



Gosport Society

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www.thegosportsociety.com

NEWSLETTER May 2012

From the Chair

The Committee, after considerable discussion, decided to change the venue for the Wednesday evening talks from the Discovery Centre to the Explosion Museum. The change of venue did not, as the Committee feared, lead to a reduction in the number of members. At least we now have a view of the screen that is not obscured by a pillar holding up the roof, and it does give us more room. The experiment to start the meeting at 7pm, to give some time for members to have coffee and a chat with friends before the talk starts at 7.30, also appears to have been a success, although I must again apologise for the chaos before the April meeting. Your Committee had failed to confirm with the Museum the Wednesday evening bookings for 2012/13, a mistake that has now been rectified! We had a varied range of interesting speakers last year. Brian Pladdys, with the help of Lesley Burton, put together a programme of speakers, covering topics from Charles Dickens failed marriage to the history of the Knowle Mental Hospital.

The coach trip last June to the Olympic Park was interesting but London traffic jams put paid to the chance of seeing the Greenwich Olympic site, which was disappointing. Comparing the Stratford site we saw during the visit with what we see now, the last 12 months have transformed it from a building site to one that the nation can be really proud of.

Brian and Doreen once again organised the successful and profitable 2011 Summer Social and 2012 New Year Social Events. As Brian and Doreen have retired from being Treasurer and Social Secretary, the 2012 New Year Event was the last one Brian and Doreen were responsible for and the Society owes a huge vote of thanks to them for the work they have put in over many years to make the Social events so successful.

Last year saw the award of three Society Green Plaques: one to the Railway Station, one to the Clarence Yard Bakery and Granary and the third to the Superintendent's

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Hon. Secretary: Miss Julia Massey (*To be confirmed at AGM*)
Hon. Treasurer: Mrs Sue Blower, Police Lodge, 4 Flagstaff Green, Gosport, PO12 1GG (Tel: 92-502179)

House in Flagstaff Green, both in Clarence Yard. Of interest, the architects who designed the transformation of the Railway Station also received a national award for their work on the station. This year there were three possible candidates for a Green Plaque: the Wiltshire Lamb in Privett Road, Pier House in Lee on the Solent and the Royal Engineer's Mews in Clarence Yard. The decision by the Committee was for the Royal Engineer's Mews to be awarded a plaque, for an excellent demonstration of how it is possible to take a redundant and tired group of buildings and bring them back into use as housing.

As part of the Gosport Heritage Open Days in September, the Society, with the help of the Gosport Camera Club, is organising a Photographic Competition for children up to the age of 18 entitled "Photograph Gosport's Heritage". I hope members will persuade their children or grandchildren to take part in the competition.

I think I can safely say that 2011/12 was again a successful year for the Society and my thanks go to the members of my Committee for the support they have given me over the year. As I have said at the last two Wednesday Evening talks, there will be three vacancies that must be filled at the AGM in June. After six years in post, Sue Read has called time as Secretary and I am very pleased to report that Julia Massey has offered to take over this post. Similarly, after seven years as Marketing Manager, David Read will be handing over his responsibilities to Louis Murray. As you all know, Brian has retired as Social Secretary, leaving us this very important post to fill. Fortunately, Juliette Hewitt, assisted by Lesley Burton, has volunteered to run the 2012 Summer Event on the 7th July and Graham Hewitt has kindly volunteered to organise this year's dinner, which is tentatively planned for the 19th October. This arrangement only covers the 2012 Summer Social Event and the Annual Dinner. Our Wednesday evening talks, social events, coach trips and dinners all require organisation so if they are to continue into 2013 and beyond, a Social Secretary must be found. The Society has 225 Members and all I am asking is for one of them to step forward and take over from Brian. To this end, a nomination form is enclosed with this Newsletter. Please try and fill it in!

For the Annual Dinner, Graham has asked that we change the venue from the Golf Club to the Palmerston Bowling Club, a venue he has successfully used in the past for Council Dinners. The Summer Social Event will again be held in the Alverstoke Parish Centre. Please book early for this event as space in the Parish Centre limits the numbers to about 80.

[Roger Mawby](#)

Hon. Treasurer

My first year of responsibility has passed very quickly, the accounts have given me plenty of work and I have enjoyed working with the committee and getting to know more members as the months have passed. The accounts have been prepared for the 2011/12 financial year and following the audit, the financial report will be presented to you at the forthcoming AGM.

As mentioned in the last newsletter the Society's Project Fund funded the cost of Restoration Award Plaques at the Railway Station and in Clarence Yard in 2011. A substantial fund remains, which will enable the Society to support further initiatives as we move on.

I urge you, as does my husband George, your Membership Secretary, to gift aid your 2012 subscriptions. Approximately 50% of members elected to Gift Aid in 2011, hopefully this number will increase in 2012. Providing you are a tax-payer, the only thing you have to do is complete a form, available at the Society's meetings, and return it to the Membership Secretary or to me. We do the rest and the Society benefits from an increased rebate from the Inland Revenue. The rebate received in 2011 was £366.

[*Susan Blower*](#)

Membership Secretary

Our membership currently stands at 225, subject to some outstanding subscription renewals. We have e-mail addresses for 80 members, and would ask those not listed to supply their details, as this is a quick, easy way to keep you up to date and save on postage costs. Please note that individual e-mail addresses are not shown on bulk e-mails.

Payment by standing order has increased, and we are grateful to those members using this method of payment, which saves us on banking costs. We have also seen an increase in members donating Gift Aid, which enables the Society to claim income tax relief on subscriptions, which is helping with funding.

[*George Blower*](#)

Social Secretary

As I said in the last newsletter, I will be resigning at the AGM 2012. I would like to thank all members who backed me up over the last 12 years by attending the Social Events, Coach visits and the trips to the Kings Theatre, not forgetting the Annual Dinners.

My last coach trip, to Bristol and the S.S. Great Britain, is on the 9th June. Looking at the list of members attending this visit, it is very near identical to the lists of most of the past events. I still have a few seats left on the coach.

I am most pleased that Mrs Juliette Hewitt has volunteered to produce the food for the next Social Event on the 7th July. Please note that the date has changed, **7th July and not 14th July** as shown on the Programme cards.

The main reason for resigning is due to, as I said at the time of the last newsletter, my bad health, which has got worse. I have been in Hospital twice this year. I remain a member of the Society and hope to be for many years.

[*Brian Pladdys*](#)

Planning Sub-Committee

The Planning Sub-Committee continues to monitor current applications for Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings, as well as the general weekly list of applications. Some important applications are outlined below:-

ROYAL CLARENCE YARD We received a new application for a seven-storey building at the North end of the site to provide 81 flats with undercroft parking. We objected to the proposed design, the increase in height and mass, and the damaging effect on the single-storey listed workshops in North Meadow. We also considered that 73 car spaces for 81 flats were insufficient. This application has now been withdrawn.

The replacement of four windows in the Eastern elevation of the Slaughter House, and some minor external and internal works completes the restoration of this Grade 2 Listed Building. The building is still being advertised as suitable for a restaurant.

DAEDALUS We received a revised application for the land at HMS Daedalus, which allayed our concerns set out in the previous newsletter concerning Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, and safeguarding established employment and leisure uses, in particular the Hovercraft Museum. We also received a Listed Building application for window repairs on the West elevation of Westcliffe House, an indication that the new owners, Homes and Communities Agency, are taking care of the Listed Buildings on this site.

ROWNER COTTAGES The previous application was granted permission at the November Regulatory Board, since then we have received a new application to turn the building into a single dwelling instead of retaining the two cottages. Our main objection concerned the proposal to demolish the front wall of no.178 Rowner Lane and build a new wall, in line with the wall of no.176. Rowner Lane. Moving the wall forward three feet would change the L shaped form of the cottages, which has been in place for about 150 years, and highlights the division between the cottages. We believe this proposal would cause substantial damage to the Listed Building and change its character and uniqueness.

LIAISON MEETINGS WITH OFFICERS FROM GOSPORT BOROUGH COUNCIL

We continue our quarterly meetings with Development Control and the Conservation Department, to our mutual benefit. A number of items are reported below:-

CONSERVATION AREAS We have been advised that the research and draft information has been compiled for Conservation Area Appraisals for Alverstoke, Anglesey, Stoke Lake and a proposed new Conservation Area for Stokes Bay, and will proceed when funds become available.

HASLAR HOSPITAL Gosport Borough Council has recently received a pre-application outline proposal from the owners, 'Our Enterprise', for this site. Before the final application is registered and open for public consultation, it will be carefully assessed by Gosport Borough Council, Development Control, Conservation Department, and National Organisations such as English Heritage and English Nature. We will keep our members informed about this important application. Sixteen residences at Haslar are up for sale. Details at www.eckersleywhite.co.uk

SHORE LEAVE HASLAR This is a group of volunteers based in Haslar Hospital Cemetery (Memorial Garden) who are preparing the gardens to offer gardening therapy to tri-service veterans. Details at www.shoreleavehaslar.org

PUBLIC HOUSES:

- THE ROYAL ARMS Work is almost completed on this building. Part of the glass panel to the canopy has been removed and stored to enable structural works to take place. Once this has been completed it will be restored to its original position, and all the broken glass in the canopy repaired. The Conservation Department is keeping a close watch on this important listed building.

- THE RAILWAY INN External works appear to have been completed and after some time of little activity, work to the interior of the building is about to start soon.

- THE WHITE SWAN and THE WHEATSHEAF After some inactivity work has now started on both the above sites

GILKICKER

Removal of vegetation has recently taken place around the perimeter of the Fort – main works are to start in later in 2012. Marketing of the site is progressing well.

BROWN DOWN CAMP The only news we have is that the site has been sold, but we are assured by Development Control that the established use is for leisure, not residential. Watch this space!

ARCHAEOLOGY OF GOSPORT TOWN CENTRE AREA With the help of a local historian, the Conservation Officer, Rob Harper, has been looking at the archaeological potential of the town centre, especially prior to the late 17th century. They have been able to positively identify the sites of a number of early 17th century and medieval buildings. A couple of key sites appear to be the sites of substantial buildings of c.1600, which suggests significant investment in the town at that date. The Conservation Dept. will be working with the County Archaeologist to add these to a map illustrating sites of archaeological sensitivity.

FORTON PRISON Since Gosport Society had a talk from Abigail Coppins the Conservation Dept. has met with her to share knowledge and begin to build up a clearer picture of the importance of Forton in the wider context of Prisoner of War Depots, showing further evidence of Gosport's central role in military history. They are expecting new information to come forward and any possibility of supporting a publication of her work would be worth considering. [May Bumford](#)

Gosport Society Archive

I am worried that as we get older and eventually fall off our perches, our collection of local historical records may not be preserved. In particular, unique pictures of the Borough, which can never be replaced, could be lost. It is vital that we secure these historic images of the past before it is too late.

To this end I have proposed that the Society should set up its own archive to keep safe these records, both written and pictorial. It has been agreed that we may store them, together with our existing stock of publications, in their present storeroom at Explosion museum. We therefore need an archivist to organise and manage this. I will do this in the short term but someone much younger than me is required. Please consider volunteering to undertake this interesting task, or think about proposing a suitable candidate.

Now that members can feel confident that any material they donate will be looked after properly, I appeal for contributions to be sent to me for checking, cataloguing & storing. Space is limited so our requirements are principally for original Society publications that we are missing (listed below), rare documents, and especially photographs. The latter may be prints, slides or digitised images. If you don't wish to part with original photos they can be digitised and returned to you. It is intended that all material will be catalogued and will eventually be available for viewing by members for interest or research.

A major task ahead is to present our vast collection of images on the website in a form that is easily accessible, by being divided into categories or topics. Help is needed to do this. Contemporary photographs are also important to record for the future how things look now. We can all think of examples of pictures that we wish we could find. Mine would be of the massed invasion fleet in the Solent in 1944!

Papers are a particular problem because they are bulky to store and it is difficult to decide what merits saving. One person's treasure is another's junk! Also, there is little point in duplicating that which is already available elsewhere in libraries etc.

Rarity must be our criterion for what goes into our archive. Your thoughts on this dilemma would be very welcome.

Finally, the message is that we can deliberate about what is worth keeping but let's not risk losing some valuable records by not safeguarding their future.

[Howard Bennett](#)

Gosport Society publications required for the archive:

Gosport Records 1-17
Gosport Records 1994
Gosport Goes to War
Gosport 1922
Attentive to Our Duty
The Face of Gosport
Gosport People & Places
Gosport Grammar School
21st Anniversary