

# Portsmouth Society News

*The Newsletter of The Portsmouth Society - Winter 2007*

## DESIGN AWARDS 2006 - A TOWERING SUCCESS!



*Celia Clark, Roger James, the Lord Mayor - Councillor Fred Charlton, Nigel Hosier and Charlotte Goodman of Heritage Projects pose with the plaque at the top of the Spinnaker Tower.*

Following the storms of 18 January, the Lord Mayor's unveiling of the plaques for the Portsmouth Society's Design Awards took place on a gloriously sunny morning the next day.

The **Best New Building Award** went to the Spinnaker Tower, designed by Peter Warlow of local practice HGP Partnership. The Tower is a triumph of innovative engineering. It has achieved its objective – to become an icon for Portsmouth, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors in its first year.

There were four Commendations in this category. The first was Hamilton House, in St. James's Hospital designed by Stuart Bone of Havant firm, PWP. The judges enjoyed this light airy home for six severely disabled residents in yellow brick, set in a lovely garden. The deliberately modest and domestic scale was thought very suitable for its use. Also commended was the bright and spacious new reception area at Court Lane Infants' School designed by architect Ed Causch and the delicate heart-motif gates made by local blacksmith Peter Clutterbuck.

The third Commendation for Best New Building is West Point, the new Barratt's and Atlantic Housing Association development facing Milton Park, also designed by HGP Partnership. The three blocks of flats are set in the mature landscape of the former teacher training college, including the beautiful walled garden. Its dense urban massing added a distinctive counterpoint to the residential context of Milton. The popular new Learning Centre by city architect Chris Greed for the City of Portsmouth Girls' School is also commended.

The **Best Restoration Award** went to local craftsman Richard Walker, for his meticulous and careful restoration of the canopy of the Angel drinking fountain in Canoe Lake, a much loved memorial to a former Lord Mayor, which had seriously deteriorated through rust and poor repairs, and was regilded at Richard's own expense.

*In this edition .. Design Awards, Meetings and Events, Savoy Buildings, New John Lewis store, Portsmouth Harbour as a World Heritage Site, Southern Comfort 2006, New Planning System, Core Strategy Questionnaire, Architecture Week 2007, Portsmouth Archaeology, Reviving Hilsea Lido, The City Council's Trees, SWT downgrades Portsmouth-Waterloo line.*

The City Council design team won the **Best Landscaping Award** for the relocation of Nelson's statue in Grand Parade and the new bridge across to Spur Redoubt, adjoining the earlier award-winning seating on the saluting platform. This project stitches together this important coastal walk and its contemporary complementing the rugged historic defences.

### Other entries

The judges also saw John Pounds Community Centre and its garden, new buildings for Portsmouth High School in Castle Road Southsea, the conversion of Branksmere House in Queens Crescent Southsea into two houses and an architects' office, St. Mary's Hospital NHS Treatment centre, Boom Tower House in Old Portsmouth, QinetiQ's mock-up of a Type 45 conning tower on the crest of Portsdown Hill, Warrior House on the Hard and the Ravelin Park archway, also by Peter Clutterbuck.

The Society's Design Awards are intended to raise the standard of local architecture and landscape design. The judges were disappointed that the overall standard of new buildings in the city did not reach as high a standard as last year. The judges were: Paul Grover, director of the Solent Centre for Architecture and Design, Matt Swanton of Format Milton Architects, Roger James and Celia Clark of the Portsmouth Society. Judging for the Design Competition takes place each September where our panel of judges decide which is the best new building, best restored building and best landscaping scheme completed in the City during the previous year. Entries for the 2007 competition are invited.

*Celia Clark*

## Meetings and Events

Meetings are on the first Wednesday of each month (not Jan/Jul./Aug/Sep) at the John Pounds Centre in Queen Street unless otherwise stated. There is no admission charge - all are welcome. For the latest programme see <a href="http://www.portsmouthsociety.org.uk">www.portsmouthsociety.org.uk</a> .	
Wednesday 7th February 7.30pm	<b>Proposed new buildings in Portsmouth</b> - Speaker: Mrs van Heyningen of Van Heyningen-Haward, Architects - designers the University's No.1 Building, Lion Terrace, and of the second 'anchor' building in City Centre North. (Note: rescheduled from November 2006)
Wednesday 7th March 7.30pm	<b>Queen Alexandra Hospital - Plans and Progress.</b> Speaker : Glen Hewlett, Deputy Director of Planning at Queen Alexandra Hospital.
Wednesday 4th April 7.30pm	<b>Annual General Meeting and Open Forum</b>
Wednesday 2nd May 7.30pm	<b>Froude and Brunel</b> - Lesley Burton, Gosport Society, will speak about William Froude, the engineer and colleague of Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Froude's pioneering work on hull design led to the establishment of the ship testing tanks at Haslar.
Wednesday 6th June 7.30pm	Chris Higgins, Director of Estates of the <b>University of Winchester</b> will tell us how he persuaded the University to love architecture.
15 - 24 June	<b>Architecture Week 2007</b> - See <a href="http://www.architectureweek.org.uk">www.architectureweek.org.uk</a>

## Architecture Week 2007

The theme for this year's Architecture Week, running from 15th to June, will be Different Perspectives. In recent years the society has organised highly successful trips to see our City from the different perspective of a vintage double-decker bus. The plan this year is to view the city and neighbouring boroughs from the water which will allow us to see the proposed Portsmouth Harbour World Heritage Site at first hand. The details of the boat trip have yet to be finalised and we will publish them in the next newsletter and on our Web site [www.portsmouthsociety.org.uk](http://www.portsmouthsociety.org.uk) .

## New John Lewis store for Northern Quarter

On 31 October we were invited to a presentation of designs for the proposed new John Lewis store, one of the two proposed 'anchor' stores for the redevelopment of the cleared Tricorn site. The presenters were Chapman Taylor, architects to Centros Miller, the overall developers. The initial impression of the design was not favourable. Here was what was intended to be a landmark building that did not impress. It was simply not good enough in our opinion. The local architects' panel were equally unimpressed, indeed they gave a very firm thumbs down. Unknown to us, CABA (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) were consulted and their rather weak judgement was revealed to us only after the revised design was published.



*The south entrance to the new John Lewis store (new design)*

The John Lewis Partnership seemed to be standing back as far as the design was concerned and leaving all to the developers and their architects. We decided to appeal directly to them and Mr Simon Stone of their headquarters agreed to meet at Knight and Lees in Southsea. He listened to the complaints of a delegation from the Portsmouth Society and the local architects' panel, whose spokesman, Tim Sage, gave a forceful and eloquent criticism of the design. Mr Stone promised to take out complaints back to London.

*The north entrance (new design)*



The next thing we heard was that a new design had now been submitted for planning permission. It meets some of our criticisms of the original but in our opinion it is still not nearly good enough.

Meanwhile Bruce Oliver worked up a case for Listing the soon-to-be redundant Knight and Lee building which many regard with affection. It has now been leased to Centros Miller by its London owners. Bruce's case failed; the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, having consulted English Heritage,

decided not to list. We are appealing against the decision, and are also considering reuse opportunities e.g. as part of a Southsea cultural quarter.

*Roger James*

## Savoy Buildings, South Parade

Readers will know that the night clubs currently based in Savoy Buildings on South Parade will be moving to the former Connaught Drill Hall in Stanhope Street (opposite the Zurich building in the City Centre). Pierpoint Developments have applied to demolish Savoy Buildings and replace them with a "Benidorm" style apartment block and to support their case they issued a glossy brochure implying that this was 'a once in a lifetime opportunity' to rid the seafront of an eyesore.

We are certainly not against the removal of the clubs from the area; and we are not against some redevelopment of the buildings themselves; but we think a refurbishment more in the spirit of the conservation area is perfectly possible. It is not a matter of leave things as they are, with the objectionable clubs still in place, or with this scheme. This is a highly attractive site. If this scheme fails or falls, developers will be queuing up to present their schemes, and our hopes would be that



among the new ideas would be at least one that, without compromising standards in any way, we could give our blessing to.

In a separate application, Pierpoint have applied to refurbish the adjoining Savoy Court creating a development of flats and, at ground level, a health club. We question why the two sites were not considered as one - they are in the same ownership and become vacant at the same time. We wonder whether this is to avoid the obligation to create affordable homes, required of applications over a certain size.

There is another consideration. There is a proposal on the way to make Portsmouth Harbour a World Heritage site. This area of Southsea sea front would probably be included in it provided the buildings were considered good enough. If the rather brash current proposal were accepted and built, that would be likely to reduce the potential value of the heritage site

RJ / JH.

## **Reviving Hilsea Lido**

Some time ago, at the time of the last attack on the Lido in the late 1980s, we in the Portsmouth Society decided we would try and stop it. We hired a hall for a night in Cosham. Then we leafleted the neighbourhood, every fifth house – something like that - saying we were holding an open meeting for everybody who wanted to save the Lido. I remember on the night in question driving up to Cosham with Celia Clark and Karl Sparrow. We had no idea what we were in for or what we could do. Would there be anybody there? Would we be howled down? In fact we were greeted by a packed hall with everybody completely on our side. We got volunteers on the spot for a committee to do what was necessary to prevent the Lido from being sold off. The committee worked with great energy. They organised mums-with-prams to demonstrate at the paddling pool and lots of other media-attracting events. They were completely successful. In a short time the scheme was called off.

This time again the action has to be voluntary. The Council won't and probably can't save it. They are committed to closing the main pool as soon as the new Olympic-standard pool in the Mountbatten Centre is open. Successive governments, Conservative as well as Labour, have systematically taken away the powers of local authorities and their money too. At the same time they've loaded them with scores of new duties which have swallowed what money remains. But a voluntary body has the advantage over a Council in that there are grants they can apply for, for exempt from English Heritage, the Heritage Lottery Fund etc., which are not available to Councils.

I am in the process of forming a small group of say 6 to 10 people, not necessarily expert in any way, simply determined to find out what needs to be done to save the Lido and do it and not to take No for an answer. Legal and accounting experience will be useful but not essential. I don't want to lead. I am too old and too busy. But I am willing to do what I can to help and advise. I was at one time a Portsmouth City Councillor and we in the Portsmouth Society have a lot of experience in setting up local groups to fight apparently hopeless causes. There was the Hilsea Action Group, the Milton Action Group to save the best parts of St James Hospital grounds, the Save St Jude's Society to stop the church authorities from knocking down their own church! and recently the Friends of Old Wymering who recently celebrated our achievement on New Year's Eve.

Jane Smith has written a book about Hilsea Lido and a Feasibility Study. She has looked into HOW it can be done. How elsewhere other Lidos and similar institutions have saved themselves. She doesn't want to be part of the group. She thinks it should consist of North Portsmouth people. She lives in Southsea. But she has told me that she is very willing to advise and give information. There are a few comforting facts: 1 The Blue Lagoon at the Lido which is owned by the council makes profits, 2. DC Leisure who run the Mountbatten Centre and other council-owned leisure facilities are willing to help us. Mrs Hammond, who runs them, does not see them as being rivals to us. She is keen to cooperate.

If you are interested please contact me, preferably by e-mail: roger.james1@tiscali.co.uk - letting me know what are the best times for you for a meeting - early afternoon, late afternoon, weekdays, weekends. Particularly what days/times are impossible. Ian Young has generously let me know that we can meet at Wymering Manor.

*Roger James*

## Portsmouth Harbour as a World Heritage Site



*Old and new - the mast of HMS Warrior and the Spinnaker Tower*

Following on the experience of the EU project linking Portsmouth, Obidos and Xincheng in Manchuria China which aimed to inscribe the Ming walled city onto the World Heritage list, and a boat trip round Portsmouth Harbour with my colleague, David Michelmore, we decided that Portsmouth too was of international significance.

An unusual group including conservation officers from Portsmouth, Gosport, Fareham, Winchester and the Isle of Wight, civic societies in those areas, the Mary Rose and Naval Base Property Trusts, Defence Estates and the Royal Naval Museum is working away at the proposal, which will focus on the harbour and Spithead, including specific defence heritage sites, designated as core and buffer zones. The only other harbour on the List is the Dutch colonial port of Willemstad in Surinam.

As the work has progressed, we have concluded that the process is justified in its own right. At present there are no formal links between the planning authorities around the harbour and Spithead – and yet we all perceive it as one place. Local development frameworks are being drafted in each community, and we should work to make sure that the World Heritage proposal is lodged into each document. There were efforts two years ago to form a Portsmouth Harbour Tourism authority – clearly all

attractions billing themselves as ‘Portsmouth Harbour’ would create a new prestigious destination. Why do we think the harbour merits worldwide recognition? This is the first draft of the short description which we will all need to sign up to and put forward to the DCMS for inclusion on the national Tentative List:

“The great natural harbour of Portsmouth on the south coast of England has significant pre-historic remains from the last ice age when it was shaped by the Solent River. Spithead, the area of the Solent between Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight, and Portsmouth Harbour are framed to the north by Portsdown Hill, a chalk outcrop, and to the south by the hill on which Ryde in the Isle of Wight stands.”

“Portsmouth Harbour was a key base in two world empires: the Roman and the British Empire. In the third century AD the Romans built their largest fortress in northwest Europe, Portchester Castle at the back of the harbour. A Romanesque keep and church were added in the 11th century. From the seventeenth century Fort Cumberland defended the approach to Langstone Harbour, gaining its star fortress form in the eighteenth century. The historic towns of Fareham and Gosport on the western and north western shores of the harbour have significant social and economic links with the development of national defence.”

“Over the last four centuries, Portsmouth Dockyard has developed into a modern naval base with the full complement of supporting facilities around the harbour, many of them supplied by water: gunwharf, victualling, hospitals, ammunition stores and magazines. In the nineteenth century a ring fortress was constructed: massive land forts encircling the harbour along Portsdown Hill and in Fareham and Gosport, and four sea forts between Southsea, Ryde and Bembridge Isle of Wight. In Haslar Gosport there is a gunboat yard developed by the Froudes, father and son, and associated with the great Victorian engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel, who was born in Portsmouth in 1806. These establishments and the historic towns around the harbour contain a significant architectural and engineering legacy.”

“The English royal dockyards, victualling yards and hospitals formed what are arguably the largest industrial centres in Britain before the Industrial Revolution, while their economic impact was out of

all proportion to their size' (Coad 1989). By the middle of the eighteenth century the royal dockyards and the navy had become 'by a large margin the largest industrial organisation in the western world' (Rodger 1986)."

"There are several technological world firsts associated with the harbour, including Block Mills, the world's first steam-powered mass production factory using metal machine tools developed by Marc Brunel, Henry Maudesley, Henry Goodrich and others; the ship-testing tanks in Haslar, Gosport developed by William Froude and his son in the 1880s - a facility which is still in operation; the discovery of the cure for scurvy by James Lind in 1753 a physician at Haslar Hospital (1671-73) designed by Theodore Jacobsen – at the time the largest brick building in Europe; and in the mid-twentieth century, the invention of freeze drying in Royal Clarence Victualling Yard; degaussing of ships at HMS Vernon; radar in Eastney Fort East; and the development of chromophotography in the Admiralty Laboratories."

"Portsmouth's green seafront Southsea Common was for centuries the assembly point for armies and naval forces departing for war, preserving it from development until 1922, when it was purchased by Portsmouth Corporation. It is now listed as a historic landscape. D-Day in June 1944, the world's greatest seaborne invasion was co-ordinated from Southwick House just to the north of Portsdown Hill; a large part of the invasion forces assembled in the area and left from Portsmouth Harbour – as did the Falklands Task Force in 1982."

"Three preserved ships: Mary Rose, HMS Victory and HMS Warrior 1860 represent key developments in warship design. Mary Rose was raised from the Solent seabed in 1984; significant historic wrecks including Invincible, Edgar and Royal Sovereign and other important underwater heritage are identified in Spithead."

"Ryde, Alverstoke and Southsea have significant Regency and early Victorian areas associated with naval and military occupants, including Owen's Southsea, an early garden suburb developed by Thomas Ellis Owen from 1830-60 and his Alverstoke Crescent and communal garden in Gosport, now restored by the local community."

Any comments on this draft gratefully accepted! We have also attempted to set out the Benefits (and disbenefits) of Inscription on World Heritage List – and of the process of application in its own right. They are:

- Prestige of worldwide publicity to boost the local tourist industry –the 'Heritage Dividend'; joint marketing of attractions
- Helps preserve and sustain the heritage – built, underwater, archaeology, cultural - by emphasising its importance to local people and to the local economy
- Enhanced inter-local planning authority co-operation and between other stakeholders around the harbour and Spithead
- Higher quality new developments and urban design; tall buildings policy
- Enhanced water transport, reducing traffic congestion and pollution

Disbenefits

- Do we want any more tourists? – Yes – off season
- Increased pressure on transport and on local services
- Sites are monitored by ICOMOS – and can be placed on World Heritage in Danger List

ICOMOS – the International Committee on Monuments and Sites – stresses that local people must be involved in any bid. Unusually, so far, this is led by one! We would have to convince the DCMS to put Portsmouth Harbour on the Tentative List which they are currently revising. A supporting dossier, identifying the heritage to be protected and existing protection: Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, RAMSAR sites, SSSIs, protected wrecks, controls over dredging etc. would be the next stage, and then, once accepted on the List, a ten-year management plan prepared to ensure that our heritage is well looked after. That is in the future; our first task now is to convince the politicians that it is a good idea! They are worried about funding, so we are exploring sources. Experience in nearby sites eg the Jurassic Coast in Dorset can also be drawn on. The next step is to spread the word. If you would like a presentation to a group you belong to, please contact Celia Clark.

## **Southern Comfort 2006**

On 14 October in Portsmouth Guildhall, the Portsmouth Society hosted Southern Comfort, the annual regional conference of civic amenity societies. Sixty one delegates from eighteen societies, from all over south-east England attended together with representatives from the Civic Trust SE and CPRE. The proceedings were opened by the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth.

### **Celia Clark, Chair of the Portsmouth Society**

Dr Celia Clark recalled that the Portsmouth Society was formed in 1973 and in the same year was represented at the inaugural meeting of Southern Comfort. Since then the Society has been actively pursuing the protection of the built environment from the ravages of unconstrained developments that are not prevented by city planners and the Development Control Committee. Because of the lack of resources and expertise in our unitary authority, we have had to battle to preserve elements of our history and our heritage and to demand new designs that properly reflect the dignity of our city. In the wider context we have strongly supported regional efforts to safeguard our region from the overwhelming engulfment, without due regard to supporting infrastructure, threatened by the South East Plan. On the positive side we have initiated annual Design Awards which identify new structures and embellishments that merit publicity and acclaim. Most notably these have included the iconic Spinnaker Tower.

### **Paul Grover – Solent Centre for Architecture + Design**

The keynote address of *What an architecture centre can do for you!* was enthusiastically delivered by Paul Grover, Chief executive of the Solent Centre for Architecture and Design. His presentation vividly illustrated how his and other similar centres funded by CABE and SEEDA provide design advocacy to professionals and the public. They are also dedicated to communicating with the wider public to assist them to understand and to contribute towards the appreciation of, and the design of their communities. The architects visit schools, to involve teachers and children, and hold exhibitions to encourage people to investigate the history of their cities. They also institute National Architecture Weeks to seek public participation. He cited our Bus Tour of the locations of the Design Awards as being an excellent example. For further inspiration he described a City Vision Centre involving three-dimensional and virtual modelling to stimulate the public to visualise improvements to their city.

In the following discussion, Paul Grover confirmed several experiences with local authorities recognising that consultation at street level with the people contributed to successful urban developments; it was important that urban design should not be marred by individual building styles; more work needs to be done on sustainability and this needs to be related to costs; we should start with the public and the broad view, not with abstract principles. Considerable interest was expressed in Paul's description of the City Vision and there was general agreement that as well as an 'Architecture Centre' each city should have a City Masterplan to aid a Citizens' Forum. In referring to the value of guided walks he added that interesting issues could be collated on the Centre's web site (using 'Google map-technology') with links to individual societies.

### **Open Forum – South East Plan ...**

The second discussion period was chaired by Michael Carden, Vice-President of the City of Winchester Trust. He invited summaries of responses already made to the SE Plan: Winchester reported seeking protection for historic sites whilst Portchester had made extensive comments about transport; Guildford considered that the report was light weight and failed to address detail or costs; they questioned whether their extensive comments would receive proper attention. In response to the question of how should the societies have responded. It was noted that it was up to individual local societies as the Civic Trust could only respond to national issues. Fareham advocated a group approach and cited SHUV (South Hampshire Unheard Voices) which comprises 30 organisations formed to counteract the aspirations of PUSH (Partnership for Urban South Hampshire). All agreed that the report concentrated too much on the provision of extra housing without proper attention to the supporting infrastructure and the impact upon the environment.

## **Michael Carden, Vice-President of the City of Winchester Trust**

In the concluding speech, Michael Carden paid tribute to the continued success of Southern Comfort, since its inception in Chichester some 33 years ago, and he congratulated Paul Grover on the practical assistance offered by the Architecture Centre and his vision of the future. He highlighted the difficulties delivering the message from the Societies to local and more particularly to national government. He suggested that the subject of the next Southern Comfort should be: "How can we get the government to make the planning system better?".

Brian Horsley, chair of Civic Trust SE expressed the regional perspective and added comments about the need for the Civic Trust to campaign more vigorously to protect the quality of life.

### **Afternoon programme**

Delegates attended guided walks to the Historic Dockyard or to Gunwharf Quays. The former, led by Celia Clark assisted by Dean Clarke, included the range of historic buildings and boathouses in the dockyard and sight of HMS Warrior and HMS Victory. The latter, led by Roger James assisted by Charles Burns, enabled sight of the restored buildings on the former naval mine and torpedo depot, including the Vulcan building and the Custom House. It concluded with a visit to the new and highly praised shopping area with the opportunity of a visit to the Spinnaker Tower.

### **Conclusion**

Southern Comfort enabled delegates from many societies to meet and discuss the questions that were important to them. It was quite evident that in many cases societies had to battle to preserve the quality of historic buildings and to achieve corresponding quality with new designs within the urban infrastructure. There was difficulty in getting their message across both to their local authority and to the echelons of national government. The resolution of this difficulty should be the subject of the next Southern Comfort to be hosted by the Worthing Society.

*Bob Adderley*

## **The New Planning System**

The latest City Plan has only recently been adopted yet work on it was started in 1997. In an attempt to reduce the timescales and to provide a more flexible system the Government introduced legislation which changed the way in which local councils plan for the future development needs of their communities. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 replaced the old system of local plans and structure plans with a system of 'Local Development Frameworks' (LDF).

The new system sees local planning policy split into a number of documents (instead of one large one) which can be created, reviewed and replaced to different timescales, so as to speed up the planning system and allow greater flexibility. Therefore, instead of reviewing the City Local Plan that was adopted in July 2006, the city council is now preparing the documents that will make up Portsmouth's LDF. They will gradually replace the policies in the City Local Plan. Portsmouth's LDF will consist of the following documents:

**Local Development Scheme (LDS)** is a timetable, which sets out when the city council will produce each document of the LDF (last reviewed February 2006).

**Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** sets out how people will be consulted in the production of the documents that make up the LDF and on planning applications (Adopted April 2006).

**Core Strategy** is the overarching policy document that sets the broad policy framework for all the other documents in the LDF.

**The Site Allocations** Development Plan Document identifies sites for specific uses such as housing, open space or employment.

**Area Action Plans** set out policies for areas in which change is expected. In Portsmouth these areas are Southsea, Hilsea Lido, Somerstown & North Southsea, The Hard and Port Solent.



**The Development Control Policies** Development Plan Document will set out more general policies that will be used to assess planning applications. As the City Plan was only recently adopted and contains such policies, they will not be replaced by the DPD for a number of years.

**Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)** help explain specific issues or sites in more detail. SPDs have already been prepared for Planning Obligations (adopted July 2006), Air Quality and Reducing Crime Through Design (both adopted March 2006), and work has started on a planning brief for Station Square.

The Portsmouth Society has recently participated in workshops which will help to formulate policies for the Core Strategy.

## **Our Response to the City's Core Strategy 'Issues & Options' Questionnaire**

The city council offered too short a period for local people to give their ideas on how the city will change in the next few years. Charles Burns arranged a special meeting for local groups and individuals to be briefed by a planning officer. Most of those attending were our members, but given our lack of success in influencing the previous city plan, we felt the questionnaire did not reflect a sensible order of priorities - or link to the city's other responsibilities eg leisure, transport, housing, education, social services, culture, waste collection...

The documents lacked any sense of local distinctiveness: what makes Portsmouth a unique place to live and work in. We said that its natural and built environment should be considered BEFORE the local economy - in which shopping in our view played too prominent a part, compared for example with high tech and creative industries and education. Younger people should be helped and encouraged to learn new skills eg by bursaries, and ageism should also be tackled, so that older people are not discriminated against if they want to work. High tech industries could be further developed by working closely with the university and Highbury College to develop new enterprises. In retailing the distinctive contribution of Albert Road as a nursery of new businesses rather like Kensington Market in Brighton should be recognised, supported and encouraged with funding, special events, promotion and environmental improvements.

Clearly the future of the naval base is crucial to future employment, but we found a disinclination to consider what opportunities there might be if it closed or contracted.

We objected to 'Social, Community and Cultural Facilities' being lumped together in the last section, with no questions about cultural facilities, which are as important to the local economy and marketing as well as to our enjoyment. We mentioned an ice skating rink, outdoor swimming, opportunities for adult education and flexible multi-use spaces, and also that Drayton and Farlington are very much lacking in community facilities. Education is a major function of the city, but no questions were asked about it.

We support the Solent Centre for Architecture and Design's proposal for a City Vision centre - a giant model of the city which would be used to discuss proposed new developments with local people - housed, we hope in the Mountbatten Gallery in Guildhall Square.

We felt that the diversity of Portsmouth's built environment was under-represented. We said strongly that regular, sustained maintenance and enhancement of the historic built environment was essential - including repairs to publicly owned buildings. As a city with a considerable historic environment we should, like Gosport, have a Heritage Strategy. Since much of our tourism is focused on the historic environment, efforts should be made to ensure that historic buildings, particularly those in the city council and Ministry of Defence ownership are properly and regularly maintained. Archaeology must be acknowledged and funded as a planning function. We also said there should be more conservation areas. In response to redevelopment proposals we have recently suggested two more: the terrace which includes 380 London Road and the mature western part of Somers Town. As mentioned in the above article, our proposal that Portsmouth Harbour - from Portsdown Hill to Ryde and Haslar to Fort Cumberland - should be put forward to the DCMS as a World Heritage Site involves working with the five authorities and civic societies

who share it, as well as many other stakeholders. The city council needs to recognise the many benefits such an initiative could bring, including joint marketing and integrated and strengthened planning policies for the whole harbour.

We also wanted protection of the city's precious open spaces from development, and consideration of more land reclamation - as in the C19 and early C20. We were divided as to whether land in flood zones should be developed.

We strongly supported local energy generation and new planning requirements for sustainable design and construction. We would like to see Portsmouth city at the forefront of sustainable development, including much more effort being put into sustainable retrofitting of existing properties, though we recognise that there are refuse implications from some aspects of this. Many recent housing developments are of ugly, cheap design with rooms which are too small and inflexible to adapt to future needs. There should be a new Portsmouth minimum dwelling size. The council should refuse developments which are of too low a standard. We would like to see definitions and good examples of what 'high density development' means in practice.

On transport, we consider that new systems of public transport - whether LRT (without the expensive tunnel) or monorail - and much more extensive water transport around and across Portsmouth Harbour - are needed to persuade people out of their cars and reduce congestion and pollution. Greater promotion of existing water transport services is needed, with joint ticketing and integrated facilities to improve links between different modes of transport. We also believe that encouragement of Portsmouth's many local centres and diversification of what they offer should be an objective to reduce people's need to travel further than walking distance for everyday needs.

*Celia Clark*

## **Portsmouth archaeology still being eroded**

As mentioned in the last newsletter, the city is still without a full-time archaeological advisor. Over the last or so year numerous sites, that could have uncovered important information on the development and past activity in the city, have been "needlessly and thoughtlessly" destroyed in direct conflict with national planning guidance. This situation is also contrary to the adopted Portsmouth local plan policy DC15, which seeks either to ensure that important archaeology is preserved in-situ or that adequate provision is made for its excavation and recording prior to development.



*Southsea Castle - scene of unauthorised excavation*

As well as having no full time archaeological advisor in the planning department, there is also no provision being made by PCC for the maintenance and enhancement of the city sites and monuments record, a database of all the known archaeological sites in the area. This database provides an important tool for planners and developers as to what potential constraints there may be on a particular development site. Without this database being adequately maintained, essential information may not be properly assessed when developments are being first considered, meaning that no provision is made for archaeological works to be undertaken prior to development work commencing. English Heritage is aware of the situation and has requested that the city rectify matters, but so far no permanent solution has been achieved.

In addition to the lack of permanent development control archaeological advice being given to the city council, a number of legally protected Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) in the city have either been directly damaged or had changes made to their settings without following the correct consent procedures, both offences under the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Area Act. In some cases this has been done either by contractors working on behalf of the city council or following advice received by city council officials.

At Fort Southwick on Portsdown Hill (one of numerous Palmertson Forts afforded statutory protection) contractors working on a road improvement scheme, on behalf of the city council, carried out significant groundworks inside the boundary of the SAM without approaching English Heritage and DCMS for consent. In the most serious recent case, contractors working for a television company were allowed to dig inside the moat of Southsea Castle with a mechanical excavator following advice received from an official from Portsmouth Museums Service who was apparently unaware of the legally protected status of the site and that carrying out these works without obtaining prior consent from DCMS constituted an offence. This further highlights the need for the city council to appoint a full time archaeologist.

Members of the society executive committee have had a number of meetings with city councillors, most notably Cllr. Eleanor Scott and Mike Hancock MP, to discuss the situation. With the amount of redevelopment in the city currently being planned, such as The Point, Old Portsmouth - where work has already started, the Northern Quarter development, the development of Eastney seafront and the potential redevelopment or relocation of Fratton Park, there will potentially be a significant impact on the cities dwindling archaeological resource. Elsewhere in this newsletter the potential submission of a bid for Portsmouth to become a World Heritage Site has been discussed, which will require a significant archaeological input.

As a civic society the Portsmouth Society is not against redevelopment and openly welcomes any development that enhances the city and makes Portsmouth a better place to live. Where we are concerned, however, is that this redevelopment does not take place at the cost of damaging the archaeological resource of the city. A city with the depth of heritage of Portsmouth deserves to have that heritage preserved alongside urban and social improvements and it is down to the city council to take the lead on this.

## The City Council's Trees

Because I look at the weekly planning applications for your committee, I was asked to find out whether planning application must be made by the Council for 'works to trees' as householders have to. The City Helpdesk put me on to Stuart Campbell (023 9268 8178). Yes, he said, for a Tree Preservation Order tree or one in a Conservation Area, a planning application must be made by the Council. I said I couldn't remember seeing any. No, because the application is made by the contractor employed to do the job, not PCC. But there are exceptions. Any tree declared dead, whatever its preservation status, or any branch reported dangerous, can be felled or lopped immediately before our winds bring it down on someone. These are the principles. If you wish to report or query any tree matter, do ring Stuart - he is very approachable. Most of the time he is out of the office protecting trees and protecting us from trees.

*Betty Owen*

*Right: Trees ancient and modern in Grand Parade, Old Portsmouth*



## South West Trains downgrades Portsmouth-Waterloo line



A high-density class 450 train

We are very concerned that the quality of the trains operating between London Waterloo and Portsmouth by South West Trains (SWT) has been downgraded with "blue" class 450 trains replacing the "white" class 444 units which were introduced as recently as 2004.

The "blue" trains are designed for suburban journeys typically lasting no more than 1 hour and have five seats per row as opposed to four in the "white" units. Legroom is much reduced in the "blue" trains and the overall result when these trains are used on longer journeys, such as Portsmouth-Waterloo, is that passengers complain of cramped conditions and backache. Other drawbacks of the "blue" trains include a lack of tables, no power supplies for laptop computers etc., narrow corridors which have put an end to the at-seat refreshment trolleys, external doors which open directly into the seating areas letting a blast of cold air to enter the train at stations.

The excuse offered by SWT relates to overcrowding, yet no overcrowding occurs south of Guildford. The changes will discourage rail travel between South Hampshire and the capital as travellers revert to their more comfortable cars with a resulting loss of revenue for the SWT.

The real reason for these changes is, of course, cost cutting and is a result of the new franchise which was awarded to South West Trains for a 10 year period starting in February 2007. SWT will have to pay a substantial premium to the Department for Transport instead of receiving a large subsidy. As a result, a batch of quality long-distance trains has been put into storage and our "white" trains moved to the Bournemouth line as a back-fill.

In 2004, "white" Class 444 was launched with much celebration - 'Portsmouth's New Trains'. Now, it seems, Portsmouth is to relinquish its inheritance, in order to serve Bournemouth's need. This is grossly unfair and is indeed a betrayal of trust we placed in SWT's promise of two years ago.

During the 1990s, Network South East found it possible to offer both Bournemouth and Portsmouth high quality Class 442 trains on principal services from a pool of only 24 units. With 45 of the Class 444 trains, it is surely possible to offer a high quality accommodation on all fast services on both the Bournemouth and Portsmouth lines.

We have written to SWT management and, so far, have received unsatisfactory replies. We have lobbied MPs, City Council officials and the Rail Passengers' Council and we are working with the recently formed No450 Campaign which is led by David Habershon of Emsworth. The No450 campaign has a Web site at [www.no450.co.uk](http://www.no450.co.uk) and we urge readers to sign the on-line petition.

*Bruce Oliver / John Holland*

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