

Portsmouth Society News

The Newsletter of The Portsmouth Society - January 2003



The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress inspect one of the displays in Boathouse 6.

Design Competition 2002

On 5th December the Lord Mayor, Councillor Elaine Baker, unveiled our plaques for the Portsmouth Society's annual Design Competition.

The **Best Restoration Award** went to the spectacular restoration and conversion of Boathouse 6, one of Portsmouth's finest buildings, in the Heritage area of Portsmouth Naval Base. This pioneering Victorian iron framed building has been given a sparkling new lease of life by master architects MacCormac, Jamieson and Prichard, in an exhilarating combination of magnificent nineteenth century structure and elegant modern insertion.

Boathouse 6 has been adapted to include the Action Stations exhibition for the active navy, a 250 seat auditorium and teaching accommodation for the university on an upper floor. Most dramatic was the way the architects have fitted the obviously modern supports for the auditorium into the 150-year old cast iron structure of the building.

The Landport Community Garden won the **Best Landscaping Award**. It is a genuine community effort, drawing in the local children and very imaginative - banana trees grown from seed for example. The Lord Mayor was accompanied to both sites by her sister, the Lady Mayoress. The two of them make a marvellous team, radiating jolliness and showing more enthusiastic interest in the buildings and the people involved with them than any previous Lord Mayors.

This year we didn't give a **Best New Building** award as there was no one outstanding building. Instead we gave certificates of commendation to five worthy new buildings each of which might have earned the plaque in a leaner year: two new buildings at St Luke's Secondary School, Southsea - a design and technology block and a sports hall including a delightful swimming pool - and a sparkling new classroom block at Court Lane Infant School in Drayton, all by the City Architects; a group of three terrace houses of imaginative interior design, Nos 17, 17A and 18 High Street, Old Portsmouth; and the refurbished landmark tower block and library at Highbury College.



Jim Cable speaks before the Lord Mayor unveils the plaque at Landport Community Garden. The plaque is hidden behind the banana plant leaf.

The plaques were beautifully made this year by John Phillipson, a Southsea sculptor and potter, to the original design by Clive Nethercott.

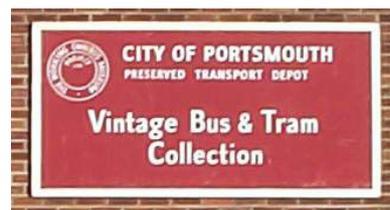
Entries for the 2003 competition are being accepted now so - have your say! Judging will take place in September and we'd welcome your nominations. Remember that for inclusion in the 2003 competition, all schemes must have been completed by 31st December 2002.

RJ

In this edition .. Design Competition 2002, 30th Anniversary, Brent Goose Strategy, Broad Street Bus Museum, Commercial Road Fountain, Sale of the Century, New Road Centre, Impact of the Signing Strategy, Book Review, St James's Hospital Grounds, Wymering Manor Update, Vulcan Building, Gunwharf, Manhattan on Portsmouth Harbour?, Pompeyspeak - more readers' comments, Meetings and events ...

Broad Street Bus Museum under threat

For some years we have been concerned about the future of this very popular collection of preserved buses and a tram which has been under threat. The City Council's Property Services department have been keen to move them as their building is in bad repair and its site in Broad Street, Old Portsmouth, is very valuable for housing.



In March 2001 a meeting of the City Council decided that they should be allowed to stay where they are for the time being; but now they are under threat again because the developer of the adjoining site - what was Lucas's chandlers and sailmakers - has made a tempting offer for the bus site. Apparently the state of the garage is so bad that it is not a realistic option to plan to keep the buses there for any more than a very few years.

The present location is ideal; the buses provide a focus of interest for the many people who just like to stroll around the Camber area but who would be unlikely to make a special journey to see the buses or ride in them were a new site to be found for them. Our solution is for the Council to build a new shed for them out of the profit they will make by selling the bus site for development; and site it alongside the two that remain of the six sheds that formerly stood on the Town Quay, East Street, on the Camber.

RJ

Manhattan on Portsmouth Harbour?

As you may know, there are current planning applications for two very large buildings at the back of the Gunwharf site for a total 465 new dwellings including 120 affordable units in the form of key worker accommodation (26%). The Society is opposed to both of them as they stand. Details of the two new blocks are:

A*36334/EE 'East Side Plaza' site Three linked blocks of 4/5/6/8 storeys rising to 13 storeys and 26 storeys to form retail units on ground floor up to 2089 square metres with 307 dwellings over.

A*36334/EF 7/11 storeys to form day nursery, up to 583 square metres and function hall up to 982 square metres and 158 dwellings over and hotel (under construction)

The south block rises from 4 to 7, 13 and 26 storeys, and builds up to a focal point opposite the 8 storeys of Canalside (at present being built) which has a roof top element. It is claimed to be a counterpoint to the scale of the end of the tower at the other end of the Millennium Boulevard. The 26 storeys are 80m high; the Spinnaker (not yet built) is 95-100-105m, for the viewing platforms, 150m to the top. To give you an idea of scale, Millgate House in St. George's Square across the railway line is 18 storeys.

The Society is not opposed to tall buildings, and had anticipated that Gunwharf would benefit from taller buildings at the landward end of the site. However, these proposed blocks are just not good enough in design for such an important location. So much more has already been crammed onto the site than first envisaged, that we said that the two applications "far exceed the City Council's Development Brief for the site, and constitute excessive over-development". The buildings and landscaping are poorly designed, and unsustainable in terms of energy consumption. We also objected to the loss of the hotel originally proposed for one of the sites, which in our view would have been an important ingredient in the Gunwharf development overall, and to the loss of yet another historic building, Donegal Lodge, currently Berkeley's office.

Key worker housing

Until these applications, the Council had not insisted that there was any affordable or key worker housing in the Gunwharf redevelopment. We welcome this offer of 120 flats by the developers, but not at the expense of such a massive overdevelopment. In our view it is a very ugly, dull block in the worst location, against the access road and railway line. It also contains a conference centre and nursery. We also question whether the nursery and the associated open space labelled 'future play spaces' – for which there are no details – would be adequate as an environment for young children, given the shadows and down draughts from the surrounding very tall buildings.

The design of the two blocks will dominate a wide area in Old Portsmouth, Portsea and southern Gosport and the view from the harbour with very large, dull, poorly detailed buildings, which would do nothing to enhance this conservation area – a consideration which the planning authority are obliged to take into account. Here the comments by the Architects' Panel, English Heritage and CABE, not yet available, are crucial in informing public responses. Will their comments be made public as part of the consultation

process? We believe that best practice means that they should be now, in the consultation period. Does the proposal conform to the government's tall buildings policy?

Lack of quality open space

The original application by Berkeleys included high quality open spaces, including an amphitheatre at the end of the canal, yet all that is offered by these applications is a windy circular space with a site for public art marked in the centre. In contrast, Gosport Millennium walk has a whole series of artistic additions, many of them in paving in interesting materials in a coherent scheme of the highest quality. To imply that 'public art' can only be vertical surely suggests an inadequate grasp of its potential. We are pleased to hear that Adrian Fisher (world famous designer of paving designs and mazes, until recently based in Southsea) is involved in the design of the important circular space; we hope that his designs are available before the applications are put to committee, rather being treated as a matter to be dealt with later. One per cent of the cost of the scheme – as recommended by many planning authorities and in Portsmouth's draft cultural strategy - should surely yield a greater investment in public art than what is proposed in these applications.

Donegal Lodge to be demolished

Despite the references in the application to the historic environment, this has not constrained the developers from the demolition of Donegal Lodge. Gunwharf is still designated as a conservation area, yet the redevelopment of Gunwharf has already led to the loss of many eminently reusable buildings. We object to the loss of Donegal Lodge on top of all these. The replacements do not look like "enhancement".

Sustainable development?

The government's stipulation that new developments should be sustainable would surely be breached by 465 air-conditioned dwellings. The glass cladding, particularly of the tower blocks facing east and west will mean the flats suffer from considerable solar gain, since each unit has only one opening window on the side elevations of the 26 storey block, so there will have to be climate control. We were told when some windows are open in tall blocks, it looks a mess... but we cannot believe natural ventilation cannot be designed in.

The wind effect

At a meeting with Society members Charles Burns, Celia Clark and Roger James on 20 December 2002, Paul Newbold, City Planning Officer and Alan Banting, we held to our view that, unless specially designed, tall buildings cause unacceptable wind effects. We asked for information on exactly what is being done to prevent these effects, since we were not convinced by the wind tunnel tests that the designers have really introduced features that will prevent unpleasant effects which afflict so many taller buildings eg at the Civic Offices, Fastnet House and in Somerstown. We asked for assurances on this.

Berkeleys have a model of the development which the Planning Dept. will put on display before the Development Control Committee. As a result of the flyby the planners asked for detailed shadow drawings, which show that it is a good location for tall buildings – eg the east/west juxtaposition.

Paul Newbold acknowledged that the numbers of units were well beyond the original brief, but Berkeleys are challenging us to think about the potential of Gunwharf – a great, successful location and sustainable (?). According to Berkeleys, 50% of visitors are not coming by car. The car park is rarely full. The planning brief was written long before Berkeleys were on the scene and before the bids were looked at. He said we would be missing an opportunity for the city if we stuck to it rigidly. Six to seven years on, we are not going to say that we are cannot entertain a new idea.

We are impressed

We said we were impressed by the amount of work the planning department has put into getting the design improved, and to asking the developers for additional information. We asked that Berkeleys provide details of their expected demographic profile: who the occupants of the development will be. This will have an important bearing on the social, educational and health provision on the site, about which we and the councillors are bound to be concerned. As a new quarter of town (nearly all the yearly housing provision on one spot) does it need a new doctors' surgery or primary school, or is it expected that the blocks will mainly be lived in by retired people or as second homes? How much new traffic would be generated by so many new flats? Charles Burns suggested that this was an ideal site for trying out the idea of car sharing which has been tried out in other central areas. Paul Newbold liked the idea and said he would press it.

We agree that this part of the Gunwharf site offers a very important opportunity for increasing the scale of development and making a considerable contribution to the city's housing allocation. However, despite the planning department's welcome negotiations with Berkeleys over design and detailing, we are not convinced

that Broadway Malyan's design is worthy of such an important site. Our objections are to the massing and the detail of the two blocks.

Reject on design grounds

We believe that the Council should resist this application, which in our view is a 'Manhattan on Portsmouth Harbour', which would seriously unbalance the surrounding townscape. A lower density, better designed scheme could then be generated. The Oxford Westgate scheme was called in by the Government Office of the South East on design grounds, while GOSE have refused to do so here. The council have the powers to reject applications on design grounds and should do so here. Our fear is that the temptation of increased council tax income plus the incentive (or bribe) offered by Berkeleys of £3million towards the cost of the Millennium tower may otherwise lead to permission being granted to a far too large, ugly and non sustainable scheme of no discernable benefit to the existing residents of Portsmouth. If you feel strongly about these applications, you still have the chance to object.

Finally, we asked that the Section 106 agreement should stipulate a public, cultural use for the Vulcan South Wing, which would provide a much needed cultural dimension to a new city quarter.

Celia Clark

Vulcan Building, Gunwharf

Berkeleys have also applied to convert the south wing of the Vulcan building in Gunwharf for residential use. We and the Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust are very much opposed to this. The Vulcan's most important characteristic is that it contains enormous uninterrupted open spaces, which would be lost for ever by domestic conversion. Many of the changes proposed would be irreversible.

Because of its importance, we ask that all the members of the Development Control Committee be given the chance by the owners to see the Vulcan for themselves, in order to assess its potential for other uses including ones that allow the public to enjoy one of the most important historic buildings in the city. It seems to us very important that. As we say above, there should be some cultural attraction to balance the overwhelmingly residential and commercial uses of the Gunwharf site. Celia Clark has asked to speak to the committee on behalf of the Society and the Trust.



Portsmouth Society's 30th Anniversary

The Portsmouth Society was founded in 1973, in response to the considerable areas of 'comprehensive redevelopment' and large road schemes taking place from the late 1960s. We would like to celebrate our thirtieth anniversary. Do you have suggestions on appropriate ways of doing that? Some of the original founders are still active, so their service to the city amounts to thirty years - longer than nearly all the councillors and city officers. I cheekily suggested to the Lord Mayor that we should be made Freeman/women of the city!

Celia Clark

The impact of the Signing Strategy

As reported in last September's edition of the Newsletter, we were greatly concerned about the proliferation of Traffic Signs that suddenly appeared throughout Portsmouth. At no small cost, more than 300 large directional signs have been sited, as well as a number of equally large intrusive illuminated signs bearing mythical Car Parking information.

We cannot disagree with the policy to provide clearer assistance to visitors; to safely navigate the confusing maze of roads that choke our city; to find their way to the ferries or to the tourist facility of their choice. However, we contend that the actual implementation has been achieved with little concern for the unimpeded passage of pedestrians and cyclists and with total disregard to the visual amenity of Conservation Areas and many other city locations.

Despite Governmental guidelines to the contrary, the consultants employed by PCC have zealously pursued the technique of cramming multiple destinations (sometimes, misleading) and/or the names of recreational facilities upon each sign. Because they have applied large-scale script plus illustrative icons for each facility they have been forced into erecting signs up to 8 metres in height. In many cases the large size of individual

signs has required two or even three hefty metal tubular poles to support them. Inevitably this has led to the obstruction of pavement and/or cycle tracks and has created visual disfigurement of the street scene.

Our efforts to rectify the situation started in May 2002 and still await resolution. Initially, the City Planning officer agreed that there was validity in our complaints but claimed that the City Engineer, acting as the Highways Authority, had authority to locate signs as and where he chose to do so. He finally admitted that at least in the case of the Conservation Areas there was a case for consultation - in future - between the planners and the engineers

The City Engineer claimed that the new signage had been approved by the City Council. Certainly the principle had been approved - and, as noted above, we support it. But what the city council did not formally approve and what we objected to was the over zealous implementation of an excessive number of costly, obstructive large-scale signs. In some cases these were misleading and/or prejudicial to road safety. Specifically, their overall impact was to unnecessarily desecrate the visual amenity of conservation and other areas.

Our objections, as made to the City Planning Officer and the City Engineer remained unanswered until we drew the attention of the Chief Executive to regulations and guidance provided by the Department of Transport which *inter alia* limited the number of destinations that should be displayed on each sign. Such a limitation is in the interests both of road safety and visual amenity. The government guidelines clearly say there should be interdepartmental negotiations and that proliferation should be avoided.

With the consultants present, these points were discussed with the City Engineer and the Planning (conservation) Officer in November 2002. It was agreed that PCC would undertake a survey of the signs in the conservation area and possibly of other offending signs identified by the Portsmouth Society. The target date was Christmas 2002. To date it has not been completed by PCC.



Sign on Queen Street near the dockyard. Does it enhance the conservation area?

Bob Adderley

Brent Goose Strategy

Love them or hate them? Brent Geese have become an increasingly important subject in Portsmouth and surrounding coastal areas in the last 20 years.

Many people love watching these plump, garrulous birds grazing or flying in perfect v-shaped formations across our skies, and seek their protection. Others see them as noisy, cereal-eating, mess-making blockers of development. Remember Pompey v Farlington Playing Fields where plans for a new football stadium were scuppered on environmental grounds?



Did you know that some birds live to be 30 years old and that in SE Hampshire we are home to 10-13% of the world's population and 30% of the UK's Brent Geese population?

The Brent Goose Strategy grew out of the need to clarify and resolve differential planning issues locally. It is a thorough scientific survey of Brent Geese, their lives and habitats with the aims :

- To identify all current and potential feeding outside the intertidal habitats of the harbours of S.E Hants.
- To identify the most important of these sites in terms of numbers of geese and frequency of use.
- To determine the factors that influence the use of these sites by Brent Geese.

The Report looks at Site protection, Development Pressure, Disturbance (to geese!), Site management, sealevel and Coastal Retreat. It is clearly the Government's view that documents such as this are an appropriate way forward in seeking to inform local decision making. It is a very useful document. By the way, I love them!

Brent Goose Strategy - South East Hampshire is published by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, Woodside House, Woodside Road, Eastleigh, Hampshire, SO50 9ET; 023 8061 3636.

Gillian Norman

The New Road Centre

The northern half of what was New Road School (one of the two first Board schools built in Portsmouth in the 1870s) was demolished a few years ago and replaced by a social services building. The southern half which includes and retains the street frontage with its attractive little tower is the subject of an imaginative scheme designed by Mick Morris who some years ago did our award-winning scheme for converting the Royal Marines church in Henderson Road into houses by vertical slicing.

The New Road scheme similarly slices the school building into ten houses, all different, each using the height of the old schoolrooms to accommodate bedrooms in the roof space and each with its own patio, has been subject to a long delay. Now a new developer has taken it on; but ran into difficulties over car parking. The local residents supported by their councillors fear the new residents' cars will clog up the neighbouring streets.

Mr Morris has now modified his design providing extra spaces partly by lifting up his two new-build houses masking the dull backs of the shops on Kingston Road to incorporate car ports on the ground level. The Development Control Committee at their meeting on 8 January 2003 unanimously approved the application.

RJ

Sale of the Centuries

In response to the successful seminar in Winchester on MOD sites, the Civic Trust, our parent body, has proposed that Heritage Link, the joint body of heritage organisations, should pursue the cause - and possible changes to the rules under which defence sites are used.

The Ministry of Defence - one of the largest landowners in the UK - is selling off its unwanted sites, large and small, in what Giles Worsley called "the greatest exchange of property since the dissolution of the monasteries", in response to defence cuts, joint tri-service facilities and the need for rapid response teams rather than the vast fixed encampments of the Cold War.

The South East is probably disproportionately affected because of its proximity to the old enemies! The scale of the sale is huge: it was expected to raise £100 million in 1996, this year the 56 sites going through the process are expected to raise a similar amount, and the Treasury expects the MOD to generate no less than £500 million over the next three years

Disposal system

The disposal system is controlled by the 1992 Treasury rules - disposal to the highest bidder, at maximum planning value, within three years - with slightly lower prices and longer timescales for historic sites according to 1999 DCMS guidelines. The MOD controls disposals through its own agency, Defence Estates, and the early stages are secret: choosing the highest value land uses and short listing developers is done in house, with local authority planners only becoming involved via the Local Plan. Unlike other countries such as the US, France and Sweden where raising money is not the priority, this system has no remit to help local communities affected by defence cuts or to target urban or rural reconstruction.

First seminar

The Civic Trust South East held its first event in Winchester, a seminar to investigate how this process is affecting our region, organised by society chair, Celia Clark. The lessons from the four case studies - and other sites identified in the survey of civic societies in the region - highlighted the greater public expectations from sales of public land, compared with civilian redevelopments, which are not often met.

Case studies

Farnborough's Royal Aircraft Establishment is of world importance to the history of flight and the development of aviation - from manpowered kites to carbon fibre - but the future of its extraordinary buildings such as the balloon shed and wind tunnels was treated as a local rather than a national case. The local trust proposed that there should be a robust, transparent and accountable selection process for the developer, with the DCMS and English Heritage involved in approving development briefs and Section 106 agreements.

Ashford's Templar Barracks showed what is gained by long term community input into design of new developments, funded by the developer.

Independent historical research on the Royal Clarence Victualling Yard strengthened Gosport Borough Council's arm to retain more historic fabric; a community planning event also gave local people a chance to offer creative ideas for reuse. In Caterham, this process reached a higher gear: the local authority declared

the barracks a conservation area and identified that low density with reuse of most standing buildings was the preferred option. A community trust now runs community facilities and is working to provide new jobs and sustainable transport via a commuter bus.

If other regions are similarly affected by defence sales, or if the South East region has the most sites being sold, the changes to the current system endorsed by those who came to the seminar (more detail on the Trust's website) should be taken forward for national discussion.

Celia Clark

Commercial Road Fountain - a personal view

There is much talk of moving the Jubilee Fountain from the spot it has occupied in Commercial Road at the junction with Arundel Street to make way for a new piece of public art.

I was undecided so I went to Commercial Road to take a look for myself and also to take part in the City Council's consultation exercise held on January 9 and 10 in a caravan nearby. The fountain is in need of refurbishment: the figures need a good clean; the plaques are unreadable and the concrete plinth is dirty and worn. I'm told that the figures were made from moulds which were found by former City Architect, Ken Norrish, in a South London junk shop and date from the Festival of Britain. Surely we can move on from 1951!! The whole structure is dwarfed by the buildings which surround it and therefore lacks presence as a City Centre landmark.



The fountain requires daily attention to keep it free of litter, chewing-gum and soapsuds. It does, however, provide a useful meeting point, somewhere to sit, and a place of endless fascination for young children. The fountain has a place in the hearts of the people of Portsmouth.

So, what about the proposed pen which would be placed on the site of the fountain? Personally I like it - it's sleek, it will be visible from a way off and will work as a meeting-point. Granted, it does not have the same fascination for children as the fountain, but those clever people at the PCC together with artist Peter Codling have worked to create a linear alternative. A stream of deep blue coloured tiles will follow the length of the Arundel Street pedestrian area to represent the former canal and, yes, there will be a water feature at Slindon Street junction (outside U-Need-Us). Young and old will want to explore the artworks and that's the aim of the exercise - to bring some life to the place!

In celebrating local authors and archaeology we have a welcome alternative to our nautical heritage and for those who talk of about the cost, this is investment in the city centre which will attract people and businesses who would not otherwise come here.

Back to the fountain - if has to be kept where shall we put it? What about Gunwharf? Berkeley's could fund the move and refurbishment as a goodwill gesture and by placing it near the retail outlets they will attract many Pompey folk just to see it. How about putting it at the northern end of Commercial Road? This rather dull spot and needs some livening-up. Then there are the acres of concrete and tarmac at Clarence Pier (near where the car enthusiasts congregate) with the added bonus of Southsea Town Council to look after it. And finally, the summit of Mount Paulsgrove (the landscaped rubbish mountain behind Port Solent) is crying out for a feature and this would be visible to everyone passing by on the M27 and M275. Children will love to clamber up the slopes to see the water and get good exercise at the same time. Yes, this one gets my vote!

John Holland

St James's Hospital Grounds

The long-running story of the fight for village/town green in the grounds of St James Hospital looks like coming to a satisfactory compromise solution.. The deal is that the Health Trust agree not to build on the square of land which we had campaigned for and which was designated a town green in exchange for permission to build 18 units of accommodation on the strip of land bordering Locksway Road south of the cricket ground between the two drives. The buildings can be erected, we think, with the loss of some young trees but without destroying any mature ones. There has been some opposition from residents of Locksway

Road, but from our point of view it is a good deal. We get what we set out to get in the first place, that is the saving as open space of the most beautiful part of the grounds with its splendid mature trees. This is unaffected by the adverse side of the balance, the concession for some housing south of the cricket ground.

The St James Park Trust was nominated for - and won - a News "We can do it" award for its achievement in preserving a valuable part of the city's environment. Councillor Dr Caroline Scot who has worked tirelessly for the Trust's case received the award at a ceremony in the New Theatre Royal .

Celia Clark and Roger James were invited by Zenna Atkins, chairman of the Portsmouth Health Care Trust, to view and comment on the plans for two new developments they propose in the eastern part of the St James grounds, one bordering Locksway Road which we liked, for patient accommodation, partly to replace the much disliked Solent Wards. It is designed to have the appearance of a terrace of three houses. We were doubtful about some aspects of the other, further north; but they listened to our criticisms and may well take note of them. At any rate we were pleased to be consulted.

RJ

Pompey as she is spoke - more readers' comments!

Comments on the Portsmouth dialect in response our article published last year continue to arrive. Alun writes from Dubai ...

I lived in Alverstoke and went to school in Southsea until I was eighteen in 1982 and I worked in Portsmouth for most of the 1990s. I see myself as a member of the Alverstocracy, rather than a pure Portsmouthian, or "Pompey-oite." However I do have fond memories of my times spent on "the old mud-flats"

Place Names

Where I grew up, Alverstoke was a part of Gosport, Gods Port, Our Haven, Turk Town or even Turk Tain when pronounced by those folk over the water. Southsea, where I went to school and based much of my socialising was called Sarfsee.

I had arranged to meet with some others in a pub called the Mucky Duck. It does of course not exist and is in fact the White or Woite Swan. I just remember the "Mud-larks" referred to earlier, that would dive into the sea to retrieve coins, although this must have been 30 or so years ago.

Language

Being a naval city, references to the "skates" are many. I remember hearing Pompey "Slappers" or young ladies telling naval personal that "I aint no skate-bait mate." Another sentence that a Portsmouthian might utter in reference to an evening's entertainment could be "Oi goes eight on a Froiday noite, Oi 'as noine points, gets in a foite, Oi loikes it Oi dooes, its noice." There are references to "going dain tain on the saith dain for half a crane." I think Southdown was a bus service and half a crown is something to do with pre-decimal currency.

Conclusion

In Dubai I do occasionally hear the familiar Portsmouthian brogue and it is always a pleasure to exchange pleasantries about how the Pompey Football team are doing – pretty well I think in the 2002-2003 season.

Does anybody really know where the nickname Pompey comes from? I have heard that it is something to do with Bombay, meaning beautiful city or the Roman Emperor, but have never been given an authoritative answer.

Wymering Manor Update

We reported in the Autumn newsletter that Wymering Manor, the oldest house in Portsmouth and currently home to Portsmouth's Youth Hostel, suffered a collapse of a key corner post with the result that two rooms are propped up and unused. John Sewell has since written to update us on progress.

"Many thanks for putting details of the problems at Wymering Manor on your website. I'm sorry not to have been in touch earlier - I'm having to split my time between here and the youth hostel in Brighton (another lovely old council-owned house that needs attention!), and at the moment, we're busying ourselves tidying up the interior decoration in the rooms we have left! Hopefully we can get the decor more in keeping with the surroundings!"

"All through November and December, various people from the City Council have been dropping in here to prod and measure things, and the understanding I had is that the repair work will be done sometime in the

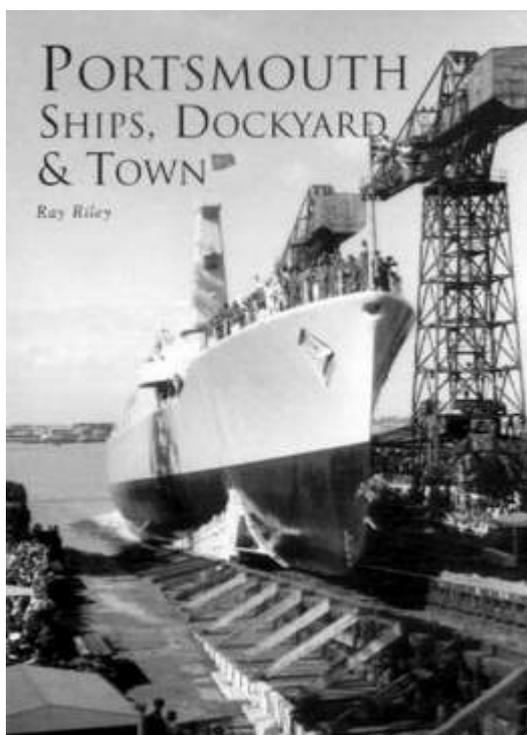
future. Nobody can give me any idea of timescale yet, but I also heard that the work will actually cost substantially less than the £200,000 that was originally claimed."

"I have also received communication from the YHA Buildings Manager for the Southeast, who tells me that the Manor is top of his priority list for capital investment programmes in 2003. In practice, this probably means that the heating will get a much-needed overhaul, and if I'm lucky I might get the exterior painted (not before time!)"

"My Operations Manager is looking at sites in Portsmouth to which the YHA can move in the long term. The preferred site was the historic no. 9 storehouse in the Naval Base, but now this looks unlikely to happen. There are apparently several other sites he's looking at, but knowing how long these things can take, I reckon we'll be at the Manor for at least the next 4-5 years. I'll keep you posted on any further developments."

John Sewell, Wymering Manor

Book Review - Portsmouth Ships, Dockyard and Town



Ray Riley Tempus Publishing Ltd. £11.99

If you have a Christmas book token or any New Year cash left after the sales, treat yourself to Ray Riley's latest book, launched most entertainingly in his Christmas lecture to the Society. He now adds to his many Portsmouth Papers this photographic survey of Portsmouth industries, based on his own archive pictures of civilian industries and the collection of the Portsmouth Royal Dockyard Historical Trust, accompanied by authoritative text and vivid drawings by John Green, once a dockyard rigger.

As he says, "No two towns are alike". Portsmouth was unlike the great commercial shipyard towns of Newcastle and Glasgow, where fortunes were made by the building companies and by sub-contractors and suppliers, and where, as a result there was a substantial middle class. As a government establishment, profit did not arise. Because there was a high degree of self-sufficiency within the dockyard, there was limited opportunity for local suppliers. Since sailors were not paid until the end of their tour of duty, wives and daughters of dockyardmen were the workforce for the clothing industry, particularly the manufacture of corsets, which provided as many jobs as shipbuilding until the interwar period of the twentieth century.

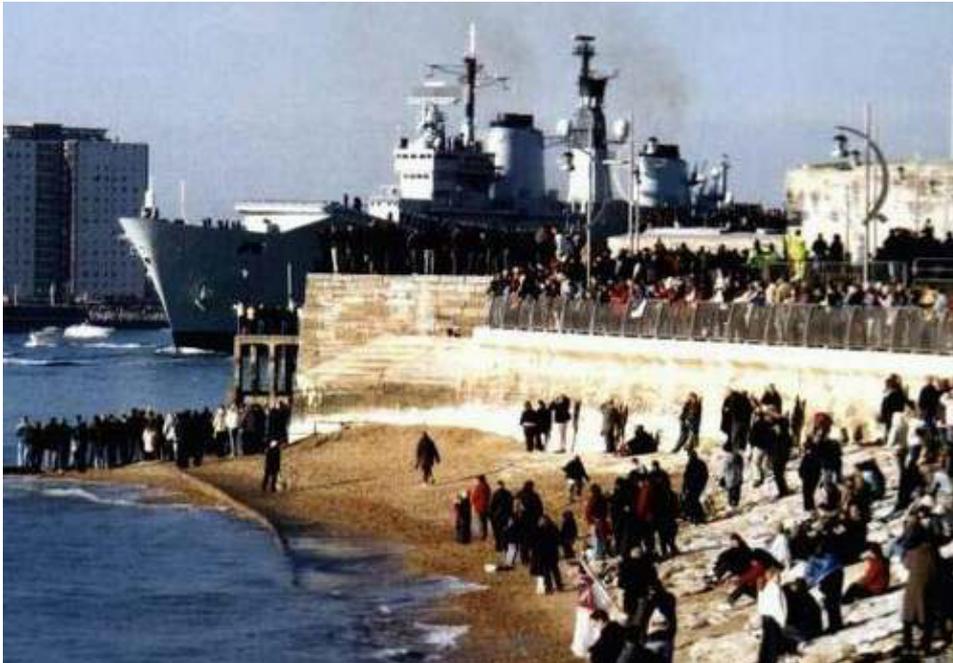
Since the 1970s, as the dockyard and clothing industry declined, mechanical and electrical engineering developed, and the office and service sector has become increasingly important - the university is now the biggest single employer in the city. 'Heritage tourism' centred on the dockyard has replaced seaside holidays, and the ferryport is the second largest passenger port in the country.

The first two chapters describe the dockyard's two great periods - in the sailing age before 1840, to the structural changes wrought by the introduction of steam propulsion up to 1913. The town's industries: Sperrings Albion Iron Works, Cash's Foundry in Aylward Street Portsea, the gasworks, tripe factory, and breweries: Pike Spicer brewery In Penny Street, Jewell in Catherine Row, Portsea, Miles in King Street, Long's in Hambrook Street, Lush in St. George's Square were joined later by Brickwoods in Queen Street. The premises of many of these survived into the 1960s, when Ray photographed them, sometimes accompanied by Deane Clark, city historic buildings architect. City photographer Ralph Court also recorded many buildings before they were demolished in the 'second blitz'. Ray has pictures of metalworkers, Treadgolds of Bishop Street, Portsea, which stayed in business until 1988 and is now a time capsule museum run by Hampshire County Council. Pubs, railways, piers and tugs... The book's a feast, not only for nostalgia, but for reflection on the increasing pace of change and renewal. If the number of building cranes is anything to go by, perhaps Portsmouth is changing more rapidly than ever before. Go buy the book!

Celia Clark

Who are we?

The Portsmouth Society is an independent voluntary body affiliated to the Civic Trust with the purpose of promoting good design in the built environment. We campaign for quality in new buildings and for the preservation of the best of Portsmouth's existing environment of buildings, streets, and open spaces. If you have something you would like the society to investigate or do something about, do contact us. We welcome new members; come along to one of our meetings or contact the Membership Secretary (contact details below).



Ark Royal leaves Portsmouth Harbour on 9th January 2003. Picture by Celia Clark.

Meetings and Events

Our regular meetings on the first Wednesday of each month (January, August and September excepting) at the Norrish Central Library, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth. There is no admission charge and all are welcome.

Wednesday 5th February	Norrish Central Library, 7.30pm	Mountbatten Centre Redevelopment - The City Council is proposing to centralise sports and recreational facilities at the Mountbatten Centre site in North End. Geoff Lawton, City Leisure Services Officer, will describe the plans and answer questions.
Wednesday 5th March	Norrish Central Library, 7.30pm	Design Competition 2002 - slides, reports from the judges and discussion on the Portsmouth Society's competition.
Wednesday 2nd April	Norrish Central Library, 7.30pm	Annual General Meeting and Member's talk-back - annual report, elections and open forum.
Wednesday 7th May	Norrish Central Library, 7.30pm	Arundel Street Renewal - Peter Codling will describe his scheme to celebrate the non-maritime heritage of Portsmouth which will breathe life back into the City Centre.
Wednesday 4th June	Norrish Central Library, 7.30pm	Waterfront Renewal in the Baltic - Celia Clark will describe her recent visits to Helsinki, Turku, Tallin, St Petersburg and Kronstadt; all of them having one thing in common with Portsmouth - their historic waterfronts.

The Portsmouth Society, Registered Charity no. 266116

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