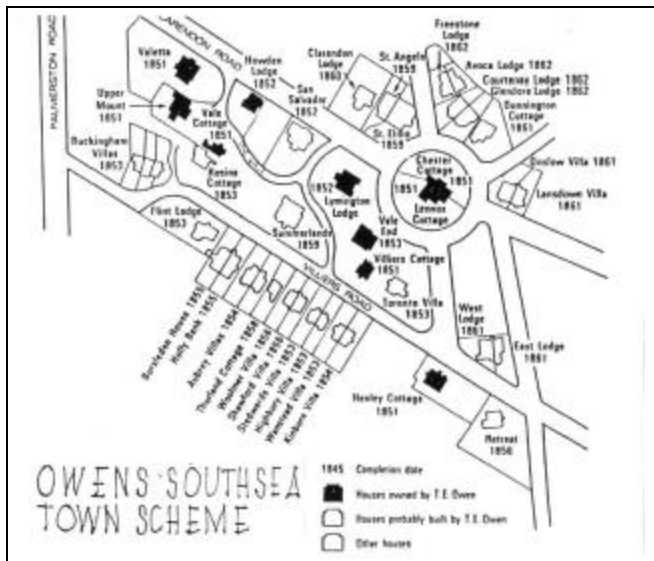


The Portsmouth Society Newsletter



Spring 1994

PROGRAMME

Meetings are held in Room F on the 3rd Floor of the Portsmouth Central Library, Guildhall Square starting at 7.30 p.m. unless otherwise stated.

We dnesday 2 February

The 1993 Design Competition

Review of the 1993 Design Awards and Member's Questions. Also showing a video of the work of Santiago Calatrava.

Tuesday 8 February,

Victorian Values: Portsea Island Workhouse / St Mary's House,
7.00pm, Frewen Library Room 1.

Speaker Celia Clark, Portsmouth Society. Details from Mrs Susan Healey, Academic Development Centre, University House, Winston Churchill Avenue, Portsmouth, PO1 2UP.

21 February to 5 March

Deserted Bastions Exhibition

Photographs from SAVE Britain's Heritage - military & naval buildings demolished, under threat or saved. Central Library Ground Floor, 10-7 (10-4 Sats).

Tuesday 22 February

Formal Opening of Deserted Bastions Exhibition at 3.00pm in the Central Library by Jonathon Coad, English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments.

Tuesday 22 February

The Royal Dockyards

Speaker: Jonathon Coad, English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments & authority on military buildings.

We dnesday 2 March

Gosport and D-Day

Speaker: Lesley Burton, Chairman of the Gosport Society.

We dnesday 13 April

AGM and talk - The Origin of Portsmouth by: Sarah Quail, City Records Officer.

We dnesday 4 May

Pictures of Portsmouth

David Lloyd, Architectural Historian and Author, will be showing a selection of his many slides taken throughout the City.

Saturday 28 May

Seminar on Owen's Southsea

An all day event combining the celebration of Environment Week and Portsmouth's 800th Anniversary. Time and place to be announced.

We dnesday 1 June

Waste Disposal in Hampshire

Roger James will talk on this topical subject.

UNIVERSITY SEMINAR

The Society propose to hold a seminar about the University's estate and its relationship to the City as a whole. The seminar will explore benefits that accrue and the problems that arise from the presence and expansion of the university in the City. It will be held probably on a Saturday in March or April, on the lines of the one we held on the Dockyard in the then Polytechnic Geography Department three years ago. We have the Vice Chancellor's approval in principle and we have received a grant from the County Council towards the expenses. We are at present discussing the details with the University authorities. We promise to invite outside expert environmental speakers as well as local ones.

We have asked Lord Palumbo, Chancellor of the University, to chair the meeting and our sketch of the subjects covered is at present this:

- A history of the university's estate;
- an architectural appreciation of the buildings and townscape;
- an examination of the university Master Plan;
- plans for safe movement for pedestrians and cyclists within the university;
- an exploration of the University's links with the local community;
- a discussion of the environmental problems that have arisen between the University, the City planners, the local residents and the traffic authorities, and to make recommendations.

Participants would be: local residents, City and County Councillors (especially in Milton, Highland, St Thomas and Charles Dickens wards), students, contractors and professional practices, members and officers of the City and County Planning and Transportation committees, University staff Association and the Students' Union.

ST JUDE'S CHURCH, SOUTHSEA

We have now heard that a decision has been taken to retain the church for worship though possibly not for its pastoral functions. The vicar has asked the County Council for their promised grant. This of course cannot be given until the church formally embark on a programme of restorative and repair works. The Save St Jude's Society have expressed their willingness to help in fund raising but this cannot be started until the church have publicly announced the decision not to demolish and have themselves launched an appeal.

A meeting is to be convened by Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust with the Vicar, the Archdeacon and the City Planning Officer; and, we hope, a representative of the Portsmouth Society.

"DESERTED BASTIONS" EXHIBITION

This exhibition by SAVE Britain's Heritage has been shown in London, Plymouth and Greenwich. It consists of photographs of many splendid military and naval buildings throughout the country in three categories: demolished, under threat and saved. We shall be showing a selection from the whole, concentrating on Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, in the Central Library from 21 February to 5 March. The formal opening will be at 3 pm on February 22 by Jonathon Coad, Inspector of Ancient Monuments for English Heritage and a great authority on military buildings. The same evening at 7.30 pm Mr Coad will give a lecture on 'Royal Dockyards'. Please come to both events if you can.

SEMINAR ON OWEN'S SOUTHSEA

As our celebration of Environment Week (20-30 May) and of Portsmouth's 800th Anniversary we plan to hold a seminar in celebration of Owen's Southsea on Saturday 28 May.

The suggested title is: "Owen's Southsea: History and Conservation - A celebration of an early Victorian garden suburb, and of the work of preserving it for future generations to enjoy".

Speakers will include local historians (including if possible Dr Ray Riley, author of the two Portsmouth Papers on Owen's Southsea) and conservationists; Celia Clark, author of Thomas Owen's Southsea: Four Guided Walks; and, if possible, Priddy and Stewart, the two students at Portsmouth School of Architecture who rediscovered Owen in the 1960s.

It is intended to hold the seminar in Owen's Southsea so that walks and visits can be arranged. The date will be just a week before D-Day and a month before Le Tour de France visits Portsmouth. If we cycle to the seminar we can celebrate that too! Full details will be announced later.

THE GOVERNMENT'S TRANSPORT POLICY

Portsmouth Friends of the Earth held a meeting in December for questions to David Martin MP about the Government's policy. Several members of the Society attended. Roger James asked the following question whose substance he had extracted from *Transport Retort*, the journal of the pro-public transport group Transport 2000. It was this:

Would it not be in the public interest and to the benefit and health of the economy and the environment to scrap the multi-billion pound road building programme? The money saved would be enough to:

- Give BR and London Transport the money they need to carry out their published 10-year investment plans.
- Traffic calm 80% of residential streets (encouraging cycling and walking as well as cutting casualties).

- Encourage a tenfold increase in cycling trips (with more facilities and promotion).
- Transform local public transport systems to encourage a switch of freight from road to rail and water.
- Maintain or even increase the present expenditure on maintenance of existing roads.

If this were done there would still be £1 billion to spend on really necessary new roads.

Not surprisingly there was no very satisfactory answer. RJ subsequently put this question in writing to Mr Martin who has replied, saying he will put it to the ministers concerned.

TRANSPORT POLICY - LETTER TO 'THE NEWS'

The Society has tried to keep up pressure in favour of a rational transport policy. Only the beginning of a recent letter to The News was published:

The news that Eastern Road is not after all to be widened in the near future is not the disaster you make it out to be. It is good news. To spend £6 million on a scheme to bring still more traffic into the City would have been directly opposed to the policies announced by both City and County Councils - that they would in future devote resources as far as possible to public transport, to helping cyclists and pedestrians, and to discouraging reliance on the private car.

The unpublished part of the letter went on:

This £6 million widening was far and away the most expensive project for the Portsmouth area, and should be compared with an allocation of £100,000 for cycleways for the whole of Hampshire.

The postponement will give the authorities time to work out a scheme that will enable them to carry out their own declared intentions.

Monday's BBC Panorama programme (broadcast 25 January) made it abundantly clear that it is pointless to go on widening existing roads and building new ones. We could take a lesson from Oxford where park-and-ride operates from four out-of-City sites, where City centre traffic has not increased in twenty years and where they are now embarking on a scheme to reduce it, or from Southampton which is claiming that it will have the most progressive transport policy in the country.

BENEFICIAL SCHOOL, PORTSEA

The old 'Benny', a grade II* listed building situated in Kent Street Portsea, is in a sad state. It belongs to the City Council which runs a training workshop in it, but it's a very bad advert for the way the City looks after its historic buildings.

Three windows were broken in the Kent Street elevation, exposing the lath and plaster by the staircase which is cracked and showing signs of dampness. Inside the splendid assembly room upstairs, where Charles Dickens' mother was at a social function the night before he was born, crude partitions now subdivide the space. The Conservation Section of the Planning Department were consulted. They told the Beneficial Workshop that the work must not impinge on the structure, but in fact the bracing has caused some damage. We really think those responsible for the City's building stock should ask for more advice before such a bodge is carried out.

We're writing to the City to ask for the Beneficial - one of the oldest charity schools in the country dating since 1785 - to be better looked after. Brother Laurence Gatt wrote a

fascinating account of the Beneficial Society and school in his Portsmouth Paper.

COTTAGE GROVE SCHOOL, SOUTHSEA

We have been worried for some time about the derelict state of the eastern wings of Cottage Grove School, the first state school to be built in Hampshire. The other wing has been excellently restored and converted for the Sarah Duffen Centre, but the east wing is empty and decaying. The County Architects would like to find a new use for it - or it will be pulled down and the site offered to Cottage Grove First School next door as a playground. We wonder whether it might be a more community based venue for the Rendezvous Cinema - at present in a University building in Lion Terrace.

Do members have any other proposals? If so, please let Celia Clark know. She is writing a national report on school buildings for SAVE Britain's Heritage on demolished, future uncertain and converted for educational and other uses. If you have any other favourite school buildings which look unloved, please let Celia know.

NO. 4 BOATHOUSE, PORTSMOUTH NAVAL BASE

The Executive Committee have decided to ask the Department of National Heritage to spot-list No. 4 Boathouse in the naval base; and so have the County Council. This is the large building with the blank greeny-grey corrugated iron end which faces you on your left as you enter the dockyard. It was finished off hurriedly only half built when the war started in 1939 - it was planned to be at least twice as big and extend to the site occupied by the Cell Block just inside the gate. A good impression of what the south wall would have looked like is obtained by looking at the comparatively handsome northern end with its bands of horizontal windows which faces you as you return from HMS Victory.

At present repair work to the Victory is carried on there and also work on admirals' barges. This is to be transferred to Boathouse 7 early this year. The MoD will then have no further use for it and the building will be handed over to the Property Trust who want to demolish it. They have no immediate plans for the site. Under the Sea Containers' scheme for the Heritage Area it was to be replaced by a new three storey building designed by John Winter, containing restaurants and 39 shops. This is now abandoned, and the RN Museum are planning a restaurant with harbour-wide views in their northernmost building opposite Victory.

There is no shortage of work that could be done in Boathouse 4 for which it would be most suitable. It has a huge internal space encumbered only by massive steel pillars which support the travelling cranes and the structure, and it has an 80 feet long dock connecting with the harbour by which boats needing repair or fitting out can be floated in, and if necessary lifted out.

Boathouse 4 was very fully used at the time of D-Day both for building and repairing landing craft - half wrecked craft were brought back in large numbers from the landing beaches.

The main argument for conservation is that BH 4 is the last in a long line of storehouses and boathouses, undervalued simply because it is not Georgian. It has an ugly and partly rusty corrugated iron southern face (but a much more handsome northern face) because it was left unfinished when war started in 1939.

INSPECTOR'S REPORT OF CITY LOCAL PLAN

This has now been received. The inspector has not upheld any of our objections, although a number of points were modified before the inquiry in the direction we had asked

for. Typical was his comment on our objections to policy T.30, the proposal for six new multi-storey car parks. We opposed this as being in conflict with policy T8 which seeks to promote public transport. We were accused of misunderstanding that the policy related to commuting rather than shopping. A multi-storey car park is a very expensive fact and once built has to justify its cost by being filled. That means traffic - whether commuting or off-peak shopping. We want a policy to cut down traffic and this gets confused with attacks on 'the vitality of the City centre'.

We presented (from a CPRE report) evidence from studies of 38 German cities which showed that retail trade in central areas grows fastest where there are policies to restrain car use. "I do not think it would be to Portsmouth's overall advantage to put at risk the vitality of the City centre" - (by not building new multi-storey parks) said the inspector, thereby ignoring the point of the German evidence.

Similarly in respect of our objections relating to the lack of pro-pedestrian proposals. We said we had no objection to the one specific proposal in the plan as such - to widen the footway on the east side of The Hard, but that there were many places where help for pedestrians was more urgently needed, for example: St Michael's Road, King Richard I Street, Isambard Brunel Road near the station and the Eastney Road - Devonshire Avenue junction. The inspector said he had seen no evidence to support our contention that other places were more urgent, although we actually showed photographs of these sites and the west side of Anglesea Road which has no footpath. The evidence he wanted, no doubt, was figures - and accidents; but figures show only those who cross despite the danger. The don't show those who are deterred from crossing.

However the inspector did "fully support the aims of the Portsmouth Society's proposed amendment" to the plan

policy that "children of different ages, including teenagers, have appropriate facilities for play", but he was satisfied with the Council's proposed changes to the wording which did not in fact fully meet our suggestions.

EDINBURGH ROAD PUBLIC INQUIRY

The Inspector's report on the public inquiry has been received. His recommendations, which have now been accepted by the County Council, were that Edinburgh Road between Anglesea Road and Unicorn Road should be closed to motor traffic except buses (it will also be open to cycles), and that the junction with Anglesea Road should be controlled by traffic lights activated by buses approaching from Queen Street. This is in line with the position we took, along with the City Council, at the Inquiry.

PITT STREET BATHS

Work has been going on for some weeks now on the conversion of the Baths to a regional gymnastics centre. We are assured that, although the start was delayed, the work will be completed in good time for the intended opening in August.

TRAFFIC CALMING LEAFLET

The Department of Transport has recently issued a new free leaflet on traffic calming regulations (Traffic Advisory Leaflet 7/93). It covers all legislation on the subject, including the provision of the 1992 Traffic Calming Act and will be of interest to all groups involved in promoting traffic calming. The leaflet is available from: Traffic Policy Division, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 3EB.

Published by The Portsmouth Society.

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The PORTSMOUTH SOCIETY

Membership Application & Renewal Form

To join the Society or renew your membership for **1994-95** please complete this form and send it with your remittance to:

Mrs J Thompson, Honorary Treasurer, The Portsmouth Society, 4 Malvern Road, Southsea, Hampshire, PO5 2NA.

The membership year runs from April to March.

Name

Address

.....

..... Post Code

Telephone No. Amount Enclosed

Please make cheques & postal orders payable to The Portsmouth Society. Membership rates are : Full £4, Joint £6, Senior Citizen / Student / Junior £3, Voluntary Associations £6, Corporate Bodies £25