

THE PORTSMOUTH SOCIETY
CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT for AGM on 06 April 2011

1. Overview

Happily since our long-time former Chairman Dr Celia Clark suffered a heart attack shortly prior to our last AGM she has made a wonderful recovery and continues to vigorously contribute to the aims of the Society in her newly elected role as our President. As well as continuing as a judge for our Design Awards programme, she also finds time and energy to pursue a range of her well-known wider interests including being Project Leader for the World Heritage Steering Group and contributing to the research in Branding Portsmouth Harbour as a destination. She is a lesson to us all in terms of her unabated enthusiasm.

Equally happily, our well known former Hon. Secretary Dr Roger James, having reached the age of 89 tendered his resignation at the last AGM and at a later SGM was elected to become our first vice-President. Now in his 91st year, Roger staunchly continues to contribute his knowledge and wisdom at our monthly committee meetings particularly with our Design Awards programme

A third long-time officer of our Society, to whom we are so grateful, our Hon. Treasurer Jean Thompson, has looked after our finances for many years and has remained in office throughout the year despite the sad loss of her much loved husband, George. She is gallantly standing again for office this year and will be working closely with our new Membership Secretary as referred to below.

It has been my honour, or should I say fate as the newcomer, albeit a former member of the Executive Committee, to be recalled, to steer the ship, in the absence of enthusiasm from other members to take the helm. I pay great tribute to those members of the dwindling Executive committee who have remained in office and now stand for re-election in roles that have contributed so much towards the continued success of the Portsmouth Society. At the time that I was elected to the chair I emphasised that I was a humble substitute for the Celia and Roger reign and was dependent upon the knowledge, enthusiasm and support of the Committee members. This has indeed been the case and is marked by our successes and shortcomings.

Let me therefore present a concise summary of the most important of our activities.

2. Monthly Meetings

As planned, successful Monthly meetings have continued except in the months of January, August and September. At the last moment, the December meeting had to be cancelled because of a combination of adverse weather and ill-health. Normally held in St George's Building, in Old Portsmouth, we have deliberately tried alternate venues, to be more convenient to those residents in the north of the City and/or to attract larger audiences; these were: The Blue Lagoon at Hilsea Lido, and The Square Tower in Old Portsmouth. The latter attracted a 'full-house' despite a programme change.

The years programme is listed at Annex (A) and the future programme, including alternative venues, appears in The Newsletter and on our web site: <http://www.portsmouthsociety.org.uk>

3. Design Awards

The Design Awards continue to be our most successful venture. Great credit is due to the members led by Vice-chairman David Baynes who organised the selection, inspection and judging, and those who traditionally organise an open-top bus tour for members and friends to visit some of the winners and runners up. Our thanks to the judges including Celia and her husband Deane and also to member Malcolm Reeves who acted as driver throughout the judging period. This year it was gratifying to see that *'The News'* gave prominent and favourable publicity to the Awards providing due credit to the City and to the Society. Each year the event culminates with the unveiling, by The Lord Mayor, of plaques at winning locations; this year it has included awards of Certificates of Commendation to Runners-up.

A summary of these awards is at Annex B. More details including Celia's report of these awards are available in The Newsletter and on our Web Site

4. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee normally meets monthly and is responsible on behalf of members to oversee the day to day running of the Society and to respond to external events that are of interest or concern to us. The bulk of these are concerned with the well-being of the built environment and response to major plans and reports issued by Portsmouth City Council. Importantly, it also extends towards attending outside events for recruiting and promoting the protection of trees in our green environment.

Sadly the number of active committee members has dwindled throughout the year. The pressures of other work and other reasons have led to several resignations. This has not detracted from the quality of work performed by those who continue to respond to our tasks. I can offer nothing but praise for the hard work and dedication offered by those who have stayed the course. I am proud to name them as; David Baynes, Charles Burns, Terry Carter, John Holland, Sue McClory and Pauline Powell and I refer later to some of their individual achievements.

To spread the workload we would welcome more volunteers, particularly with Planning or Financial know-how, and with the motivations and/or genuine interest, to enable the Society to address those aspects to which we have not fully responded. Additionally we would always welcome other volunteers, not for the committee, but to assist with support at meetings with such helpful tasks as refreshments and raffle. Here I must mention the unsung heroine, Jackie Baynes, who regularly does so much to help at our meetings.

5. The Planning sub-committee,

The Planning-sub committee, led by committee member John Holland aided by Bruce Oliver and Robin Kay is to be commended for its diligence and stamina in meeting every 3 weeks to scrutinise the details of all the Planning Applications regularly publicised by the City Council. On our behalf they decide whether it is sometimes appropriate to object in writing or to make a deputation to oppose all or part of an application. Contrary to some beliefs, they do not hesitate to openly support worthy applications. It is encouraging that recently, developers of major or unusual projects have been recommended by the City Council to deliver short presentations to our Society to seek comment on their proposals before formal submission to the Council

As reported in The Newsletter, a plea to the City Council to conceal disfigured facades, opposite South Parade Pier, has failed for many months to be resolved. The blatant eyesore remains as a disgrace to the preached city standards of conservation.

6 Civic Voice

For many years the Portsmouth Society was affiliated to the Civic Trust via its regional group the Civic Trust (South East). Sadly, and unexpectedly, the Civic Trust went into administration. A new national organisation, Civic Voice has arisen with considerable marketing and publicity skills under the chairmanship of Griff Rhys Jones.

In common with other UK Civic Societies, though not all, we have been pleased to become affiliated. Its advantages include workshops and regional meetings, the declaration of a national Civic Day (26 June) and copious helpful electronic documentation upon many subjects of common interest. This is available directly to individually registered members as well as to our Hon. secretary, Terry Carter. The disadvantage is that, not surprisingly, it requires an increased membership fee that impacts upon our own finances

7. Membership & Finance.

When I was elected to the Chair I expressed some concerns about the strength of our membership and our finances. As I have already stated, Jean Thompson has for many years continued to do a praiseworthy job as our treasurer and is standing again for re-election at the AGM. To ease her workload we have been delighted that long-term member Eunice Coneybeare has actually volunteered to assist Jean by taking over the role of Membership Secretary and will maintain our membership records. So welcome Eunice!

This will assist the receipt or reconciliation of overdue or under-priced subscriptions and facilitate the reclaiming of tax rebates. Please do not overlook renewing and paying for your annual membership or amending your standing order if it is out of date.

In the light of the increased *per capita* subscription to Civic Voice, the rise in inflation and other increased costs, it is inevitable that in due course the annual subscriptions need to be increased. Until recently, committee members did not claim expenses incurred when representing the Society. They paid them out of their own pockets. It is my view that, when representing the Society at official events, members should be entitled to reclaim their travel accommodation and/or registration costs, subject to prior approval beforehand. Future budgets should make due allowance for these cost and future subscriptions should take these into account.

Our membership has crept up during the year by a mere 12 very welcome new faces to now total 207. I assume that the majority happily thrive on the contents of our Newsletter and our Web page. I remain disappointed that, despite the quality of the speakers and their interesting subjects at our monthly meetings, we have been averaging only 30 to 40 members and guests at each occasion; though we were pleased to attain a full-house for our meeting at The Square Tower. As mentioned, we will hold additional meetings in the north of the city during the coming year including one at the Hulsea Lido on 1st June.

8. Constitution

Before he left the committee, Terry Halloran undertook a revision to our Constitution which has remained unchanged for 37 years. We thank him for this. This revised Constitution has been reviewed by the Executive Committee and circulated to you and is tabled at this AGM for your ratification.

9. The Newsletter and our Web Site

The Newsletter and the Web Site, both so ably edited by John Holland have always been a great credit not merely to the Society but also to promote a good image of our City. They provide a wealth of easily accessible information for members and non-members alike; the best I can say is: - Please READ THEM!

10. Outside Visits and Tours

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge that sadly the usual programme of Outside Tours and Visits which have been so successful in the past has come to a grinding halt. This is because of an ongoing disagreement between Bruce Oliver and the Committee. Hopefully, similar trips will be organised again very soon because they were profitable for the Society and clearly gave great pleasure to the members and guests who attended them.

11 Transition

This has been an interesting year. Much has been quietly achieved without unnecessary fanfares. Where there has been publicity, it has been good publicity, particularly with the Design Awards, and has brought credit to the City and to the Society.

I resisted an abundance of suggestions to get involved far and wide and insisted that with our limited resources we must concentrate upon our primary objectives within the bounds of the City. Certainly there is great value in meeting with neighbouring Civic Societies to learn from and help us with common challenges; clearly there is much to be gained from the embryo Civic Voice with which we are now affiliated. All this requires resources and that means people. Is this what our members want or are they quietly content with the *status quo*?

In closing, I address my thanks particularly to Vice-chairman David Baynes who is always active and organises our meetings programme without fuss, and to Charles Burns who is a fund of knowledge and regularly prompts us to respond to the machinations of local government. Gladly I applaud the committee members who have introduced new initiatives which promise well for the future:

Pauline has set up a very successful Tree Wardens Scheme with the help of the society. It is now standing on its own feet and is flourishing.

Sue has done much with her work in recruiting new members, - hopefully not all of my vintage - through organising the Society stall at the Lions Fair on Southsea Common, the Green Fair in Victoria Park and the Southsea Castle open day. She has also undertaken a selected leaflet drop to potential members living in conservation areas.

Terry Carter who bravely undertook the role of Hon secretary and also took over the role of committee secretary has beavered away behind the scenes. With Sue and John he has been planning a Civic Day programme, in co-operation with certain schools, with a competition with prizes being awarded by the Lord Mayor at the Norrish Central Library on 25 June. Hopefully this Civic Day programme will tempt the younger generation to join us.

Let me wish great success to these ventures and to those who promote them.

Acutely conscious of my own advancing years, a mere 81, this is my cue to quietly take my leave. Good wishes to my successor and to The Portsmouth Society.

Bob Adderley
Chairman

Annex A.

List of Monthly Meetings

(As organised by our Vice-chairman David Baynes)

| Month | Subject | Speaker(s) | Members & Non-mbrs attending | Location |
|-----------------|--|--|---|--|
| April 2010 | AGM + Slide Show & Film | Celia Clark | 26m | John Pound Chapel Old Portsmouth |
| May | Portsmouth's Past in Photos | Bruce Oliver | 30m | St George's Building Old Portsmouth |
| June | It' Your Society + Civic Voice | Bob Adderley | 36m (2 nm) | St George's Building |
| July | The People's Pool | Jane Smith | 42m (16nm) | Blue Pool @ Hilsea Lido |
| <i>August</i> | <i>Architectural Bus Tour Org .by Bruce Oliver</i> | <i>Celia Clark & Deane Clark</i> | 44 | <i>Round City</i> |
| September | <i>No Meeting</i> | | | |
| October | Portsmouth School of Architecture | Todd Wakefield | 31m (5 nm) | St George's Building |
| November | Leader of City Council | Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson | 35m (4nm) | St George's Building |
| <i>December</i> | Design Awards | Celia Clark | - | <i>Cancelled: Wx/health</i> |
| <i>Jan 2011</i> | <i>No Meeting</i> | | | |
| Feb | Pevsner's Buildings of England | Charles O'Brien | 56m * (26nm) | Square Tower Old Portsmouth |
| Mar | Portsmouth Plng & Archaeology | Dr Andy Russell | 36 (5nm) | St George's Building |
| Apr 2011 | Zurich Building + AGM | Adrian Stewart | | St George's Building |

** (Unintentionally, some additional attendees were 'locked-out' from the Square Tower)*

PSOC DESIGN AWARDS 2010

**Unveiling of Plaques and Awards of Certificates of Commendation
By Lord Mayor of Portsmouth Cllr Mrs Paula Riches
Saturday 19 March 2011**

(Start 10.00 hrs at The Friary Southsea) (use Waitrose Car Park)

| | Civic Dignitary | Lord Mayor | Cllr Paula Riches | To Unveil Plaques and to present Certificates of Commendation |
|--------|------------------|--|---|---|
| | PSoc | President /Judge Vice President Chairman Organiser Judge | Dr Celia Clark Dr Roger James Bob Adderley David Baynes Deane Clark | +++ Merrick Denton-Thompson Graham Steagles |
| | | UNVEILING OF PLAQUE | Lord Mayor | |
| | 10.00 hrs | Best Restoration | The Friary Marmion Rd Southsea | Built by Thomas Ellis Owen Upgraded by Architect: Gary Seymour of Seymour Bainbridge Architects for Mr & Mrs Philip Hill |
| | | CERTIFICATES OF COMMENDATION | | |
| 1 2 | 10.15 hrs | Best New Building | Wilton Place Southsea (4 houses) | Developer: Janet Storey Robert Benn & Associates Ltd Built by PMC Construction & development Ltd |
| 3 4 | | Best Restoration | Treadgold Warehouse | Richard Sexton Hedley Greentree Associates Ltd |
| 5 | | Best Restoration | Shakespeare Apartments | Smith & Langton Ltd |
| | <i>Travel to</i> | <i>Drayton via</i> | <i>Eastern Rd</i> | |
| | 11.00 hrs | UNVEILING OF PLAQUE | Lord Mayor | |
| | | Best New Building | Eco House 15 Drayton Lane | Architect : Mick Morris with Stephen Victoria & Blake Cripps Built by : PMC Construction & Development Services Ltd. |
| | NB: | NO LANDSCAPE AWARD | | |