



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

Newsletter Spring 2013

From the Chair

Firstly I want to thank you, the Members, for your support during the year.

This report also gives me the opportunity to thank the Committee for their support, without which my job would have been a considerably more difficult. Especially, I want to thank Liz Mitchell for agreeing to take the minutes of the Committee meetings, an essential role in the conduct of the business of the Society.

The Society, thanks to David Moore, has a very much-improved website that can be accessed at www.gosportsociety.co.uk. The work on digitising the many photographs the Society has collected over the years has meant they are available via the website and there have, in fact, been over 3600 hits on the site since it was brought on line.

The Wednesday Evening talks continue to be well supported. May Bumford and Lesley Burton have arranged speakers that have given interesting and wide-ranging insights on Gosport's history. The talks have covered subjects as varied as: *Gosport Railways*, *Black Prisoners-of-War in Forton Prison* and *The History of Grange Airfield*.

Members will remember that we moved to the *Explosion* Museum for the Wednesday Evening talks as it could accommodate a greater number of members than the *Discovery Centre*. However, it seems that the future of the *Explosion* Museum maybe a little uncertain and we know that it is not the easiest place to get to, especially in the winter. As result the Committee is investigating moving the venue for the Wednesday evening meetings back into the town centre.

The last twelve months have been challenging ones for the Committee. Despite not having a Secretary or Social Secretary, we have still managed - thanks to Juliette and Graham Hewitt - to hold a very successful Annual Dinner and New Year Social Evening. Our last Annual Dinner was held at the Palmerston Bowling Club rather than Lee Golf Club (our venue for many years). We hope to hold an Annual Dinner in 2014 but as yet have not decided where. If you have any views or suggestions on this please let me, or a member of the Committee, know.

This year's Summer Social Evening is being held in the Alverstoke Parish Centre on the 6th July at a cost of £10 per ticket (please note the change of date from the blue *Meetings and Events for 2013-2014* programme). My thanks go to Maggie Feist for volunteering to cater for the evening. I know that Maggie and her band of willing helpers will ensure a great evening with good food and good wine. Just a reminder - these Social Evening are always well supported and, as there is a limit on the numbers, you are encouraged to buy your tickets early. Tickets are available now from George Blower or me and will be available at the June Wednesday evening meeting.

Not having a Social Secretary has meant that it was not possible to organise a Society outing this year but I am pleased to tell you that Mary Knapman has volunteered to organise one for 2014. Her aim is to pick a venue about two hours away by coach. As yet this is undecided but you will be given plenty of notice when one is found.

I must thank Louis Murray, the Society's Marketing Manager, for all he has done in the last year. He has managed to keep up the sales of the Society Publications even though we have not produced a new publication for several years. These sales, although falling, still provide a significant contribution to the finances of the Society. Louis was also the driving force and author of the recently published *The Gosport Town Trail*. The Society had in the past produced, with the help of the Town Hall, a leaflet entitled *An Alverstoke Trail* which gave a guide to the important sights and buildings in Alverstoke. Initially, the idea was to re-publish this for the Gosport Tourist Office but Louis volunteered to create a booklet that covered the 'bottom end' of the town as well as Alverstoke. The result is a very impressive and informative walk around the town. The Tourist Office and the Town Hall are delighted with Louis' booklet and I would recommend that all members should obtain a copy, not only for their own interest, but as a useful guide for house-guests not familiar with the town.

Over the many years it has been in existence, the Society has built up a large collection of its Committee records, publications and photographs. The Committee decided that it was necessary to establish a Society Archivist and Howard Bennett agreed to take on this role. The Archivist's aim is to collect all this material in one place and I must thank Howard for all his efforts in achieving this aim.

I want to thank Adrian Knight, Howard Bennett and May Bumford, who make up the Society's Planning Sub Committee, for the diligent way they vet planning applications affecting listed buildings, conservation areas and trees with preservation orders. While their work is not often apparent to the rest of the Society members I can assure you that their views are well respected by the Town Hall planners. Another Society Sub Committee, which deals with planning policy and whose members are Joyce Upperton, May Bumford, Adrian Knight and me, has, this year, been involved in a review of the very important Gosport Local Plan. The Plan is a key document in the Government's drive to simplify the planning process and is based upon a presumption in favour of sustainable development of housing, industrial facilities and open spaces within the town until to 2020; it is therefore an important document controlling what building will happen in the town. It has gone through its first review cycle and we have submitted comments on this first draft. It is due to be published in its final form at the end of the year and the Sub Committee will again review it and comment if it is felt necessary.

It has been necessary for me to contact our MP to express the Committee's concern on the change to the Permitted Development rules. This change would increase the length of a rear single-story extension that can be added to a house without first obtaining planning permission, from four metres to eight metres. Our concern was shared by many including Civic Voice, other Civic Societies and Members of the House of Lords. In the end, the Government changed its position on the issue and our MP explained to me that, before going ahead with a long extension, approval from neighbours must be obtained. The Town Hall Planning Officers will manage this consultation process.

I hope that next year is another successful one for the Society. I am sure this will be easier to achieve if two of the two hundred Society members come forward and volunteer to take on the role of Secretary and Social Secretary. If we can fill these posts, the Committee will then be able to provide its members with a programme that they deserve.

Roger Mawby

Honorary Treasurer

Finances continue to be fairly robust and we have sufficient funding for future projects to be agreed. In the last year, the Society funded the Green Plaque Award, the Photographic Competition and marketing initiatives which we hope will encourage an increase to our membership.

As we move into the new financial year of 2013-2014, this is a busy period for the Treasurer as it is time to balance the accounts for the previous financial year and complete the Income and Expenditure Report. The books now await the annual audit to enable reporting of the accounts to all Society Members at the Annual General Meeting in June.

Susan Blower

Membership Secretary

Membership renewal is continuing through April, and reminders will be sent during May for subscriptions still to be paid. We would again ask members who have changed their email addresses in the last twelve months to advise the changes to gospportsociety@gmail.com, as we have had some difficulty with a few currently listed addresses.

We had a very disappointing response to the membership recruitment campaign conducted in March, so if you have any friends or family interested in the history, and future development, of Gosport, please refer them to our new website, or ask them to contact us on the above email address.

George Blower

Planning Sub Committee

The Planning Sub Committee continues to inspect current applications for listed buildings, locally listed buildings and applications for conservation areas. We also monitor the weekly list for any applications requiring our attention. Since the last Newsletter in November we have inspected about fifty eight applications, mainly for minor developments. Some important/interesting applications are outlined below with an update on some previous items.

Rowner Cottages:

At the December Regulatory Board, permission was granted to turn the cottages into a single unit of accommodation with a single-storey rear extension, and garage. The front façade was to remain intact except for the addition of a porch and window. Work has now started on the development.

Royal Clarence Yard:

We continue to receive applications for this site and are waiting for another application for the Northern end of the site, opposite the Millennium Bridge.

Redcliffe House:

The house is to revert to its original use as a care home and does not require planning permission for the internal alterations underway. Gosport Planning Department is monitoring the situation.

Qinetiq, Haslar Road (Cavitation Tunnel):

Gosport Borough Conservation Department has submitted an application to English Heritage for the tunnel to be listed. We will keep you informed of the outcome.

The Railway Inn, Forton Road:

A recent application has been received which removes the shop component from the previous application owing to lack of demand for A1 retail space in the area. The applicants have now applied to convert the property to two two-bedroom houses and one four-bedroom house. We had no objection to this change of plan.

The White Swan, Forton Road:

The development, to turn the building into flats, is well underway. Workmen have recently uncovered a tile above the front door showing a white swan, which will be retained in situ.

The Wheatsheaf, Brockhurst Road:

This development has now been completed and people are moving into the flats. It is worth having a look at the excellent re-use of this site.

Haslar Hospital:

A pre-submission application is with Gosport Borough Council being carefully inspected, but has not yet been registered.

Forton Lake Archeology:

Permission has been granted for a free standing Interpretation Panel to be sited at the Northern end of the Millennium Bridge showing pictures and information about Forton Lake Archaeology. This too is well worth a visit.

Lee-on-the-Solent:

We recently received an advert application to display an Interpretation Panel on the promenade railings opposite the Remembrance Gardens. The proposed panel will show ten photographs with information. We had no objection and will inform members when the panel is in situ.

HM Submarine Affray Memorial:

This impressive memorial is now in place along the Esplanade (Millennium Walk) Gosport. We sent a letter of support for this application.

Mayfield Buildings, Harbour Road (facing Mumby Road):

This is an Outline Plan for a mixed-use development including residential tower block, hotel, restaurant, shops and public house. We did not object as this is a derelict site and noted in Gosport Borough Council Local Plan 2011–2029 for re-development. However, we did comment on grounds of insufficient car-parking, loss of parking in Harbour Road and concern about overdevelopment. Permission was granted at the Regulatory Board meeting, 7th May. If you wish to inspect the application, go to www.gosport.gov.uk and click on planning, then planning applications, No. 12/00319//OUT.

Land at Alverstoke Village Showroom and 1-3 Green Road:

We recently received four planning applications to demolish the garage, car showroom and two houses in Green Road to build a *Co-op* store with four two-bedroom flats over the store. Three three-storey terrace houses and three garages, with a flat over the garages, were also proposed. We objected to this proposal on the grounds of insufficient on-site car parking, the use of Green Road for parking (already over used), the design of the new build and the effect on the adjacent listed building and Alverstoke Conservation Area. The application has since been withdrawn.

Liaison Meetings:

Our Liaison meetings with Gosport Planning and Conservation Departments were suspended for a few months, owing to unforeseen circumstances. They will now resume in June. **May Bumford**

Society Archive

I am pleased to report that our Archive is now a reality. Instead of material being tucked away in cupboards and drawers throughout the town, these items, incorporated with our publications, are now stored at the *Explosion* Museum. An inventory, which will be available on the website to members who may wish to have access for research purposes, contains: *Gosport Records*, numbers 1-17; seventeen other books published by the Society; the original CDs of the *Image Library*; minutes of meetings; Newsletters, and membership lists. The contents will be updated as suitable items are found. We still need one of our early publications from 1975 entitled *Gosport Railway Era* by G A Allcock. A copy for the Archive, if you have one, would be greatly appreciated.

We own a considerable number of Display Boards which were created for various exhibitions in the past. These are laminated, in good condition and about three feet by two feet containing excellent photographs with explanatory notes. They are bulky to store and, as it is unlikely that they will be required for future exhibitions, we are looking for a home for them. Please let me know if you would like any for personal use, or can suggest any organisation that might accept them - as they are really too good to destroy. The subjects covered are: *Haslar* Hospital, D-Day Stokes Bay, Clarence Yard, Froude & Brunel, Post War Gosport (High St. The Hard, Stoke Road, Lost buildings, Railways, Fortifications, etc).

A new album has been added to the website photo gallery entitled *Commemorative Plaques* showing places of which you might not be aware and would be interested to visit. It is sad that in some cases the Plaques are in poor condition, and one object of the album is to persuade the owners to renovate them. It is also proposed to carry out a similar project with the many Interpretation Boards in the town.

In view of the scarcity of good building restorations last year, it is unlikely that a Green Plaque award will be made in 2013 unless any last minute nominations appear. So, if you have any suggestions, please let us know quickly.

Howard Bennett

Publications

Just over £1000.00 was generated in book sales for the financial year 2012-2013. This is in line with expectations, given the difficult financial climate, the continuing decline in the number of retail outlets, and the age and character of Society book stocks. Society book sales continue to be loyally supported, mostly on a quarterly basis, by *Waterstones* in Fareham; *The Sea Chest* and *The Bookshop* both in Lee-on-the-Solent; the Gosport Tourist Office; the *Explosion* Museum and the Gosport *Discovery Centre*. Occasional purchases are made by national museums and out-of-area outlets. Attention will need to be given to a book stock reduction strategy over the next year or so, and this is on the agenda for committee discussion.

As part of a membership/Society profile-raising and publicity-drive, a new publication - *The Gosport Town Trail* - was produced this year. A first printing of 1,000 copies has taken place and the booklet (which describes a walk of about five and a half miles in and around Gosport's community and historic sites) is available free to Society members, visitors and the general public. The main stockist is the Gosport Tourist Office by the ferry terminal. Smaller stocks are taken by libraries and local museums. This publication has been well received and is, hopefully, the first in a new series of commercial publications highlighting various aspects of Gosport town and life. If you have ideas, suggestions and resource material (especially unique photographs and personal biographies) for possible new publication titles please get in touch.

Louis Murray

Ferry Across the Harbour: a reminiscence

The ferry had just left on its way to Portsmouth and I knew I had to wait fifteen minutes for the next one. As I stood patiently on the new, clean, dry, but gloomy, covered Gosport pontoon, I remembered my school days when the ferry service was somewhat different.

The 'landing stage' then was just that... flat, unadorned, unsheltered but... there was always a ferry to board, a six-minute service, and only four minutes to cross. Four boats plied back and forth, one in each direction and one at each 'Hard'. As the next ferry came to the pontoon, behind the one full of passengers ready to go, it disgorged its 'cargo' of people in double-quick time, a bell shrilled and the waiting ferry started to move. Never were the gates closed in the face of the hurrying folk hoping just to make it - the chains were even undone again to let on one last struggler!

Best of all were the 'Dockyard Mateys', the dozens of dockyard workers who travelled on the ferry daily and piled their bikes in rows over each other on the foredeck so close together, it seemed they could never again be parted. Fortunately, however, these men had developed the knack, and in a minute, were all safely off the ferry and dashing up the approach. It was not uncommon, as the ferry was pulling out, for a cyclist, on hearing the shrill warning bell, to 'scoot' down the ramp, jump on the stern of the moving boat and, with bike clasped under one arm, be helped over the rail and on board by either 'mates' or strangers.

My sisters and I never attempted this feat but were almost always off and running before anyone else, before, even, the boat had actually 'arrived'. Across the means of access to the ferry were three linking chains held between movable posts. As soon as the boat was underway, a Mate linked two of the chains to their posts, not bothering with the bottom one. As the boat neared its destination, however, any passenger could unlink the two chains to be 'at the ready'. We were past-masters at this and, judging the distance, could leap over onto the pontoon. I only ever heard of one person 'slipping up' over this and no-one was hurt. How different from today's large health and safety notices and forbidding messages from the Captain!

We often shared the ride with sailors in full uniform - in those days square collars, and bell-bottomed trousers with creases like concertinas. These always puzzled me, as did the sailors who took out penknives and cleaned their nails - without spilling blood.

We used the four minute journey to do last minute homework, chanting such rhymes as, 'Then out spake *brave Horatius*, the *Captain of the Gate*, *To every man upon this earth*, *Death cometh soon or late...*' Though we only needed to retain them long enough to recite later in the day, strangely, I still remember most of the lines now. I think our education owed almost as much to the ferry journeys as to the classes we attended when we reached school.

All this for one (old) penny, and only a ha'penny before 9am – Ah! Memories!

Joyce Upperton

Gosport Society Annual General Meeting 7.30pm Wednesday 12th June 2013 *Explosion* Museum Conference Hall (to be followed by a talk: *HMS Alliance - History and Restoration* by Daniel Ball)

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions by Chairman
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the AGM held on 13th June 2012 (see below)
4. Chairman's Report
5. Honorary Treasurer's Report
6. Election of Chairman and Officers for 2013-2014
7. Election of Committee for 2013-2014
8. Any Other Business

Minutes of the Gosport Society Annual General Meeting Wednesday 13th June 2012 *Explosion* Museum

Item 1 - Welcome and Introduction

1.i The Chairman, Roger Mawby, welcomed members to the meeting and introduced the Deputy Mayor Councillor John Beavis.

Item 2 - Apologies

2.i Apologies had been received from Councillor Alan Scard, Joyce Upperton, Lesley Burton and Mrs Collins.

Item 3 - Minutes of the AGM held on 15th June 2011

3.i Minutes of the 2011 Annual General Meeting were agreed and accepted by attendees. There were no matters arising.

Item 4 - Chairman's Report

4.i 2011-2012 had been a successful year for the Society and the Chairman gave his sincere thanks to the members of the Committee for their support over the past year.

4.ii The change of venue to *Explosion* for the evening talks had not, as the Committee feared, led to a reduction in the number of members attending. While it was not possible to get to *Explosion* by public transport, lifts could be arranged.

4.iii The experiment to start normal meetings at 7pm, which gave time for members to have coffee and a chat with friends prior to the talk, would be continued.

4.iv The Chairman thanked Brian Pladdys and Lesley Burton for arranging the year's varied and interesting speakers.

4.v The Society's Planning Sub Committee of Adrian Knight, Howard Bennett and May Bumford had reviewed a significant number of planning applications commenting on those they considered inappropriate either in design or compatibility with their surrounding environment. The Chairman had made representation at a Council Planning Committee meeting in support of an application for the restoration of the semi derelict thatched cottages alongside of Rowner Church.

4.vi The Society's Planning Policy Sub Committee had reviewed the latest Local Development Framework Policy Document and would continue to work with the Council Planning Department on the allocation of land in the town for housing, industry or leisure use. Adrian Knight, Howard Bennett and May Bumford, together with the Chairman, met regularly with the Conservation Officer and the Planning Department to discuss issues concerning listed and buildings of interest in the town. It was through this forum that the Grade 2 listing of the WW2 Civil Defence Bunker in the Avenue had been initiated, a building which, thanks to Hampshire County Council, was now being used to store the archives of the Diving Museum at Number 2 Battery at Stokes Bay.

4.vii Brian and Doreen Pladdys had organised the successful and profitable 2011 Summer Social and 2012 New Year Social Events. As his last contribution to the Society's Social Programme, Brian organised a very successful coach outing to Bristol. Coffee and lunch were taken at the Famous Royal Navy Volunteer Pub. The day included a bus tour around Bristol, with a Blue Badge Guide, visiting the Brunel Suspension Bridge and the SS *Great Britain*. The day was sunny and enjoyable.

4.viii In 2012 there had been three possible candidates for a Green Plaque award. *The Wiltshire Lamb* in Privet Road, *Pier House* in Lee-on-the-Solent and the *Royal Engineers Mews* in Clarence Yard. The Committee chose the *Royal Engineer's Mews* as they are an excellent demonstration of how it was possible to take redundant and tired buildings and bring them back into use as housing. The award would be presented builder of the Mews in July. Nominations would be sought from members for 2013 awards in the autumn.

4.ix As part of the Gosport Heritage Open Days in September, the Society, with the help of the Gosport Camera Club, was organising a Photographic Competition for children up to the age of 18 entitled *Photograph Gosport's Heritage*. The Chairman asked members to persuade their children or grandchildren to take part in the competition, as it was felt important that the younger generation were made aware of the heritage of the town.

4.x Julia Massey had agreed to be nominated as Secretary of the Society. The Committee had been unable to find a volunteer as Social Secretary. Speakers for the Wednesday evenings had been arranged, but a volunteer was required to take on Brian Pladdy's role as Social Secretary.

4.xi Juliet Hewitt and Lesley Burton had volunteered to run the 2012 Summer Event on the 7th July. Graham Hewitt had volunteered to organise the dinner on the 19th October, at Palmerston Bowling Club. This arrangement covered only these events. A volunteer was required to join the committee to organise future events.

4.xii Two places were vacant on the Committee.

4.iii The Chairman Roger Mawby and Vice Chairman Adrian Knight had decided to stand down at the 2013 AGM.

Item 5 - Honorary Treasurer's Report

5.i Sue Blower thanked Doreen Pladdys for auditing the accounts, and explained the key points of the 2011-2012 Income and Expenditure Account, copies of which had been made available to all attendees. Key points were as follows:

5.ii Income was up very slightly on the previous year. Subscriptions were up by £262.00, with sale of publications down by £308.00. Gift Aid and donations had increased. Total Income was £9,978.00. Expenditure Affiliation fees were down as the Society no longer subscribed to Civic Trust. Venue fees, having moved to *Explosion*, were reduced as the Society no longer paid for lecture evening use. Website fees, Social Events, Trips and Meeting Expenses, Speakers, Postage, Printing and Stationary costs had all reduced. Overall expenditure was £7,061 and Project Fund Expenditure £328. £9,922.00 remained in the Project Fund.

5.iii The accounts were duly accepted by members present.

Item 6 - Election of Chairman and Officers for 2012- 2013

6.i Councillor John Beavis presided over the re- election of the Chairman Roger Mawby, who then presided over the re-election of the Vice Chairman, Adrian Knight, and Honorary Treasurer, Sue Blower. Sue Reed had decided to stand down as Secretary. Julia Massey had been formally nominated by David Read and Sue Read and, there being no other nominations, Julia Massey was duly elected as Secretary by a show of hands.

Item 7 - Election of Committee for 2012 – 2013

7.i Howard Bennett, George Blower, May Bumford, and Joyce Upperton were re-elected by a show of hands. David Reed had had decided to stand down as Marketing Manager. Louis Murray had been formally nominated by May Bumford and Howard Bennett and was duly elected. Paul Hutton-Dunton volunteered to join the committee, nominated by Howard Bennett and Ivor Feist and was duly elected by a show of hands. Councillor Alan Scard remained the representative of Gosport Borough Council.

Item 8 - Any Other Business

8.i The Chairman announced the Heritage Open Days Photographic Competition organised by the Society and Gosport Camera Club aimed at 10 to 18 year olds.

8.ii Paul Hutton-Dunton volunteered to find a Senior Officer for the Royal Engineers to unveil the Green Plaque being awarded by Gosport Society to the 1850 workshop in Weevil Lane.

8.iii Councillor John Beavis thanked the Gosport Society for the work undertaken on conservation in the Borough and Planning Meetings. He stressed the importance of Heritage Open Days and involving young people in activities in the Borough.

8.iv Presentations were made to Brian and Doreen Pladdys for their sterling work on the Committee over many years.

8.v There being no further business the meeting closed at 20.00. It was followed by James Daly speaking on *Portsmouth's World War Two Heroes*.