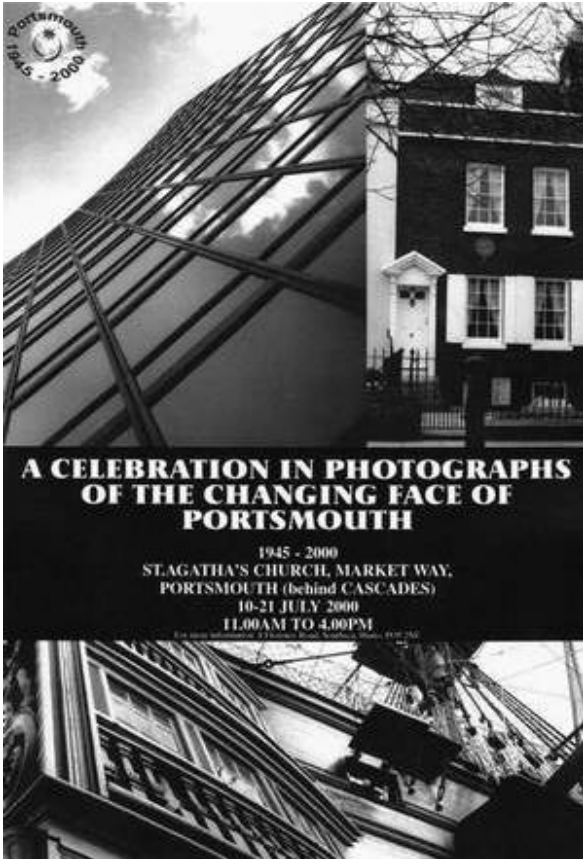


Portsmouth Society News

The Newsletter of the Portsmouth Society - July 2000

EXHIBITION 2000 A Celebration in Photographs of the Changing Face of Portsmouth since 1945



THE Portsmouth 1945-2000 Group invite you to come and enjoy a Celebration of Portsmouth's townscape, past and present - in photographs, models and sound - in St. Agatha's Church, once a naval store, but now a splendidly restored church.

The exhibition takes place on 10-21 July 2000 from 11am-4pm and St. Agatha's Church is on Market Way, Portsmouth (behind Cascades).

The city fabric has undergone many changes between the end of the Second World War and the Millennium. Local people have responded and commented on development and redevelopment. The exhibition has been put together by an informal group with an active interest in the City, who

have watched and documented these changes. They include members of the Portsmouth Society, several departments of the University, and City Council Museums and Planning Departments.

The themes of the displays are:

- War damage & opportunities presented.
- Clearance of buildings and their replacement, including comprehensive redevelopment.
- The change from demolition to conservation: Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings.
- New housing, shops, offices, factories, education buildings.

- Transport change: roads, ferries, public transport, the short-lived airport.
- Employment change and dockyard contraction.
- Development of the heritage industry.
- Entertainment : theatres, cinema; Leisure and pleasure: Southsea beach, Hilsea Lido.

A specially commissioned soundtrack explores how the city sounds and people talking about its past and present.

We will be there to hear what you have to say - about the exhibition - and about what has happened to Portsmouth. The exhibition is funded

by the Millennium Festival Awards for All.
Celia Clark

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Future Programme

Meetings are on the 1st Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm, Norrish Central Library, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth. Admission free - all are welcome.

Wednesday 10th - 21st July
St Agatha's Church, Market Way.

Portsmouth 2000 Exhibition
(behind Cascades)

Tuesday 25th July, 3.15pm
Peaceable demonstration against the closure of Cumberland House
Guildhall Square

Wednesday 26th July, 6pm
Evening walk in Newport IOW led by David Lloyd

Meet at Newport bus station.
See article for travel details.

Wednesday 4th October
Claire Taylor, Urban Wildlife Officer,
Hampshire Gardens Trust
Gardens for Wildlife

Wednesday 1st November
Buildings of the Isle of Wight
David Lloyd

Wednesday 6th December
David Levitt of architects Levitt Bernstein

Discovery of the Mill Redoubt, Gunwharf

THE Society and Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust and local people have had a long standing concern that despite it being a conservation area, so many standing buildings and so much archaeology are disappearing on Gunwharf, apart from the Vulcan, Infirmary, Gunwharf Gate, Vernon building, one shell store and a lock keeper's cottage, which are preserved because they are listed or scheduled.

We heard that the Mill Redoubt, part of Sir Bernard de Gomme's defenses round Portsmouth had been uncovered. It was under what had been the Wardroom garden, a triangular wall about three metres high in finely cut ashlar stone, with evidence of a round structure which may have been a kitchen on one side. Concerned that it might be demolished as part of Beeston's Bastion was, before the public got to see it or hear about it, we wrote to and telephoned Michael Thomas, Berkeley's manager on the site asking that the find should be made public before its future was determined, and whether it might be incorporated into the amphitheatre near the head of the new creek.

Sarah Quail, Director of the City Museums and Art Gallery told me that she took the view that as there are extensive stretches of De Gomme's fortifications still standing from the seaward defences of Portsmouth, the Mill Redoubt, which had already been "cut off at the knees" during the construction of Gunwharf, should be recorded and if required reduced in height from three metres to one.

Our letter to Richard Thomas has not been answered, and neither the News article or the BBC South piece give us the information we asked for - that the public should be allowed to see not only the Mill Redoubt and the remains of the King's Mill, but also

to take part in determining their future in the context of the planned amphitheatre, which might mean their destruction. The City Museum archaeologist, Giffords archaeological consultants and English Heritage have recorded the remains over six weeks, but they have not made public their records or photographs, and are apparently unlikely to do so for three months, by which time, they may be partly destroyed.

Jonathan Coad and others at English Heritage have several times expressed their concern to me about the loss of archaeology on Gunwharf. There appears to be a grey area in conservation law which does not protect archaeology which is not scheduled to the same extent as standing buildings, whose demolition as you know is subject to Conservation Area consent. After the South Today report, I was contacted by a resident in Christchurch, where again archaeology is unprotected and at risk from development. Our concern is that important decisions about the site are being taken without public discussion. John Pike in the Planning Department subsequently confirmed that the Mill Redoubt is likely to be reduced considerably in height by foundations for a car park where Ariadne

was and for underground changing rooms for the amphitheatre. [RJ has a copy of John Pike's plan, but perhaps you should ask him if you want to publish it]. The Planning Committee gave permission for the demolition of Ariadne, and for the amphitheatre, subject to conditions that the effect on archaeology must be the subject of negotiations, but decisions do not have to be taken in public.

We and other people in Portsmouth are very sad to see the destruction of Ariadne and the lack of discussion about whether the plans might be amended to show people the Mill Redoubt. We do not know whether the fine Queen Ann style staircase in

Ariadne was saved, though residents living in Millgate House report that columns and globe shaped structures were carefully taken down and stacked on the site. Even the last vice-chairman of the Planning Committee, former councillor Phyllis Rapson did not seem to understand the consequences of the committee's consents for demolition. On June 3 she said to me "It's sad that Gunwharf has lost its character".

Celia Clark

Millennium Scheme in Jeopardy - The Portsmouth Tower

JUST prior to the recent parliamentary review of the failing Millennium schemes, we submitted the following letter to Gerald Kaufman MP Chairman of the Culture, Media and Sport Committee.

Dear Mr Kaufman,

Portsmouth Millennium Tower

We are the local amenity society for the city of Portsmouth, affiliated to the Civic Trust. We have read in the local paper that your committee are investigating the delays and tribulations concerning the building of the Millennium Tower here. There are various important aspects of this case which you may not be told about from other sources.

The fundamental trouble has been the failure to decide clearly what the tower is for. It has not been appreciated that the tower's design should be looked at from two points of view - from outside and inside. From outside it would be a landmark, symbol of what? From inside it would be a viewing point; but to enable people to view what in particular?

At a very early stage - in late 1995 - Virginia Bottomley, the responsible minister at the time, came to Portsmouth and said that we must have a design competition. We were very pleased. It was what we had been asking for; but nothing came of it.

Various spurious reasons were given - it would take too long, a laughable reason seeing that that was at the end of 1995.

Design - Not just Aesthetic

In 1996 three of us were invited to the offices of Sir Norman Foster to see what their ideas were. To our surprise they had done a lot of work on the design - to the extent that they knew how deep the piles would have to be. Their design symbolised a dockyard crane with a viewing platform at the top, at the required 150 metres accessed by lift, but, crucially, it had a several layered viewing complex as it were in the crane driver's cabin at a much lower level at 40 or 50 feet accessed by escalator. They had grasped the essential point - which nobody else has - that what is unique and really exciting here is the sheer volume and variety of boat and ship movements on the harbour, not really appreciated from a great height - they'd just be insects on a pond. There is incomparably more going on on the water here than say the London river, Liverpool or Plymouth. At present there is nowhere where the public can see it from, certainly nowhere where they can have a drink or a meal and watch it.

Fosters had realised that the public might like to go to the top viewing platform and enjoy the distant views - once; but probably never again. You'll be able to see Bognor Regis on a clear day; but who will want to see it again? But the lower level complex with bar and restaurant taking in the panorama of the harbour's activities would be a place people might well want to go to once a week.

The reason why various potential operators have walked away is because the design is wrong, not just aesthetically, but functionally in terms of a place where you can 'pack them in'.

Fosters had also realised that the dockyard itself was the reason for Portsmouth being here and the crane was the best symbol of the yard. The current design - the

spinnaker, the image of a sailing yacht, is not as typical of Portsmouth as of many neighbouring harbours. Portsmouth is only secondarily a yachting place. It is above all a working harbour and that's its fascination.

Transport and Works Act

Then there is the business of the Transport & Works Act under which permission has to be obtained to build in the water. If the plan had been to site the tower on land - which it could easily have been (its proposed site is only a few feet offshore), all this would have been unnecessary. Furthermore Portsmouth have chosen, for some unknown reason, Berkeley Festival Waterfront Company, the developers of the adjoining Gunwharf site, as their agents in the negotiations with the DETR about the T&W Act. And Berkeleys deal via their solicitors Cameron McKenna. So discussions go from Portsmouth via Berkeleys to Cameron McKenna to the DETR instead of direct. Not surprisingly it is taking a long time. And although Berkeley's are contributing £3m to the cost. The building of the tower is not really in their interest. It will spoil the view from their buildings.

It remains a mystery why the Fosters design was never seriously taken up, and even who commissioned it. In our view simply to have had Fosters on board would have been a big boost to the city, quite regardless of the superiority and ingenuity of their design.

You will be told by others of the spurious choice given to the public. It started off as choice of designs from the German firm LAP "who have designed more towers around the world than anybody else". It turned out that they were simply the structural engineers. The choice was between three designs all from the local firm of HGP who have never designed a tower anywhere!

Roger James

Membership Renewals

THE recent membership reminder letter resulted in an excellent response and we'd like to thank everyone who has paid their subscriptions for the 2000-2001 membership year so promptly. If you've not managed to renew then membership secretary, Jean Thompson, will be pleased to hear from you!

The Local Transport Plan

THE society has recently submitted its comments on the Portsmouth Local Transport Plan. The plan will run for a five-year period. The aim is to reduce pollution by reducing the number of car journeys and increasing the number of journeys made using public transport. The major suggestions put forward by the society are below.

Rail

- Re-instate the full five platforms at Portsmouth Harbour station.
- New stations at Farlington, Paulsgrove and Copnor.
- New trains to improve accessibility both for disabled passengers and those with pushchairs / prams.
- Improved reliability of departure and information screens / announcements.
- More trains to terminate at Portsmouth Harbour instead of Portsmouth and Southsea – especially Virgin Inter City trains.

Bus

- Real-time bus departure indicators.
- Improved markings for bus stops to discourage obstruction from parked vehicles.
- Increase in the number of bus shelters – ideally there should be a shelter at every bus stop.
- Improved communication between the city council and the bus operating companies.
- Increase in the number of bus lanes and removal of on street car parking in London Road, North

End and Portland Road, Southsea to speed bus travel.

- Allow taxis to use bus lanes as in Brighton, the taxis must be clearly marked and mini-cabs to remain forbidden from travelling in bus-lanes.
- Improved road surfaces at bus lanes to increase passenger comfort.
- Install traffic lights that are activated by buses.

Cycles

- Sensible placement of signs / lampposts to avoid obstruction of cycle-ways.
- Improved surfaces of cycle-ways – especially Eastern Road.
- Discourage combined footpath / cycle-way.
- Improve crossing facilities at junction of Eastern Road / A27.
- Encourage a greater proportion of school children to cycle / walk to school as at Admiral Lord Nelson School.
- Provision of secure cycle parking facilities throughout the city
- Indoor cycle parking at Pitt Street.
- Lockers at interchanges to enable cycle hats etc. to be left.

Pedestrians

- Encourage growth in pedestrian traffic.
- Investigate establishing a pedestrian forum.
- Removal / perforation of 'toblerone' structure to allow safe crossing of Winston Churchill Avenue.
- Adapt street lighting to light primarily pavement rather than road.
- Provisions needed for other pavement users - ? a separate lane in busy areas? E.g, Skateboarders, Roller-skaters, Roller-bladers, Electrically propelled vehicles.

Road Users

- Encourage a greater understanding of the consequences of transport choice.

- 'Urban Motorway' status for M275.
- 60 mph maximum speed limit on M275.
- Lights above carriageway on M275 to control traffic speed and to enable temporary bus lane.
- 20mph maximum speed limit in residential areas without speed bumps / humps.
- Encourage residents parking schemes.
- Encourage park and ride and 'kiss and ride' schemes.
- Make car free day's regular events within the city.
- Encourage vehicle (car and van) sharing.

General

- Development of 'through-ticketing' to be used on buses, trains and Gosport ferry.
- Investigate water-based transport.
- Erect signs to identify different areas within the city.

The society has yet to reach a consensus on the monorail currently being proposed by Carr-West, as details of the scheme remain unknown at present. Comments from members are welcome.

Stephen Cookson

Data Protection Act

UNDER the terms of the new Data Protection Act, the Portsmouth Society is classified as an 'unincorporated members club' whose members usually contribute by way of entrance fees and subscriptions to the clubs funds. As such we are exempt from registration, however we are obliged to ask members whether they have any objection to their personal data (we hold only names, addresses, and telephone numbers) being held by the club for the purposes of administration.

If any member does object, then we are obliged to delete that information. We would also like to assure members that any data we do hold will not be passed to any

third party without the owner's prior written consent.

Gunwharf Restoration The Grand Storehouse

PORTSMOUTH'S gun wharf was established by the Board of Ordnance in 1662 between the fortified towns of Portsea and Portsmouth to serve not only the navy but also the land defences. The Board of Ordnance, distinct from the Navy Board, had its own yards and powder magazines from which it supplied warships with everything from heavy guns and their equipment to cutlasses and boarding pikes. Portsmouth Gunwharf was enlarged and improved in 1797.

To lessen the crowding at Gun Wharf during the Napoleonic wars, more land fronting the harbour was acquired on the south side of the channel leading from the mill pond. This, known as the New Gun Wharf, effectively doubled the size of the Ordnance Yard. Its most imposing building was 'The Grand Storehouse'(1811-14), now known as the Vulcan building. It used to be said that it lost its north wing in the Second World War. In fact the Navy demolished the wing after the war and replaced it with the Creasy office block. Vulcan itself lay empty and unused for some twenty years.

However major restoration works are now under way and on 13 June Celia and I joined an Architecture Week public visit to the Vulcan, conducted by Michael Underwood who on behalf of the architectural firm HGP is organising the restoration work. We were both most impressed with the scale and quality of the work. The Berkeley Festival Waterfront Company, the owners of the site, are spending £1.5 million on Vulcan. The 3 - 4 foot thick brick walls are basically sound but a lot of the roof trusses and huge horizontal structural timbers which are about a foot square in section have rotted at their insertions into the brickwork.

New pieces of timber are being spliced into them and reinforced with steel.

About two years ago, with the help of a friendly security guard who turned a blind eye and lent us a torch Celia and I explored it and were impressed with its magnificence even in the dark. All the windows were boarded over. We must indeed have been among the first people to see inside the building in recent years; for it was not only blacked out but said to be dangerous. Now, last month, we were able to see the inside in daylight. After our first gloomy sight of it we had taken in the city's Chief Arts Officer who at once exclaimed "This is my art space!" But it was not to be.

The initial plans for Vulcan, made, incredibly, by people who had never seen inside it, were for residential conversion. Now seeing the magnificence of the spaces one must feel that anything other than public use - art gallery, museum etc. should be out of the question. Mike Underwood himself said "What about a Tate of the South? or a Museum of the Sea?". We have decided to take this up by arranging for three VIPs of the architectural world to see it for themselves and explore the idea.

Berkeleys are to spend a further £2 million on reinstating the cupola in the middle of the central block which did perish in an air raid. It's a marvellous building which really can be a great asset to the city. Berkeleys' work is impressive and praiseworthy.

Roger James

Civic Trust Millennium Award Civic Champion Project

THE Civic Champions Course has been a wonderful opportunity to train in current project management techniques.

The undoubted success of the scheme was in providing delegates the chance to get away from the day to day routine of life

to find the time and space to share enthusiasm with others struggling to develop dreams into real and viable community enhancing projects.

Sharing learning and experiences with the thirty five other Champions a few days at a time over several months built my confidence to encourage the Portsmouth Society, who supported my application, to restate our message to widen the audience, listen to the responses and to be prepared to fine tune the project to maximise the community stakeholding without compromising the prime objectives.

Every delegate had a mentor to take an individual local interest in project development between course modules. Mentoring was a new experience for me which I found helpful in keeping me focused on delivering the project, identifying areas that would need careful later consideration but not getting bogged down in the detail.

For example when my mentor asked just how many people supported the scheme I had difficulty in providing the evidence. So I arranged for a survey to be completed at the next Neighbourhood Forum Meeting. The huge support encouraged a prospective councilor attending the meeting to take the issue on board as part of his campaign for the May elections.

My project for the Champions course was (and continues) to encourage the Portsmouth City Engineer to make provision in the Local Transport Plan (LTP) for the densely populated Victorian terraces to have advisory 20mph or lower speed limit starting with the 4800 households in 18 Central Southsea streets.

The aim is to encourage vehicle drivers to be considerate to other users of the streets rather than criminalise them for driving too fast. Skeptics are reminded that health issues have caused a sea change in attitudes to smoking in public places, and that advertising the dangers of speed will bring about a similar change in

appreciating the use of street space.

The proposal has been evolving for some time. Towards the end of the last government we were given specific permission for a sign-only scheme without all the humps, lumps and expensive space consuming engineering features that, at that time, had to accompany any scheme to set a speed limit below the 30mph National Speed Limit that was introduced in the 1930s.

The Department of Transport (DTp) approval coincided with the responsibility for our roads passing from Hampshire County, who were supportive of the proposal, to the City when it became a Unitary Authority lacking the courage to run a pioneer scheme.

Amazingly the new government withdrew permission for the experiment whilst the DTp and Department of the Environment were merged into a regional structure and beavered towards producing the first transport white Paper for 20 years.

On the national stage The Streets for People campaign led by the Childrens' Play Council out of a coalition of transport conscious bodies have fostered the recognition that a small decrease in vehicle speed can turn a potential fatality into a minor incident. Following a demonstration where a couple of hundred of us lay down in Whitehall the latest supplement (daughter) to the Transport White Paper launched by the Prime Minister in February gives local authorities some leeway to reduce speed in residential areas.

With the relaxation in national rules the Portsmouth campaign returns to the Portsmouth streets. All the local political parties and the MP acknowledge the need for speed reduction and the City Engineer has advised that he is prepared to consider erecting signs asking people to drive carefully which indicates some movement in his professional stance. We are not there yet but I hope that our community group,

with the help of skills learnt with and from other Champions, will encourage Portsmouth transport planners to try a range of speed limits for different roads including low speeds advised for the densely populated residential areas.

C. M. Burns.

The Incinerator

THE Portsmouth Society's statement of reasons for its objection to the Quartremaine Road Incinerator Proposal - July 2000. The public inquiry begins on 12th September in the Guildhall.

The Society objects for the following reasons:

1. It poses a potential threat to health
2. It is wrong to make a 20-25 year commitment now, when better alternatives may well emerge
3. It will work against the goal of recycling and reduction of waste
4. There is a lack of any need for it at present
5. It will militate against the search for safer alternative methods of disposal especially recycling and composting
6. It will cause traffic dangers especially to children.

1. HEALTH

The Society objects mainly on account of the uncertain threat to health that the incinerator poses. Though the risk may in fact be very small we cannot be sure; and whatever it is we shall be committed to it for at least twenty years. Hampshire Waste Services have said that the new plant will be modelled on SELCHP at Deptford, with some improvements; but we know from the

Environment Agency itself that the safety precautions at SELCHP have broken down many times.

We need to make the point that it is impossible to control the emissions of a plant burning mixed municipal waste because of its variable and entirely unpredictable composition. There

is no kind of control over what anybody puts in his dustbin. The best that can be done is to monitor the flue gases; action can be only after the event.

Though cancer is a risk, we are principally concerned about asthma. It is not entirely clear why there is such a high incidence in this city so open to the south-westerly winds; but it seems possible that it is connected with the layout of the city with Portsdown Hill lying along the north side of the very low-lying flat Portsea Island. There is some evidence that on occasions the air is partly trapped here and comes down to recirculate rather than being blown away from the city. Whatever the reason, the incinerator is likely to exacerbate the problem. It is a risk we must not take. The two pollutants that we are particularly concerned about are dioxins and micro-particulates, though others are well known and there may be others that are not known at all. The chemistry of dioxins is very imperfectly understood and it may well turn out that they are even more dangerous than is now known. It may be true that the amount of pollution produced by an incinerator like this is only a drop in the ocean of pollution caused by motor traffic but it may also be that the proportion of the really dangerous dioxins from an incinerator, for instance those produced by the combustion of hard plastics, outweighs all other sources. We emphasise that these poisonous substances are generated in the disposal process of combustion. Plastics, the combustibles which are the main source of the most dangerous dioxins, are innocuous and inert substances which, if buried, will remain inert probably for ever.

The dangers of micro-particulates, particles smaller than one micron, has only recently emerged. They are so small they can penetrate the bag filters; and the human nose and throat have no defence against them. In the combustion chamber these particles can adsorb, for

example, dioxins. Bypassing the body's defences they may pass down straight into the alveoli, the smaller sacs of the lungs, more or less straight into the blood stream. This is new knowledge¹. It could be scaremongering; but we don't know.

We understand that under EU law planning authorities have a duty to take health matters into account, and even the public's perception of a health risk, even if illusory, is a factor to be considered.

2. 20 YEAR COMMITMENT

Other processes, notably gasification which has no toxic emissions, are under development though not yet on the industrial scale. We are concerned lest this potentially dangerous incinerator, which once started cannot be stopped for twenty years, should be licensed just as safer newer technology becomes available.

3. AGAINST RECYCLING & REUSE

Once built the incinerator will demand 165,000 tons of fuel a year. This demand must put a brake on any campaign to reduce waste and increase recycling and composting. Commonsense calculation shows that if recycling is carried towards its reasonable limits there will not be a residue of 165,000 tons of residual waste from Portsmouth sources. We will bring evidence that in parts of Germany where recycling has been taken seriously, there are proposals to bring in rubbish by train from Switzerland in order to feed the incinerators. It seems that no proper analysis of relative costs has been done. In resisting this planning application it is not incumbent on objectors to come up with an alternative although we would be happy to make suggestions, which would include a new comprehensive Portsmouth-based waste management plan. The recent comprehensive report by the Environment Agency and LPAC Re-Inventing Waste - A Waste Strategy for London (1998) is full of ideas for doing this, for example

how to do kerbside collections of segregated recyclables in busy streets. We are now saddled with what remains of Hampshire's plan. Our plan would certainly include a serious recycling programme (at present schools, for example, and small businesses are not included in the collection of recyclables).

It is true that, however successful recycling and reuse may be there will always be a residue of waste that has in some way to be disposed of.

4. LACK OF NEED

However the existence of the Paulsgrove landfill site and the scope for greatly increased recycling in Portsmouth means that there is no hurry to make a 20-year commitment to such an expensive installation as this proposed incinerator. If Portsmouth's Paulsgrove landfill site were to take only waste from the city of Portsmouth and not from the surrounding districts its rate of filling up would be halved. There would be a further halving if it were to take only non-recyclable materials. If these two things were done, by the time it is nearly full it is not unreasonable to expect that other ways of dealing with the problem may well have emerged. There is a great deal of experimentation going on world-wide. We would emphasise that no new incinerators are being built in Canada or the United States.

The discussions such as there have been on waste disposal options have notably ignored the question of costs. In particular, while the public have been urged to recycle, they have never been informed of the huge collection and segregation costs that this involves. Cost is the reason why Portsmouth's recycling programme has been so half-hearted. Landfill even when taxed is much cheaper.

5. IT WILL MILITATE AGAINST ALTERNATIVE SAFER METHODS

By creating such a large demand for waste materials the incinerator

will diminish the case for searching for safer alternative methods of disposal of those materials that cannot be recycled



or reused.

6. TRAFFIC

The increase of lorry traffic caused by the incinerator together with the three other waste installations established or about to be established in this area: the MRF, the Household Waste Recycling Centre and the Transfer Station in Dundas Spur, will be unacceptable both from the point of view of Admiral Lord Nelson School and the residents of Anchorage Park. The danger is especially to the pupils of ALN School in making their way there from Anchorage Park and the Norway Road area and in their lunch time. We know that the school authorities have made a special effort to encourage the children to come to school on foot or bicycle. The consultants employed by HWS diverted attention from the problem by concentrating on the increased traffic on Eastern Road and showing it to be very small. It is traffic on the roads in the vicinity of the plant, the school and Anchorage Park, that we are concerned with.

Although we are opposed to an incinerator wherever it is sited so long as there is no need for one, and although we have no desire to shift the incinerator to Havant, we think the reasons (based on the Hampshire Waste and Minerals Plan) for ruling out the two possible Havant sites were spurious. The Havant old incinerator site is better from the point of view of lorry access, being

approached directly off the A27, and well away from any school or other vulnerable pedestrian route. What is noticeable is that the list of sites considered did not contain any site well away from residence or schools.

¹ Seaton et al The Lancet Vol. 345, 21 January 1995

Roger James

Harbour Tunnel

THE proposed LRT tunnel between Gosport and Portsea will be the single most expensive component of the scheme. In a letter to John Prescott, Secretary of State for the DETR, Charles Burns argues the case for proceeding with the scheme without the tunnel in the first instance.

Dear Mr. Prescott,

PROPOSED SOUTH HAMPSHIRE RAPID TRANSIT ORDER (SHRT) TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT 1992

The above was the subject of Public Inquiry a year ago and is currently with your department for consideration.

The Portsmouth society, which I represented at the Public Inquiry, continues to be wholeheartedly supportive of the overall project but remains concerned that including a tunnel under Portsmouth Harbour as part of the basic scheme unbalances the finances.

The Portsmouth Society urge that our alternative proposal put forward at the public Inquiry which more fully promotes the concept of integrated transport and opportunities for end to end journeys by public transport be adopted as the first phase of the scheme allowing the Harbour Tunnel to follow later as and when traffic levels demand.

Further, the Portsmouth Society would like to see a Passenger Transport Authority and/or Passenger Transport Executive established to co-ordinate transport planning services to this area with the

proposed LRT included as an integrated element rather than a stand alone entity.

BACKGROUND TO THIS SUBMISSION

Tunnels are risky civil engineering projects tending to overrun in construction time and costs viz channel Tunnel, the Jubilee Line Extension and most recently southern water's tunnel under Langstone Harbour.

The proposed Portsmouth Harbour tunnel accounts for around one third of the LRT budget costs turning a simple worthwhile Project into something far more complex with a greatly increased financial risk.

The LRT plans suggest that a tunnel could facilitate running trams under Portsmouth Harbour at a proposed 7.5 minutes headway which is precisely the level of service already offered by the Portsmouth/Gosport ferry service at peak periods.

Whilst a change at Gosport to travel to Portsmouth by ferry may discourage some potential users of the light rail system this could be largely overcome by issuing through tickets for the ferry and onward travel in Portsmouth thereby promoting the concept of integrated travel albeit by different modes.

It is the Portsmouth Society's opinion that your Department should approve the development of the LRT scheme from Gosport to Fareham and encourage the project team to bring forward proposals to extend the system from Fareham to Southampton.

The westward extension could be achieved in two ways either by allowing dual use of the existing railway line through Netley to Southampton by light and heavy trains as is being successfully achieved at Karlsruhe in Germany or by down grading the line just for rapid transits and re-routing heavy rail trains from Fareham to Southampton via a new chord junction at Eastleigh thereby providing a direct rail link to Southampton Airport for a large part of Southern England. A

Railtrack manager speaking at an LRT presentation for business people in Southampton a couple of years ago made it clear that his company was ready and able to enter discussion to take forward either or both of these options.

These proposals all use known technology easing the costing exercise and minimising risks. Extending the area of operation for the LRT would provide an opportunity to introduce a number of integrated transport initiatives and to address the huge and rapidly increasing transport problems at Whiteley.

Once trams are running, traffic growth will create the demand for a harbour tunnel to be constructed as the obvious and necessary extension of the system rather than the financial burden which might discourage you from allowing it to go ahead as part of the first stage.

C. M. Burns

Design Competition

THE much delayed award ceremony for the 1999 competition took place at the end of May when the plaques for the winning entries at Portsmouth Motor Park, Royal Naval Museum, 96-98 St James Road and the mural at the Strand, were unveiled by the Lord Mayor. Councillor Barry Maine showed great interest in the competition and in the work of the Society.

Judging for the 2000 competition will take place in September and among the entries to be judged are:

Restorations

St Vincent Lodge, Kent Road; Fort Cumberland: the school & motor transport shed; Williamsgate, Pembroke Road (part new building); possibly another new building in HMS Nelson

New Buildings

HMS Excellent; houses on South side of New Road; odour control building, Eastney pumping station; Persimmons Homes at Port

Solent; Gunwharf show flats and others.

Landscaping

ex Inland Revenue, Norway Road; land at rear of 87 Middle Street from tarmac to garden; Millennium promenade (unfinished); Milldam House garden

If you wish to nominate any schemes then please contact the Secretary, Roger James. Work must have been completed by 31st December 1999 in allow time for faults to come to light.

Boathouse 4 Portsmouth Dockyard

WESSEX Archaeology of Salisbury have been commissioned by Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust to produce an assessment on the historic significance of Boathouse 4, the large boat-building shed of 1938/9 to inform decisions on its future and information for a Conservation Plan. Celia Clark was one of the consultees. Here is her response.

Seeing the Sheerness Boat Store (1858-1860) by G. T. Greene for the first time, I was struck by how strong an echo it has in the steelframed Boathouse 4 of 1938-9 by four civil engineers in the rearmament runup to the Second World War. Greene also designed the Smithery at Portsmouth (1851-52) and the No. 7 Slip Roof at Chatham (1852-54). As Eric le Maré says (RIBA Journal June 1961 pp. 318-324), the Boat Store was a precursor of modern, functional architecture, of which Boathouse 4 is a splendid and impressive example. Indeed, when he first saw the Boat Store, he thought it was a 1930s building.

The Sheerness Boat Store is currently listed Grade II*, but is sorely in need of a new use. The Architectural Review of July 1957 on 'The Functional Tradition' in Early Industrial Buildings', with a text by Professor J M Richards points out that functionalism is no innovation but has a tradition which is independent of period

styles. Professor Skempton said that the Sheerness Boat Store was a very important historical building - indeed the first multi-storey structure in existence having a complete iron frame. France...claimed by long tradition to possess the first of that kind in its famous Menier factory, built some 12 years after the Boat Store in a typical late-Victorian manner, but now England might be entitled to claim the distinction with a building of far greater elegance and in a truly modern idiom.

Boathouse 4 was built for a similar purpose, small boat repair. It too has bands of horizontal windows, an all metal frame, and integral cranes or gantries for moving boats about. BH 4 is the mid-twentieth century equivalent in function and design. It was constructed as part of the late 30s rearmament. Though not as pioneering as the Sheerness Boat Store, there are now few survivors of its contemporaries, and it provides the continuity of boathouse design with Nos. 5-7 Boathouse from the 19th century around it. If it were removed, the contribution of the twentieth century to the evolution of boathouse design would be lost.

The Council of Europe recommends protection and conservation of 20th century industrial, technical and civil engineering heritage. 20th century structures may not be given legal protection while they are not yet regarded as heritage, but lack of legal protection does not preclude reuse.

The Unicorn Consultancy in Anchor Lane held about ten drawings of Boathouse 4 including four from 1937/8 and a number with details of subsequent adaptations. The designers were in-house engineers (Ministry of Public Buildings and Works?). EA Scott was responsible for the elevations; and the structure was by K.F. Buchanan, JDW Ball and J. Angell. The drawings were approved by J. G. Siddons CE and CD Johnson Burt SCE; DO, Offices of Civil Engineer in Chief.

The Institute of Civil Engineers and Institute of Construction Engineers should be able to say if they were members. It is surely not fanciful to suggest that they may have known Green's Boat Store if they worked in several dockyards, and that it inspired their design.

The Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust paid for repair of the lock gate. They have long been concerned about the future of the Boathouse. They support the proposal by SAVE Britain's Heritage, who produced a report and business plan proposing that the Boathouse could provide a valuable extra introductory facility to visitors to the Heritage Area, including live small boat repair, hanging the Victory sail (which visitors to the Festival of the Sea may have seen), and a first-class restaurant.

As to the building's potential, it is so large that there could be a number of overlapping uses, the most obvious being a marvellous and authentic introductory window into the history of the site for the very large numbers of visitors. Officers of Flagship Portsmouth are very enthusiastic about this. There are proposals to hang the Victory tops' in the space, and to display collections of naval coastal craft, flags and engines - all of which would complement a really excellent mezzanine level restaurant facing the incomparable views of Portsmouth Harbour, always full of ship movement, unlike the modern-day Thames.

Celia Clark

Internet Update

THE Society's Internet site is becoming established and the usage is increasing. A common complaint has been "we can't find the site using a search engine" and we've been working hard to get www.portsmouthsociety.org.uk listed by the major operators.

A breakthrough occurred in June when, after six months of trying, we became listed by

Yahoo! Things should snowball from there, but if our site does not appear in your favourite search engine, please let me know (editor@portsmouthsociety.org.uk). It seems that to get listed, you just keep submitting requests and eventually one will get processed!

Recently, we added the site search facility where you can enter a keyword or phrase and all documents containing the search terms are listed. This could be useful if you were looking for information on a particular building or subject.

We receive a listing each month of the search terms people enter which can make interesting reading! So far, education and Tricorn are the most common words used

John Holland

Cumberland House Natural History Museum

FOR many years this very attractive building and its gardens have been open to the public, and the people of Portsmouth consider it as part of their heritage. Before the war it was an Art Gallery, and in more recent years it has become a Natural History museum. In the early 1980's it was redesigned with many "hands-on" exhibits. The story of the region including Hampshire during the Ice ages was graphically displayed, there was an excellent slide synchronised show in an "ice-well" showing life during the Ice Ages in this area. As a Zoologist I recognised that the whole revamped museum was based on sound knowledge of Biology and Geology.

The location of the museum is very attractive, with the Canoe Lake, Model Village, a play area for smaller children close by. All parents and grand-parents to whom I have spoken have said that it is much loved by their progeny, and a favourite place to visit when in Southsea.

Sadly, little has been done to the Museum since then, except the addition of a much loved



Cumberland House - from the Portsmouth Records, 1928

Evening Walk - Newport IOW

JOIN us for a summer's evening walk on Wednesday 26th July 2000 around Newport, the County Town of the Isle of Wight, led by David Lloyd and Deane Clark.

We'll meet at Newport bus station at 6pm, but anyone travelling over for the evening can assemble at Wightlink passenger terminal at Portsmouth Harbour Station.

To arrive in time for 6pm, we suggest taking the 16.50 Catamaran from Portsmouth Harbour (book to Ryde Esplanade), then the short train ride from the Pier Head to the Esplanade, followed by the number 1 bus from stand B at 17.25 to Newport Bus Station. (fare £2.15 each way). Coming back, the bus leaves at 20.55 in time for the 21.50 catamaran. We'll be back at the Harbour Station by 22.05. (There are later departures from Newport at 21:55 and 22:55). For more information, contact Jean Thompson.

Butterfly House. The slide synchronised show broke down and the initiative to repair it seemed to be lacking. Exhibits have become tatty, and almost nothing new added. The Curator was given early retirement two years ago, and the process of deliberate run-down was accelerated. The number of species of live butterflies has been much reduced. All this is obviously part of a plan to close down the museum, making it less attractive so that the public will not protest at its closure.

I sent a petition to the Council signed by eighty-four of my acquaintances asking for it to be kept open, but the reply, from John Haskell of Corporate services, was negative. The plan is to put some exhibits into the main museum, but much of it will go into store. The Butterfly House "may be" relocated in the main museum.

Council officials say "Find me £40,000 a year and we will keep it open." As an ordinary member of

the public I have not the knowledge to do this. Surely our financial experts on the Council can think of a way to keep it open, and to employ a young, fresh mind to make new exhibits, and to tackle publicity more effectively. A cyber-cafe attached to the museum has been suggested. An attractive refreshment bar might attract income.

Once the museum has gone, we have lost it and we shall all be sorry to see Cumberland House and its gardens sold to developers. No official of the Council will say what is to be the future of the building. Can anything be done to delay the dispersal of the exhibits for a year to give the people of Portsmouth time to consider this, and perhaps for someone to come up with constructive ideas? Could those interested please write to your councillor and to the Museums Service?

Kathleen Lewis.

The Portsmouth Society, Registered Charity no. 266116

*Chairman: Celia Clark, 8 Florence Road, Southsea, Hants, PO5 2NE, Tel 023 9273 2912
Secretary: Roger James, 10 Captains Row, Old Portsmouth, PO1 2TT, Tel 023 9273 4555
Treasurer: Jean Thompson, 4 Malvern Road, Southsea, Hants, PO5 2NA. Tel 023 9282 1667
Email: editor@portsmouthsociety.org.uk*

Find us on the internet at www.portsmouthsociety.org.uk

We welcome new members. Please come to any of our meetings or contact Jean Thompson for more details.