

Newsletter

Winter 2013

MEGASTRUCTURE FOR THE HARD



Plans for the demolition and redevelopment of the site on The Hard currently occupied by the unloved and empty Brunel House building were revealed to the public in November. Developers Bouygues gave a briefing on the scheme to our members on 15 January where we were shown the plans which include a landmark tower of up to 32 storeys (120 metres). This would be the second tallest structure in the city, the tallest being the Spinnaker Tower rising to 170 metres, and comparable with No.1 Gunwharf ("The Lipstick" - 26 storeys) at 101metres.

The site is triangular and the building would have three distinct uses, each with its own entrance. To the rear and in the lower part of the building would be student

accommodation which would be accessed from College Street. An hotel would form part of the lower front corner facing The Hard with the rest of the building having up to 200 private apartments.

(continued on page 3).

Meetings and Events

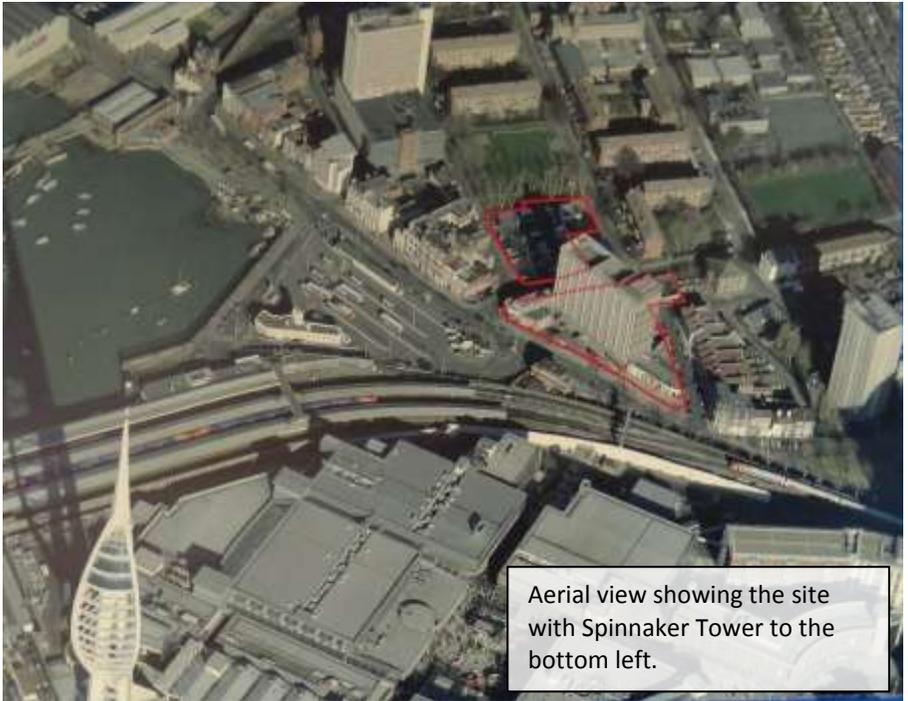
Our regular meetings are on the first Wednesday of each month (not Jan/Aug/Sep) at the University's St. George's Building, St Thomas's Street, Old Portsmouth, PO1 2HY. Buses 1,20, 23 & 700 pass the building which is a 5 minute walk from Portsmouth Harbour station. Free on-site parking is also available. Free admission. For the latest programme see www.portsmouthsociety.org.uk

Wednesday 6 February 7.00pm	Stephen Baily, Portsmouth City Council. Stephen is Head of City Development & Cultural Services. His talk will cover current and future planning and heritage issues, including those raised by members on the night.
Wednesday 6 March 7.00pm	Why our City's Trees Matter. John Stokes of the Tree Council will show how trees add value to cities worldwide and describe how Portsmouth is leading the way with projects, such as the fruiting hedge in Hilsea.
Saturday 9 March 10.15am	Design Awards Ceremony. The Lord Mayor will unveil the four 2012 Design Award Winners' plaques in Southsea and Mile End, as well as presenting the Commendation certificates. Refreshments/lunch will be available at the International Port Terminal. <u>Meet at Southsea Library, Palmerston Road.</u>
Wednesday 10 April 7.00pm	Annual General Meeting followed by 40 Years of the Portsmouth Society – a talk by our President, Celia Clark. <u>To be held in the Square Tower, Old Portsmouth.</u>
Saturday 20 April	Day visit to Shoreham by Sea – With a maritime heritage dating back to Saxon times, the town's architecture ranges from two remarkable early churches through to the Berkeley Homes riverside Ropetackle development, with its striking arts centre. We will also be checking out the new Adur footbridge currently under construction and the extraordinary Shoreham Beach houseboat community.

<p>The Portsmouth Society, Registered Charity no. 266116 President: Dr Celia Clark. Vice-President: Dr Roger James Chairman: Sue McClory, 329 Chatsworth Avenue, Cosham, PO6 2UW. Tel: 023 9242 8683 Secretary: Terry Carter, 15 Balliol Road, Portsmouth, PO2 7PP. Tel: 023 9269 9167 Email: mailbox@portsmouthsociety.org.uk Web: www.portsmouthsociety.org.uk</p>
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Contributions to the newsletter are always welcome. Please send articles to mailbox@portsmouthsociety.org.uk.

Megastructure for The Hard (continued from Page 1)



Aerial view showing the site with Spinnaker Tower to the bottom left.

The frontage on Victory Road would be low-height to maintain the scale of the residential street and the building's height would rise gradually with the highest point being to the north of the site on The Hard.

There would be limited car parking on the site at ground level with access from Victory Road whilst additional parking would be accommodated in a new multi-storey park to be built on the site of the existing surface car park in Havant Street. With the high water table it is not possible to create a basement car park.

In terms of sustainability, the building would be built to the tallest standards of insulation and would have a combined heat and power system (CHP) generating electricity on-site. A green roof was mentioned but no solar power generation is proposed (the building faces the wrong direction). Rainwater harvesting for toilet flushing was considered but rejected due to problems of storage and hygiene.

We welcome the long overdue demolition of the slab-fronted 1960s office building and we look forward to seeing the detailed plans which will be submitted for planning approval in the coming months.

Wymering Manor Becomes Community Asset

Agreement has at last been reached between the Wymering Manor Trust and Portsmouth City Council for the take-over of Wymering Manor with the official signing due to take place on 15 February. The City have given £30,000 to the trust to help pay for set-up costs and for some restoration work.

The Trust, which is chaired by Penny Mordaunt MP, is in talks with The Architectural Heritage Fund and Heritage Lottery Fund over the availability of grants to fund the significant amount of work needed to repair and restore the Grade II listed building.

We are pleased that the future of the Manor is assured and we wish the Trust every success.

Portsmouth Society's 40th Anniversary

The Portsmouth Society will be celebrating its 40th Anniversary in 2013. We have booked the Cafe space at Portsmouth Guildhall for an exhibition of our work which will be displayed for three months in the autumn, and are currently working on themes which include 'Lost/Saved Buildings', 'Greenspace', 'Buildings at Risk', and 'The Design Awards', but there is so much to celebrate that it will be hard to choose which items to showcase.

We plan to hold an 'Architecture a la Caf  ' event to enable members to have a first-hand presentation of the work and an opportunity to view the exhibition and discuss the projects with those closely involved.

The emphasis of the Society has changed over time, but that is a reflection of the progress that has been made with regard to design and heritage by changes in attitude both by Portsmouth City Council and local professionals. This change of mind-set has been brought about by our Society and other locals who care about Portsmouth, who are prepared to lobby, advise, praise and protest in equal measure and push for high standards for our community.

If you would like to become involved with working through some of the archive materials, providing quality photographs or sponsoring the graphic boards which will cost around £50 each, then please get in touch and I would be delighted to include you in this exciting project. We would be very pleased if our members could donate modest sums towards this landmark project for 2013, so do speak to one of the Executive Committee or contact me directly (see page 2 for details).

We are also discussing a 40th Anniversary lunch for members past and present and a date and venue will be announced as soon as we have confirmation, but I am hoping for a weekday lunch towards the end of June.

Sue McClory, Chairman

Civic Voice in 2012



Civic Voice, the national charity for the civic movement in England, recently published a concise and very readable annual review of its activities. Some extracts are reproduced below. As you know, part of your Portsmouth Society subscription goes to Civic Voice. If you would like a copy of the booklet email info@civicvoice.org.uk or call 0151 708 9920. The report may also be downloaded from www.civicvoice.org.uk.

Civic Voice works with a network of hundreds of community-based and volunteer led civic societies and other groups to make the places where everyone lives more attractive, enjoyable and distinctive and to promote civic pride. We believe everyone should live somewhere they can be proud of. Over 290 civic societies with over 75,000 individual members have joined Civic Voice.

Some highlights of 2012

The introduction of the Localism Act and the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework led to Civic Voice and the civic movement together running a well-coordinated campaign to successfully influence changes to the bill.

Despite the many competing alternative activities during June 2012, over 300 events took place for Civic Day during the month with over 150 groups participating.

The president of Civic Voice, Griff Rhys Jones, has continued to be a fantastic supporter, over the last year, undertaking a number of civic tours around the country. In March, our founding director, Tony Burton, left for a new opportunity (at the Design Museum-Ed.).

We provided information and support and ran a help desk which answered over 2000 enquiries from local groups Civic societies from across England came together six times during the year and similar to the previous year, we met over half our member groups face to face.

A regular supply of information and advice was provided through our bulletins which continue to be well read by members.

We found Twitter highly effective in raising our profile and have attracted a strong following with over 3500 people now following us.

290 civic societies joined in our second year and provide approximately 35% of our core funding. We are sustainable and independent. Our total income in 2012 was £214,700, with total expenditure being £149,200.

The future of Heritage Open Days is assured for the next three years, but after this is unclear. In the meantime, the National Trust, Heritage Alliance and Civic Voice have taken on the responsibility for the management of Heritage Open Days.

To receive regular bulletins from Civic Voice by email visit www.civicvoice.org.uk/join.

Civic Voice Coventry AGM and Convention

Over 100 civic volunteers came together in Coventry on a weekend on October for an exciting programme of events and Civic Voice's third AGM. After visits to places of interest across Coventry and hearing about The Coventry Society's campaigns delegates enjoyed an evening reception in St Mary's Guildhall before the AGM business. Everyone also heard from the first delegates from Civic Voice's Leadership programme and civic societies debated the kind of civic campaign the movement should be running in 2013. Everyone also had the opportunity to hear from Griff Rhys Jones on his thoughts about the future of our town centres.

Civic movement vote against planning reforms

Delegates voted unanimously to back a motion calling on the Government to withdraw its proposed planning reforms, including measures to allow home owners to build larger extensions without the need for planning permission, a relaxation of permitted development rules for three years, and plans to allow some developers to appeal directly to the Planning Inspectorate rather than the councils. Members voted on a campaign to encourage their 75,000+ members to write to local MPs and maintain pressure on the Government to cancel the reforms

When The Immovable Dawn meets The Immovable Gerald...

STALEMATE THREAT TO PIER RESCUE

Please note that the views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Portsmouth Society.

It is now nearly eight months since my concerns about South Parade Pier started me talking to local people about rescuing our pier. Our aim: local ownership to guarantee ongoing public access. The People's Pier action group is now almost ready to start fundraising with a national campaign. We've had some teething problems, but we are



now in good shape and, compared to the six years it has taken to save Hastings Pier, I think we have done fairly well – so far. But no room for complacency.

However, our vehicle still lacks its starter button, the one absolutely crucial element for our campaign to roar into life. We need at least £2m to buy the pier and put it roughly back into good shape. And probably another £3m-£6m to properly develop the business so it can generate a profit every year and prevent this kind of disaster from recurring. We'll never raise that sort of money from jumble sales, cake stalls and street collections, nor even from our planned sale of shares in the pier through a Portsmouth co-op scheme. To get the grants we need we first have to demonstrate the Heritage Lottery Fund's basic requirement: "a reasonable prospect of ownership".

Standing squarely in our way are the pier's owners, obsessed with making future ice cream and beer sales at the front of the pier, and who cares if the rest of it collapses? This is what they call "saving" a pier whose business and structure they have wrecked in just a couple of years. And if they won't sell, we have no reasonable prospect of ownership.

We could call them an Immovable Object, except they aren't actually immovable. There are laws to deal with owners who fail to maintain listed buildings, resulting in compulsory works orders where if necessary the council does the work at the owners' expense and maybe seizes the pier to pay for it, deducting the cost of work from the pier's market value (a succession of top valuers tell us that the value is £zero!). Council can't afford ongoing ownership? Then they can hand the property over to a fund-raising community group like ours to raise the money and preserve it into the future.

That's the law, and it says the council has a duty to preserve our heritage. The Portsmouth Society's President pointed this out to Portsmouth City Council at least six months ago, so they do know.

Alas, enter a second Immovable Object: PCC leader Gerald Vernon-Jackson, a decent, clever guy suffering budgetary starvation and the horrendous job of axeing programmes and people. When his duty to the pier has repeatedly been mentioned, Gerald's only reaction, time after time, is "we have no money; we can't do anything". That's some statement, when the pier will cost them nothing.

Money or no, Gerald has a duty and I think he is better than his timidity suggests. We are sure we can raise the cash if he does his duty. After all, they have done just that at Hastings Pier, where a community trust like ours has recently won an £11.4m grant.

Here's the most interesting fact about the successful pier rescue at Hastings from an unwilling absentee owner (NB: they also call themselves The People's Pier!):

- ◆ it took the Hastings community trust six years to achieve success. But the first four years were wasted while their council refused to act.

- ◆ The crucial change factor was public campaigning in a tight council election on a non-partisan, any-candidate-who'll-save-the-pier ticket.
- ◆ Faced with losing power, the ruling party's attitude shifted suddenly. Hey, presto! Everything was achieved in just two years – a council CPO of the pier followed by its handover to the trust, then winning their massive grant!
- ◆ South Parade The People's Pier is already well set up to shorten that timescale in Portsmouth, especially as we now have inside access to the expertise and hard experience the clever Hastings Trust people built up over six years. So we are confident we can do our part, money-wise. We aren't just relying on lottery grants, either.

And guess what? Gerald faces some tight elections of his own in just two years' time. If he goes to the polls as an Immovable Object he will run into the Irresistible Force of voters who watched his 30-month prevarication while the pier slowly collapsed in full public view.

The hard fact right now is: no Gerald doing his duty, no pressure on the owners, no reason to sell, no reasonable prospect of ownership for The People's Pier, so no grants, no purchase or maintenance of the pier. No rescue.

Come on Gerald, lift your horizons! You can do this. Help us to help you. What's not to like about pumping Lottery millions into the local tourist economy? And doing our duty together?

Council Leader Gerald Vernon-Jackson and the PCC Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Cllr Mike Hancock MP, have accepted invitations to a public discussion of the vital pier protection/acquisition issues at the next meeting of East Southsea Neighbourhood Forum, at 7pm on Thursday, February 28, in the Royal Beach Hotel opposite South Parade Pier. All Portsmouth citizens are welcome to come and have their say.

Leon Reis, Chairman, The People's Pier

Meetings with the Leader of the Council

The Executive Committee has re-convened the quarterly meetings with the Leader of Portsmouth City Council, Councillor Gerald Vernon Jackson. In November and December, John Holland, Terry Carter and I spent time with the leader of the council, Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson discussing a wide range of topics in the first two of what we hope will be a series of regular meetings.

We expressed our concern about the Savoy Buildings which continue to blight our seafront and will be writing to Harry Redknapp about his plans to develop the site. We also discussed the changes to planning policies meant to encourage people to develop their properties and give a boost to tradesmen, but there is a possibility that neighbours

will become involved in disputes over issues of privacy and light in their back gardens. This national policy is out of the hands of local government, so we shall be submitting comments through the website, and also consider writing to ministers if further action is deemed necessary.

Gerald informed us that the Northern Quarter would be a smaller project than the one proposed in better economic circumstances – probably only having one anchor store instead of two, and sadly containing less housing which is a loss-making element for developers. The Mary Portas report and the Draft City Centre Masterplan, both call for the inclusion of housing within the city centre to prevent the area becoming dead by 4.30pm and providing that element of safety through ‘eyes on the street’. We shall be studying any proposals very carefully when they become available and pressing for high quality design and planning throughout all aspects of the scheme.

We talked about the other shopping centres within Portsmouth which are vital to local communities - they all have area plans and traders associations, and we hope they will work hard to find solutions to the individual problems which face these particular areas. We too, must do our best as citizens to support our local facilities whether they are shops, community or sports centres; otherwise we risk losing vital assets, particularly for those people without a car or internet access who rely on such facilities.

We praised the inclusion of greening in the recent draft masterplans, where trees and landscaping are to be increased wherever possible. The Design Awards recognised the project on the M275 and Princess Royal Way, and we hope that this style of project can be increased where large areas of tarmac or sites awaiting development need improvement. We shall be presenting our project for the Market Way Gap in the new year, with the hope that progress can finally be made.

We discussed the changes to the structure of the planning department, which had been undertaken as part of the Council’s resource review. We are keen to see the heritage and archaeology aspects retain sufficient expertise within the enforcement and legal areas, and will be keeping abreast of matters through Stephen Baily.

Sue McClory, Chairman

New Members

It is a pleasure to welcome new members to the society. In recent months Mr NA Phelps (interested in Historic Buildings and Planning) and Mr D Walsh (interested in Historic Buildings, Planning, Road Layout and Art Displays) have joined us.

Diamond Jubilee tree planting in Milton Park



The Lord Mayor, Cllr Frank Jonas and Portsmouth Tree Wardens at the Jubilee tree planting in Milton Park. Picture by John Scott.

I should like to extend my thanks to everyone who attended the Diamond Jubilee tree planting in Milton Park on 28 November. The Lord Mayor Councillor Frank Jonas did the honours with the silver spade helped by children from Milton Park Infants and Wimborne Junior Schools. Other members of the local community gave their support as well. They came from Milton Park Bowling Club, The Portsmouth Players, The Portsmouth Society, Locks Sailing Club, The Porter's Garden, Milton Village Community Centre and of course Portsmouth and Southsea Tree Wardens.

Council Leader and Milton Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson, Milton Councillor Caroline Scott and Central Southsea Councillor and Tree Warden Phil Smith were also in attendance.

We were encouraged by the Tree Council, who donated the White Mulberry (one of 60 Diamond Jubilee trees country wide), to plant during National Tree Week, which we did.

We were fortunate to have the help and support of the City Arboriculturalist, Stuart Campbell and Milton Park manager Ashley Humphrey. It was a happy occasion which also recognised the centenary of the Park coming into the care of Portsmouth City Council and the Award of Green Flag status in July 2012.

The Lord Mayor said "This tree will be valued as part of the local community and hopefully become a future Green Monument".

Pauline Powell, Coordinator, Portsmouth and Southsea Tree Wardens

Hertha Ayrton (1854-1923)

Dear Portsmouth Society members,

After the demolition of 1-5 Queen St, PMC construction is building an apartment block for Guinness Hermitage and they have agreed to name it Ayrton Apartments. I believe that a plaque or information board would be appropriate to inform local people and visitors as to who Hertha Ayrton was. To this end I am seeking help in raising funds or sponsorship to help finance this. Any ideas or suggestions would be most welcome.

I can be contacted at ckennedy1@ntlworld.com

Yours hopefully, Calum Kennedy



Hertha Ayrton was born Phoebe Sarah Marks at No 6 Queen St, Portsea, and the daughter of a Polish immigrant watch maker. The family also lived in Butcher and Union streets in Portsea. At the age of eight her mother allowed young Phoebe to be taken to London to be educated by her aunt. This caused some hardship to the family because Phoebe helped her widowed mother with the sewing that she took in. Hertha's mother stayed in Portsea until old age.

Hertha was one of the earliest woman students at Girton College, where she studied physics, but being a woman she was not eligible for a degree, merely a certificate.

In 1899 the Institution of Electrical Engineers elected Ayrton their first woman member and in 1902 she was proposed for the Fellowship of the Royal Society, but Hertha's candidature was refused on the grounds that being a married woman she had no legal existence under British law. This was despite the fact that she was the first woman to be allowed to read her own paper to the Royal Society.

She became a distinguished British scientist, inventing draftsmen's devices, worked on arc lamps, improving searchlight technology and in 1915 invented a fan for dispersing poisonous gases in the trenches, 'The Ayrton Flapper'. At first the War Office dismissed her invention because of its simplicity, but finally issued some 100,000 to the troops in the trenches, saving thousands of lives.

Later she wrote to her friend Marie Curie saying 'That if I had invented a device that killed people rather than saved lives the Government would have welcomed it'. She was an active suffragette, providing safe refuge for released prisoners. She later became the vice-president of the National Union of Women's Suffrages Societies. Hertha Ayrton died of septicaemia on the 26th of August 1923.

Can anyone identify this house?



As part of some research I am carrying out, I am looking for advice and hope you may be able to help. The attached photograph shows the front of the house in Cowplain where I was raised, sadly now demolished. We were always told that when the house was built that the front, which was much grander than the rest of the building, was rescued from a former pub/hotel in Portsmouth. Can anyone identify the location of the original building or know how I may find out?

If you can help please drop a line to Mike Davies at mailbox@portsmouthsociety.org.uk.

Greening the Tricorn Car Park

As mentioned earlier in this newsletter, we have been trying for some time to brighten up Market Way, a main artery into the city. We propose to introduce container grown trees and shrubs which would be relocated when the area is finally developed, as part of the Northern Quarter scheme. Here is a picture of the dreary, tarmac and concrete wasteland crying out for some greenery.



New Horizon Elms



The New Horizon Elms pictured on a rare sunny day in January. Photo by Malcolm Reeves.

A number of New Horizon Elm trees were planted on Southsea Common in December close to Duisburg Way. The planting by Portsmouth City Council, supported by Portsmouth Tree Wardens and with financial help from the Hampshire Gardens Trust replaces specimens lost many years ago. There were insufficient funds available to plant the whole row but it is hoped to finish the project in the coming years.

Design Awards report in Autumn newsletter – a correction

In our autumn newsletter we published a report on the Society's 2012 Design Awards. For the Best Landscaping award we omitted the names of several of the artists who painted the murals on the walls at Trafalgar Gate. They are Richard Oakes, Dan Williams, Vincent Winstanley, Charlie Howkins, James Waterfield, Rob Waterfield and Mark Lewis. We apologise for this omission.

A Day Out By Train to Shoreham-by-Sea

Saturday 20 April 2013

With a maritime heritage dating back to Saxon times, the town's architecture ranges from one of England's finest Norman churches through to Berkeley Homes' riverside 'Ropetackle' development, with its striking arts centre. Shoreham is made up of three communities: Old Shoreham, to the north, up the river Adur; 'New' Shoreham, planned and built by the Normans nearer the sea, and Shoreham Beach across the river mouth.

Our day will begin with coffee in the Community Centre in Pond Road and an introductory talk about the town by a member of the Shoreham Society. After visiting the nearby St. Mary's church we will have a guided tour, taking in some of the heritage buildings and finishing at Chambers Bistro in the old town hall for lunch.

In the afternoon we will go across to explore Shoreham Beach and visit the the home of one of the houseboat residents, with his mini-museum of local memorabilia and artefacts, finishing with tea in the cafe over there. Alternatively, members can choose to visit the town's local history museum in the 12th century Marplins building in the High Street and then perhaps take the river walk upstream to the Saxon Church of St. Nicolas (sic), with views of Shoreham Airport and Lancing College Chapel.

ALL MEMBERS AND THEIR GUESTS WILL BE VERY WELCOME ON THIS TRIP !

If you have any queries please call Jackie Baynes on 02392 831 461. To book a place(s), please complete the form below, enclose a cheque for £16.50 and send them to Jackie at 17, St. Thomas's Street, Old Portsmouth, PO1 2EZ. The cost will be £16.50, to cover coffee on arrival, room hire, guided tour and 2-course lunch with coffee.

Train times are : Portsmouth Harbour Depart 8.45am/Portsmouth and Southsea 8.50am/Fratton 8.54am, all to connect with the 9.11am train to Shoreham from Havant, arriving 10.04am. There is a through train departing from Portsmouth stations at 8.29/8.33/8.37, arriving at 9.34am, if you don't mind an earlier start !

I wish to book ___ place(s) on the Shoreham trip on Saturday 20th April.

Name (please print) :

Address :

Tel. :

Email :

I enclose a cheque for £ _____, payable to 'The Portsmouth Society'.

Signed :

Date :

Architecture a la café at the Groundlings Theatre

Our Architecture a la Cafe visit in October was to The Old Beneficial School in Kent Street, Portsea. A talk and full tour of the building was led by Richard Stride of the Groundlings Theatre.



The Portsmouth Society – Membership Application & Renewal Form

To join the Society or renew your membership then please complete this form.

Title:Initials: Surname:

Address:

..... Postcode:

Tel: Email Address:

Type of Membership (Annual Rates) (please tick):

Full £10 Joint £15 Senior (over 60 yrs) £8

Student £5 Senior Couple (over 60 yrs) £10 Corporate £25

I enclose cash* / cheque* / postal order* for £..... payable to The Portsmouth Society

(*Please delete as necessary)

Gift Aid Scheme

Are you a UK taxpayer? If so, every £1 you give could be worth £1.25 to us, helping to fund our work at no cost to you. All you need to do is tick this box.

I would like the tax to be reclaimed on any eligible donations or membership subscriptions that I have ever made or will make to the Portsmouth Society until further notice. I confirm that I pay an amount of UK income or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the Portsmouth Society will reclaim.

Please notify the charity if you

1. Want to cancel this declaration
2. Change your name or home address
3. No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains

Have you any special interests? Please tick.

Historic Buildings Planning Transport Trees & Shrubs Other

How did you hear of the Society?

Signed: Date:

Data Protection: We will record only the details you supply on this form solely for administrative purposes. We will not pass this information to any third party without your prior written consent.

Please send completed form together with remittance to:

The Membership Secretary, The Portsmouth Society, 31 Allenby Grove, Fareham, Hampshire, PO16 9RP. (Please include a stamped addressed envelope).

Telephone 023 9232 7868 or email unice.conybeare@ntlworld.com for further information.