight



Walpole Park

This nice green space in the centre of Gosport, making a break between Stoke Road shopping and the High Street, has seen several changes over the years but still plays a big part in many lives when it comes to events, entertainments, and special days.

Apart from being a park where children could play or adults sit in the sunshine by the water, it was always the main venue for the annual Carnival, with its procession of decorated 'Floats' arriving after their long tour of the town. The fairs and fairground rides always appeared at Walpole Park. One entertainment we particularly enjoyed in our early teen years was the 'dancing on the green'. How we managed our steps on the rather rough grass, I do not know. I only remember we thought it was lovely out in the open with the music playing, whether 'live' or 'canned', we loved it. Of course, the park was much bigger before it was split in two by the South Relief Road and partially covered by the building of the much needed Council housing.

The provision of play equipment was very popular but had little regard for safety. Apart from roundabouts and see-saws, there was a slide which was a narrow metal chute reached by a narrow metal steps which soared upwards. The downward slide deposited the rider onto hard concrete, but I do not recall any accidents. As the park was next to the *Ritz* cinema where we would go for the Saturday children's matinee, we would often pop into the park after the film for a quick 'go' on the slide. Once, when it had rained, a friend, using her *Ritz* programme to sit on the wet slide, shot down so fast, she flew right over the concrete and landed on the grass past the end, unhurt fortunately, but we decided to wait until it was dry in future.

A very popular attraction was the paddle boats - why, I don't know, as they were beasts to make go especially as there was usually a breeze (if not a gale!) against any progress. How we envied the slightly older kids in the canoes for which we had neither 'seamanship' nor funds. As it was, our time was soon 'up' and the call for 'Come in number seven' was heard at which we always endeavoured to get to the other side of the pond to delay our return!

Many years later, as a local Councillor, accompanied by my father, I planted a tree in a commemorative row where it still stands. I also recall, as a Councillor, attending a 'Business Breakfast' in a very grand marquee set up in Walpole Park. I doubt this is something repeated now!

Many varied events and activities are still held in the park these days which is well kept and much enjoyed. Most of us pass it frequently and enjoy the flowers, the water, the swans and other birds, and the wonderful model yachts which appear every year for international competition. Gosport's model yacht pond is of importance, and yet another of Gosport's special features.

The park and its ponds are a very valuable asset and I am sure still bring as much pleasure and memories of happy times to others as they do to me.

Joyce Upperton



Walpole Park was laid out in 1891 on a piece of land called the Horsefield. It was named after Thomas Walpole, Rector of St Mary's Church, Alverstoke. Walpole Park is an amalgam of an open air venue for Fun Fairs, Circus' and occasional music festivals, combined with a boating lake (without boats) and an internationally recognised model boat racing venue, one of only two in the country (*My Gosport 2014*)