

Newsletter

Winter 2014

Dr Roger James



It is with great sadness that we report the death last November of our Vice President, Dr Roger James. Roger was a founder member of the Portsmouth Society and Honorary Secretary for many years.

In her tribute to Roger, Portsmouth Society chairman Sue McClory wrote "He was clearly a visionary, a man ahead of his time by twenty years. He could see the issues ahead, knew what should be done, and stood up for what he believed in despite the opposition. A man of principal whose ideas have been adopted as best practice in areas of health, housing, planning and heritage is an example to us all".

Sue's tribute appears on page 2 along with Dr Ray Riley's memories of Roger.

Record Year for the Design Awards

No fewer than five awards and several Commendations were given in the four categories of the Design Competition.

Best New Building Winner - The Limes, St James' Hospital. Commended - Portsmouth University Marine Laboratory, New council houses at Henrietta Place Somerstown.

Best Restoration Winner - Spitbank Fort.

Best Reuse Joint Winners - Former Grave Diggers pub, St Cuthbert's Church Copnor.

Best Landscaping Winner - Baffins Pond. Commended - Portsmouth's Naval War Memorial.

Turn to page 5 for the full report.

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Meetings and Events

All are welcome to our monthly meetings and other events. Coffee and biscuits are available from 6.45pm. For the latest information and updates call David Baynes on 02392 831 461 or visit www.portsmouthsociety.org.uk.

Wednesdays 5 February 7-9pm. St. George's Building, Old Portsmouth, PO1 2HY	Portsmouth's Cemeteries and Burial Grounds make a valuable contribution to the city's open spaces. Gerry O'Brien is responsible for them and will tell us about their history and present day management.
Saturday 22 February 10.15am. Meet at St Cuthbert's Church, Lichfield Road, Copnor	Design Awards Plaque Unveilings and Presentation of Commendation Certificates by Lord Mayor, Cllr Lynne Stagg, at St. Cuthbert's Church, Lichfield Road, Copnor 10.15am (refreshments) and thence to Baffins Pond and The Limes at St. James's Hospital. Come and look around 3 of the winners!
Wednesday 12 March 7-9pm. St. George's Building, Old Portsmouth, PO1 2HY	Deniz Beck of Southsea architects PLC Partnership will tell the story of how Spitbank Fort has become an amazing and beautiful hotel, while still retaining its historical integrity.. Note: This meeting is on the 2nd Wednesday in March.
Wednesday 2 April 7.30-9.30pm. Royal Maritime Club, Queen Street close to train & bus stations. Car park in Havant St.	AGM followed by the New Theatre Royal project. Caroline Sharman will be giving us an update and full details of the New Theatre Royal project, which will be in its final stages. She will also talk about her varied career working as a theatre and opera director, both in the UK and countries as varied as Mexico, Greece and Mauritius.
Saturday 26 April (Provisional Date)	All-day visit to Arundel - our annual day out by train exploring the heritage and architecture of a town you may not have visited recently.
Wednesday 14 May	Members' meeting at Royal Maritime Club. Speaker TBA.
Wednesday 11 June	Members' meeting at Royal Maritime Club. Speaker TBA.
Wednesday 2 July	Evening architectural walk around Ryde with Ben Cracknell. Hovercraft time to be advised.

Roger James 5.1.1921 - 14.11.2013.

When I first joined the Portsmouth Society I realised that Roger was a knowledgeable person with regard to buildings and planning matters in Portsmouth. His input was invaluable when discussing both individual planning applications, and making submissions on City Plans and other consultation processes. He provided me with

support in my role as Chairman and offered his home as a meeting place when preparing paperwork, as well as being a mentor and mediator during difficult times.

I looked back through some early paperwork to discover that he had chosen to work as a GP when he had opportunities to become a consultant, and he represented disadvantaged people who suffered from appalling housing conditions and health issues. He served the Society as chair of a sub-committee, Secretary, Librarian and as administrator for the Design Awards over his many years of service, but he also had the ability to explain technical matters in layman's terms to make knowledge accessible to non-experts.

His interests included waste disposal, climate change and transport – all very important issues for Portsmouth, and he vigorously campaigned to prevent many large roads from being created in the City and the resultant demolition of large areas of housing and historic buildings.

Roger never boasted of his achievements and many of us remained unaware of his wide-ranging skills, but more than that he was clearly a visionary, a man ahead of his time by twenty years. He could see the issues ahead, knew what should be done, and stood up for what he believed in despite the opposition. A man of principle whose ideas have been adopted as best practice in areas of health, housing, planning and heritage is an example to us all.

Sue McClory

Roger James – A tribute from Ray Riley

I had known Roger more or less since the inauguration of the Portsmouth Society, but an opportunity arose to further my acquaintance round about 1980 when I was working on a Portsmouth Paper concerning Thomas Ellis Owen's houses. Someone, probably Celia Clark who knows about these things, mentioned that Roger actually inhabited one of the great man's premises, so I secured an invite. Knowing that Roger was a medical doctor - a profession with which I seemed constantly to be at odds - I prepared for a lukewarm half hour or so. But very quickly the half smile and merry twinkle in the eye came to the fore in answering my questions; from time to time one meets somebody who creates a really favourable impression and Roger certainly did. I suspect it might have been mutual since I was invited to lunch.

Over the years I had watched with admiration Roger's subtle management skill in restraining Celia Clark's enormous enthusiasms at Portsmouth Society meetings, and was impressed by a talk he gave to the Society on the UK energy market. This was so full of fairly technical detail that I mentioned the fact afterwards, only to discover that Roger had initially studied mathematics before switching to medicine. What is more, after retiring as a GP Roger experimented with hypnotherapy, successfully curing many of their devotion to nicotine. Some of us once asked him for a demonstration; his

carefully modulated tone certainly made one slightly comatose even though the treatment, so to speak, lasted only 10 minutes.

This was not all, for on a visit to his house I spotted on a shelf a Pelican book about the philosopher Karl Popper by someone called Roger James. To my shame I thought the name was a coincidence, but that half smile assured me that it was not and that philosophy was another of his interests. Since to have something accepted for a Pelican was a goal scored by only a few academics, I realised that I was indeed in the company of a polymath. Added to all this cerebral activity was a wartime career as a Royal Artillery officer. If you were at the funeral I hope you noticed that, in a truly nice touch, Roger's medals were affixed to his coffin. Even while matters military were of prime concern Roger found time to compile notes for his book on Field Marshal Montgomery. Putting pen to paper was, for Roger, something of an addiction, but once more I only came to realise this when I was presented with his book *Putting People Right*. The title really is a misnomer for the work is not full of hubris, but rather a collection of closely argued letters to such as *The Times*, *Independent*, *Guardian* and *New Society* on a variety of subjects, and correspondence with nationally known luminaries such as Enoch Powell and AJP Taylor. Perhaps I am biased, but Roger always did seem to be right.

For some years Roger was a City Councillor seeking to support less privileged members of society, quite apart from the medical support he gave to society as a whole. I edited the Portsmouth Society's book *Maritime City* in which Roger had two chapters, both making good use of his work on the Council. One was about transport planning, highlighting the scheme to run a dual carriageway as far south as Goldsmith Avenue, which Roger successfully argued against. The other was concerned with sewerage, a subject dear to no one's heart, but which the perceptive Roger could see was a pretty important issue. At several meetings over the book another Jamesian trait emerged - the liking for discussion, especially about abstractions. He argued that ship repair was a service and therefore distinct from shipbuilding which was manufacturing. Since both used the same facilities I considered both to be manufacturing. Indeed no ship had been built in Portsmouth Dockyard for 40 years, but thousands worked there. Roger would have none of this and suggested we move on since others present had lost interest. A clever ploy I thought. As editor I had a few queries to put to the contributors, but Roger alone failed to reply to my letters. Exasperated, I called upon him one day for an explanation. Unabashed, Roger said that it was not widely known that he had invented an entirely new element of domestic architecture, the bottomless pit which was located immediately behind the front door letter box, rendering letters irretrievable. Somewhat far-fetched I thought at the time, but I was nevertheless amused at his amusement at my discomfort. Needless to say the queries were answered, and some rebutted good naturedly, within minutes.

As that quasi-philosopher Frances Albert Sinatra said 'Chicago my kind of town'. Well, Roger James, my kind of man.

Ray Riley

Record Year for the Design Awards

No fewer than five awards and several Commendations were given in the four categories of the Design Competition: Best Restoration, Best Reuse, Best New Building and Best Landscaping.

Best New Building Award Winner: The Limes, St James's Hospital



The Limes, an in-patient acute treatment mental health unit for older patients in the beautiful grounds of St. James's Hospital in Milton. Designed by architects IBI Nightingales of Brighton and built by Keir Southern (Construction), its light filled, calm and beautifully detailed spaces have seats in the corridors where patients and nurses can rest, with views out to the lovely gardens which patients can freely access. This was the only

entry with significant public art - apart from the restored Osmund Kay windows relocated in St. Cuthbert's. Commissioned by Portsmouth City Primary Care Trust, Ben Barrell's beautiful Dignity is by the front entrance. Tree by Alyosha Moeran and Guy Stevens is in the north garden.

New buildings – commendations

Commendations in the Best New Building category were the Portsmouth University Marine Laboratory at Eastney, with its varied blue panels reflecting the sky and surrounding sea. Important research into human interaction with the coastal marine environment takes place here, including pollution damage to aquatic organisms, the impact of biofuel technology development and marine conservation strategies. Also Commended are the new council houses at Henrietta Place in Somerstown, designed for larger families by the City Architects, winners of numerous previous awards. The large well- planned rooms are much appreciated by the residents.

Best Restoration Award



Spitbank Fort – Winner

Spitbank Fort has been impressively transformed into an extraordinary hospitality venue by Clarendon's owner Mike Clare, who also owns the other seaforts : No Man's Land and Horse Sand. Spitbank's mechanical services have been

renewed, its massive brick, iron and teak structure carefully repaired, while new facilities: a professional kitchen, glamorous bedrooms and bathrooms and bar have been sensitively inserted. PLC Architects were the designers and interior design was by Carol Clare. Drayton firm ITD Consultants were responsible for the planning and design of all the engineering services in this challenging location. Other firms involved included structural engineers Hamill Davies, service engineers Lowe & Oliver, and contractors Newman Scott. Together they have brought this neglected Ancient Monument back to life.

Best Reuse Award - former Grave Diggers pub - Joint winner



Joint winner of the Best Reuse Award is the conversion of the former Grave Diggers pub in Highland Road into an airy, dramatic new home for exceptional clients, Val and Jackie Walker. Little of the inside of the pub was worth keeping, though the barrel slope survives in the basement. The interior was completely transformed by architect Carl Leroy Smith and the building work was carried out by contractors McCann. The judges particularly enjoyed the elegant new

metal and wood staircase designed by the architect and made locally by Will Chamberlain Joinery and Harrison Industrial.



St Cuthbert's Church Copnor- Joint winner

The other joint winner of the Best Reuse Award is the extraordinary and imaginative insertion of new facilities: meeting halls, doctors' surgeries, nursery school, education base and renewed church, all within the massive spaces of the listed St. Cuthbert's Copnor, built in 1914. This has been a long term project over fourteen years, led by the Rev. David Power and his congregation, who had to raise £4.5 million and

use a school hall for worship for four years. The architect was Nicholas Lee Evans and there were four builders : Ash Construction, (surgery/hall/entrance/lift/stairs), Austins, (flats), Habens, (community rooms) and Davies Developments, (worship area/entrance). The place hums with activity throughout the week, fulfilling the important sustainability criteria of the Awards: reuse of an existing building - now home to dramatically increased social activity, energy conservation and sustainable design.

Best Landscaping Award - Baffins Pond – Winner

The extensive work on Baffins Pond by Portsmouth City Council's Parks and Recreation Services, including new edges and planting into the wetland areas, is the winner of the Best Landscaping Award. The judges were impressed by the richness of the wildlife



using the pond and local people's involvement in education and recreation, including fishing. The Environment Agency was one of the funders, the designers were Adrian Rozier and Peter Burrard-Lucas and the contractors were Stronghold and Aquascience.

Portsmouth's Naval War Memorial – Commended

Commended is the excellent and detailed restoration of Portsmouth's Naval War Memorial on Southsea seafront by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Re-bronzing of the plaques and the figures at the summit, meticulous repointing of the Portland stone tower and sandstone paving and new landscaping demonstrate the Commission's commitment to long lasting restoration of our most important seafront memorial.

Also viewed ...

The judges also saw Waterside School's Sports Centre at Tipner, Wells Terrace (ex-Beresford Arms) in Twyford Avenue, Copnor Green housing at Copnor Bridge, James Terrace housing in Clarendon Road Southsea, Summerson Lodge sheltered housing in Milton Road, the Sea Survival Training Centre on Horsea Island, and the Foyer young people's hostel in the city centre.

The Judges

The judges, who spent two full days exploring new work in the city were: Paul Williams, architect from Winchester; James Wood, architect from Headley near Guildford, Jane Davies, retired Southampton conservation officer and Celia Clark of the Portsmouth Society.

Unveiling / presentation of plaques and presentation commendation certificates

The morning of Saturday 22nd February has been fixed as the date for the unveiling / presentation of plaques and presentation of commendation certificates for the 2013 Design Awards. The event will begin at 10.15am at St. Cuthbert's Church in Lichfield Road off Hayling Avenue in Copnor. The Lord Mayor, Councillor Lynne Stagg, will unveil St. Cuthbert's blue plaque and present plaques to two other winners. We will then move on down Hayling Avenue to Baffins Pond to unveil the Best Landscape Award plaque. Finally we will visit Best New Building winner 'The Limes' at St. James's Hospital to unveil their plaque.

How to nominate a building or scheme

If you would like to nominate a new building, restoration or landscaping scheme for consideration in the next competition please download the nomination form from www.portsmouthsociety.org.uk or contact David Baynes on 023 9283 1461.

Portsmouth Society Moves Forward

I would like to say a big thank you to those members who joined us for an evening at the Royal Maritime Club to discuss ideas to promote the Society, encourage more membership, and to provide new opportunities to learn about Portsmouth. So many great ideas, we will certainly be working on several areas to enable members to gain more from their membership, and we are also asking some of you to become involved in delivering those projects.

We are often asked to 'do something' about a planning application but have a very small team to undertake this work, so we hope to add a couple of new people to this group, and also provide members with the tools and skills to take an active role. I do hope we can run some training sessions on how to evaluate planning applications and proposals for large schemes, as I too would like to know what sort of questions to ask developers and architects.

We are also considering some tours and talks at both historic buildings and new developments, and as 2014 is focussed on WWI and D-Day we might use that as a theme -would anyone like to coordinate this? Simon is hoping to involve some students from the University of Portsmouth in designing the new Society Website, another student group is interested in running some joint guest speaker evenings, while we hope students will become involved with some of our future projects. Ideas include surveys/campaigns for trees or street-furniture issues, making short film documentaries about particular buildings, and presentations to members of student dissertation projects relevant to Portsmouth.

We hope to offer some interesting tours and visits in 2014, but would like someone to take on this role – you do not need to be on the committee. Other opportunities for members include writing an article for the newsletter to update people about developments in your local area, or some interesting information on some buildings of historical or design interest, up to 1000 words with a photo – please submit your ideas to John Holland (mailbox@portsmouthsociety.org.uk).

If any of you are interested in committee work, we have a vacancy for a minute secretary and a Chairman (as I shall be stepping down in April). If you enjoy using computers how about taking on the Newsletter? Or designing a PowerPoint Presentation to use for promoting the Portsmouth Society? If you have any ideas or contact with people about buildings we can tour that are not normally accessible to the public, please speak to David Baynes. Would you be willing to run a fundraising activity? or prepared to work on grant applications for project funds? A member has expressed an interest in examining areas of local history which are under-researched,

would you like to join this group? Whatever your interest or expertise, if you are passionate about Portsmouth, be part of spreading the word to others and promoting interest in history and the built environment. I look forward to hearing from you . . .

Historic Environment Meeting

In November David Baynes and I represented the Society at an important meeting regarding the Historic Estate in Portsmouth. Many individual people and groups are concerned about the fabric and use of our historic buildings, their ownership, neglect and many other aspects, so I had suggested to Stephen Baily that a face-to-face meeting on a regular basis would enable information and reports to be prepared, full and frank discussions to be made, and actions agreed. Our President Celia Clark and her colleagues from Hampshire Building Preservation Trust, English Heritage, Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust, Wymering Manor, South Parade Trust and John Pounds Community Trust met with the team from PCC, chaired by Gerald Vernon Jackson to discuss the condition of buildings, future plans, and options available to assist with bringing these buildings back into use or obtaining funds or assistance in kind to repair and maintain their fabric.

We were provided with a summary of buildings in HM Naval Base, their condition and strategy for repair and re-use; we discussed South Parade Pier, Treadgolds, Wymering Manor, Southsea Castle and a tramshelter; and also reviewed insurance of historic assets, listings, obtaining finance and bidding for funds. There was so much to be gained from the expert knowledge sitting round the table, that everyone agreed it was a beneficial meeting, and we will be looking at scheduling another meeting in February if possible. It makes you proud when you realise just how much heritage Portsmouth has in its historic buildings, but also brought back to reality when the problem of caring for them and planning their future is a big burden in terms of the knowledge and money required.

“Southern Comfort 2013” - Civic Associations get-together

Guildford’s oldest building, St Mary’s church, was the venue for a gathering, hosted by the Guildford Society, of civic societies, trusts and associations in the South East, under the “Southern Comfort” banner. Originally started by the Portsmouth Society its catchment area has extended considerably in the South East region, from Oxford to Salisbury to the Kent coast.

There were three clear matters of concern to societies: (1) Local plans and the National Planning Policy Framework, (2) Relevance to younger generations, invigorating membership and (3) protection of historic character and the pressure for growth.

Julian Lyon, who has coordinated the Guildford Society’s response to the Borough’s request for comment on their Local Plan evidence base, addressed the first. On the second, a paper from David Chesneau, the ex-chairman of the Camberley Society was read. In it he set out how the new “social media” had become central to sharing civic

concerns and building a following among all age groups. And on the protection of character Anna Hummel spoke about the importance of design excellence to ensure the heritage of the future, emphasising the need to support good architects and their work. Group discussions, one on each of those themes made the following conclusions.

The impact of local plans and the NPPF

Attention was drawn to pressure on the green belt and the urgency of finding a solution to the “duty to cooperate”, and also to the pressure to accommodate housing figures – how do we mitigate this? And we need to insist on defining the difference between need and demand. Action through local publicity must be taken to oppose unwanted development. The theme of inappropriate retail and how to resist it was raised, querying where the civic movement might help boroughs achieve this. Development pressure on infrastructure – schools, roads etc. – requires action by civic societies to cooperate and show councils what can be done.. And there’s a role for the civic societies to encourage neighbourhood groups.

Relevance to younger generations

Reading’s chairman asked “how to invigorate the membership and committee members – lest we croak?”. The group concluded that we must look hard at who we represent and at which groups (demographic – new estates without residents’ associations?) are missing – and target these. We could raise our profile through attendance at events and through media coverage. A properly maintained website nowadays must include facebook and twitter links – and e-mail “capture”. Other useful suggestions for action include offering membership as a prize in raffles at public events, carefully examining the timing of meetings and charges for them in relation to the membership subscription, and exchanging details with other bodies offering similar speakers to give better coverage.

The protection of historic character in the face of pressure for growth

The main need is for a real masterplan and core strategy to protect historic character. There should be a targeted communications programme and a list of key sites where buildings must present good architecture. Both publicity and all dealings with authority must be based on an objective recital of facts with no ‘spin’. Building an effective relationship with the local authority is essential, and Civic Societies should lobby for the post of Conservation Officer if not yet established. Societies can consider the need for conservation areas if none exist.

With these shared thoughts discussion continued over lunch followed by a walk-about when the hosts, were able to show off some of the delights of their town – which like so many is under constant threat from the growing pressures of commerce, ever-increasing traffic volumes and the demand for housing. All expressed their appreciation of the value of the opportunity to share problems. We are grateful for this mutual

strengthening – in the original meaning of the word “comfort” – and look forward to the invitation to a follow-on from one of our fellow-societies.

Portsmouth Naval Base – underpinning the nation's security through the 21st century



Aerial view of Portsmouth Dockyard. Crown Copyright.

By chance the Portsmouth Society's long booked address by Captain Iain Greenlees RN on 6 November 2013 coincided with the BAE feared but expected announcement to cease shipbuilding in the City.

Iain Greenlees, who is responsible for organising the work needed to transform the Naval Base to being fit for purpose to receive the new aircraft carriers (Platforms!) and supporting vessels referred

to the announcement but in the context of the Naval Base having a long term stable and bright future being 'Home Base' for the greatest amount of 'Grey' tonnage based in the City since the early 1950s the maintenance of which should provide opportunities for some of the skilled staff being displaced from ship building.

The audience were told there continues to be an important role for the British Navy because 95% of the UK trade is carried by sea and forecasts are that by 2020 35% of the UK energy needs will be carried in tankers which equates to a vessel every 300 miles between the UK & the Gulf where the RN maintains a significant presence to deter a constant threat of pirates who may not follow the conventional rules of engagement!

Established in 1194 Portsmouth is recognised as the world's oldest operational dockyard which has evolved over the centuries to serve the sea going fleet with significant remodelling during the 1866 to 75 to defend against the anticipated French invasion, then at the turn of the 20th Century to cope with the needs of the Dreadnoughts class Battleships and now the functional but not efficient Naval Base is in line for a £³/₄bn transformation to accommodate the largest vessels ever commissioned by the Navy starting with a £40m contract is to dredge 3.2million cubic meters of silt to enable the Platform carriers to come 'alongside' new and refurbished jetties that will be served by 7 cranes down from the current 12 and one time high of 35 throughout the 'old' base. A significant challenge will be to find sufficient power to supply

'alongside' vessels. One option could be for the Naval base to provide its own power station perhaps by recycling the huge Vosper/BaE ship building shed.

Whilst the surface fleet is diminishing in numbers, new craft are cutting edge world leading defence machines designed to be at sea for 300 days/year. The carriers weigh in at 100 tonnes per crew member as compared with 15 tonnes per man when HMS Victory was at sea. An increasing amount of routine maintenance will be done at sea to reduce port turn round times between dry dockings which will still have to be done every six years. There are 6 European shipyards capable of dry docking the carriers - Rosyth is the only one in the UK.

During 2012 Portsmouth was the UK's second busiest port recording 100,000 shipping movements, 3000 berthings including 60 for maintenance work and 34 cruise liners rising to 43 in 2013. Although most of the shipping is commercial the Harbour is controlled by the Queen's Harbour Master so military craft always have priority and the whole Harbour will have to be a standstill when the new Carriers are moving around.

Half of the nation's 6500 seagoing sailors will have Portsmouth as 'Home Port'. About 2000 sailors are based at shore establishments round the UK, several in SE Hampshire, between sea going deployments so there is an increasing emphasis for domestic stability with well supported families rather than the 'old' way of families being shipped to married quarters in distant places and hence the importance of the City signing the Military compact.

The capacity audience could only but be impressed by Iain's commitment to the Senior Service and flattered that he was so willing to share his enthusiasm for the huge task to regenerate the Dockyard to cater for the Navy's foreseeable needs and the consequential long term benefit for Portsmouth and the sub region. Mindful a prime interest of the Society is for the Built environment, past, present and promoting excellent design into the future and that the five sites under the Naval Base control contain 117 listed buildings some of which will have been poorly maintained then there should be an a role for the Society to be an enlightened critical friend appreciating the need for change will require restructuring parts of the Naval Base estate so to encourage and help find realistic and sustainable uses for the best of the 'old' that can be saved and prompting world class design for any new builds that will quite possibly have a 50 year life span – let's hope both the Navy and Society can rise to the challenge.

Charles Burns

Portsmouth City Council's Planning Department

At a meeting in September, Claire Upton-Brown, City Development Manager at Portsmouth City Council, described the new structure of the planning department. The focus would now look towards regional investment to enhance the city's reputation, attract investment and grants to enable development.

Development Control is a regulatory team, but their new focus would be on getting the best outcome, which could involve looking for creative solutions to problems. This would move away from a box-ticking culture.

Portsmouth has little land available for development. Vacant land was often of a challenging quality or high value. Solutions would include looking at sharing of facilities and how proposals would sit within a community, instead of looking at isolated sites.

The economy appeared to be picking up with the number of building sites in Portsmouth. The Contaminated Land group were helping developers with various issues. The Policy Team were working on site allocations; identifying housing sites and development opportunities in addition they were discussing PCC policies with developers to help them understand the requirements.

There were a large number of small/medium business start-ups but also a large number of failures, so the 'skills and training' section within the department would be looking at these issues and working as a link between employers and colleges to ensure the balance of courses was right. This was not specifically about the details of 'education' which is why it falls in the planning department.

Strategic Projects were working on many big items (Tipner for example) but also in an enabling role with regards to the important tasks in sewerage and fresh water upgrades of facilities and piping etc.

Building Control as a profession contains many people in the older age group, and there is an urgent need to train and recruit some graduates. This will be done in partnership with Gosport and Fareham to share the load/cost between, which cannot be done by Portsmouth alone.

Conservation has changed from 1.5 to 1 officer which will now be a proactive role with the emphasis on an outward-facing view. It is hoped to improve the aspect of heritage/listed buildings that they can be marketed as an asset for Portsmouth.

Sue McClory

An update on "THE STORY OF SOUTHSEA ROCK GARDENS"

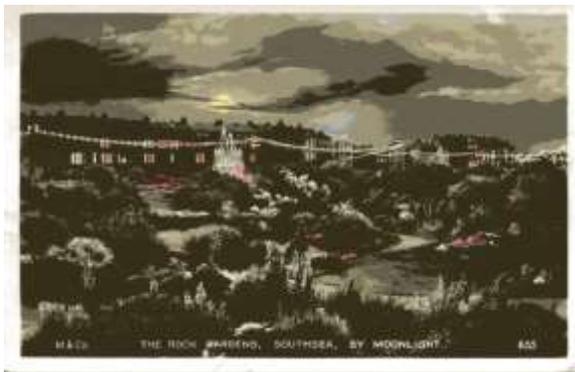
Firstly, I want to thank all Society members and friends who have supported this publication by purchasing a copy. Also, for all the kind comments which I received at the time of publication.

Sales have been excellent, with peaks whenever I speak to local groups about the Gardens. By early August I was able to donate £100 to Portsmouth Society funds. In early October the Spinnaker Tower gift shop



Portsmouth Society News Wint

agreed to take copies, along with the other outlets shown on the flyer. In June I was invited to talk to Terry Powell on Express FM and in July to Tony Smith on Angel Radio. I also did a follow-up interview with Terry in December. I recently gave a successful talk to the Visually Impaired Group who meet in Southsea Library - selling 10 copies and receiving additional memories of the Rock Gardens, especially the Pavilion. If you know of any groups which you think might like to have me along please let me know (02392 831 461).



As a keen postcard collector I went to a postcard fair in Shoreham-by-Sea in October, where I was delighted to find the earliest view of the Gardens I have so far seen. The card was posted on 17th September 1929 - just a year after the Gardens opened. It was captioned 'The New Grotto Gardens' - the first and only time I have seen this name used. Looking closely,

workmen can be seen still constructing the fountain pool and cascade !

During a recent visit to the Market House Tavern at Mile End - now completely re-furbished and re-born as the 'Ferry House Lodge' B&B - I mentioned my book and a member of staff produced a splendid framed photograph of the Gardens dating from the 1930s.



In early December at our annual Design Awards evening, Society member Martin Yates very kindly gave me another unseen mid-thirties colour-tinted postcard from the same series as the one on p.4 of the book - the publisher being identified on the back as Mills & Co. Ltd of Portsmouth. It is captioned 'The Rock Gardens, Southsea by Moonlight' and it does indeed truly look like 'an earthly fairyland'.

Amongst the further information that has emerged about the Pavilion is that in the early 1950s one of the first 'Any Questions' was broadcast from there, chaired by Freddy Grisewood. An employee of Trans-Data, a Petersfield computer company, has

told me that in the late 70s it was the venue for their annual dinner dances - showing once more just how popular the venue was across a very wide area. Also, I have come across an advertisement for the 'Southsea Old Tyme Dance Club', who it seems met regularly in the Pavilion on Tuesdays from 1954 onwards.

In November 'The News' agreed to take copies of my book to display and sell in their local offices and members may have noticed that it has featured in the regular promotional advertisements in the paper. In fact their Lake Road office closed at Christmas and will re-open in the New Year in the foyer of the Central Library, meaning that it and many other admirable local history books will be seen by and be easily available to all library users.

I have more talks to clubs and societies booked for 2014 - these are also a chance to promote the Society and recruit new members. Do please continue to mention the book to family and friends, especially those who have fond memories of Southsea's 'golden years' - the more I sell the more income it means for the Society !



Jackie Baynes

The Story of Bob's Bench

This is a well-kept secret! Whilst on a visit to the Historic Dockyard we saw a bench just inside the entrance on the right near the Porter's garden and lots of other slabs of granite lying around outside the No6 shed. I spoke to Celia who put me on to the Naval



Base Property Trust who offered to help. I visited the Dockyard and met Peter Lambert the surveyor who showed me loads of pieces of granite but ended up saying "why don't you take the bench already made up?" (The secret is it was given us gratis)

I had already taken Bob Adderley's son Terry to a stonemason behind the Eastney pumping station and discussed costs of a granite bench suitably engraved. The Pyramids management had agreed to a bench, once it was established that the forecourt was part of their lease.

We agreed with Darren from the mason's yard that he would collect the slab in his van, engrave it and put it in position. The granite proved unsuitable for lettering direct as the face kept spalling off so he did it on a separate piece and set it in flush. Another small piece has been set in the end of the slab in recognition of the Naval dockyard from where the stone originated and the mason's name.

It was all in place for the 2nd anniversary of Bob's death, 15th Dec 11, in front of the oak tree, which is growing well now. Terry suggested we have a summer picnic by the bench as it was not very attractive in the winter. (too cold to sit on!)

Having read in the News about the vandalism that goes on around Portsmouth with the destruction of timber benches I had in mind something more substantial and am grateful to the Pyramids for letting it happen on their patch where Bob was so active.

Malcolm Reeves

Tree Officer Report Winter 2013

Members of the Society, Portsmouth and Southsea Tree Wardens, friends, children and associates took part in several events to celebrate our local treescape.



On Saturday 5 October we took part in a tree identification walk around Ravelin Park led by Pauline Powell. We discovered the truly diverse tree planting to be treasured by all in this central location and enjoyed coffee in The Corner Café (Ex Wig & Pen Pub) afterwards.

Picture by Jackie Baynes

National Tree Week

On Saturday 23 November in Wimbledon Park, Southsea, Tree Wardens and members of the Society took part in the planting of two cherry trees, a willow dome and an opal plum tree. It was a happy occasion organized by Claire Seek with many children taking part. A week later, we helped the Lord Mayor and pupils from St John's College finish off one of the historic tree lined avenues that the Council have been re-planting with New Horizon disease resistant elms on Southsea Common. They were planted along the footpath that stretches from Duisburg Way/Western Parade to Pier Road/Pier Road.



Jon Stokes a Director of the Tree Council took an active part. The Tree Wardens contribution of £1000 towards the planting comes from the legacy of Muriel Stubbs, via Portsmouth Friends of the Earth Association.

Picture by Jon Stokes

The Greening of the edge of the Tricorn car park project is making slow progress. A mirror dinghy has been donated as a planting feature and 4D and Southern Water are considering donating trees and shrubs. They will also be replacing the fruit trees and bushes they have had to remove at Hilsea Fruiting Hedge as part of the new Portsmouth City Sewer/Drainage works.

Pauline Powell

Meeting with Leader of Portsmouth City Council

Portsmouth Society representatives meet with the PCC Leader, Councillor Gerald Vernon Jackson about three times a year to discuss various items of interest for Portsmouth and its people. In October we discussed the greening of the Tricorn edge which Pauline is progressing with the interested parties, and the financial support for the PCC Avenue of Elms on Southsea Common. We discussed many of the historic buildings requiring attention, South Parade Pier for example, and the changes taking place in the HM Dockyard – the command structure will change during 2014 on the retirement of Commander Cochrane, with the merging of roles etc. The Pyramids tender resulted in the appointment of BHLive taking over as operators.

New buildings were also an important topic with action on the Northern Quarter starting up, Gerald was please that Cascades had a positive working relationship with the developers and we all hope this results in an integrated solution. Tesco Fratton development consultation had raised concerns about delivery vehicles during the night, the Portsmouth Society had questioned design of parking area, bus routes and other matters, Gerald had asked these large employers to provide work experience, apprenticeships or jobs to those children leaving the care system – what a great idea. Charles suggested that Colas and the business leaders from Shaping Portsmouth might join the scheme too. We were pleased to hear that violent crime in the busy areas of night-time economy were reduced by 40% in Guildhall Walk and by 10% in Palmerston Road.

Sue McClory

The Future of English Heritage



ENGLISH HERITAGE

In June 2013 the Chancellor announced that the government would be consulting on proposed changes to how English Heritage delivers its services, specifically the management and maintenance of the National Heritage Collection.

We now know that a new charitable arm, retaining the name English Heritage will be responsible for managing all of the historic sites, while a new organisation called "Historic England" will be created and keep responsibilities for advising on and helping to conserve England's wider historic environment.

The new charitable status will give English Heritage freedom to raise funds – with a target of finding £83 million from third parties.

Civic Voice will develop a briefing and share it with members. As a movement, we have a once in a generation opportunity to influence the future protection of the nation's historic environment. The consultation is published on the UK Government web site (<http://tinyurl.com/qgcm2t9>) and send any initial thoughts to info@civicvoice.org.uk.

Distressed Town Centre Report

Rejuvenating town centres requires radical action on a scale not seen since the building programmes of post-war Britain, according to a new report.

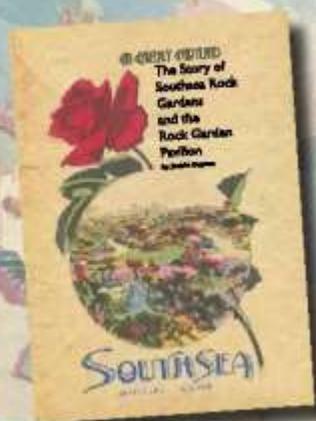
The Distressed Town Centre Property Taskforce says structural changes needed in retail are so fundamental, many towns and cities need reshaping.

The taskforce was set up following Mary Portas's review of the High Street and one of the main recommendations is that the government should designate town and city centres as key national infrastructure in order to open up new funding opportunities.

The report found that in the past four decades, retail floor space in England increased by around 43 million square metres.

That is the equivalent of building nearly 300 Bluewater Shopping centres across England, or seven of the new Westfield centres near the London Olympic site every year since the early 1970s.





AN EARTHY FAIRYLAND

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