

PORTCHESTER CIVIC SOCIETY

August 2022 Newsletter

Dear Members,

I do hope you are coping with the sweltering heat we have had recently. Our poor gardens are very crisp and brown and we have already lost our new silver birch tree which we planted only a few months ago. I really don't know what will survive! We can only pray for rain and let nature take its course.

I do hope you have managed to visit St Mary's church with the exhibitions of local artists and also, this week, the Flower Club celebrating their 50th Anniversary.

Portchester Castle was packed with locals and visitors for the Gala, but sadly the procession through the village was absent again this year. With health and safety concerns about young people travelling on open backed floats it has become more of a walking groups parade in recent years!

There have not been many new planning applications for Portchester recently but the development on the corner of Station Road and the Castle Street roundabout is progressing well. This will provide 16 much needed, Council run, age restricted (over 55 years old) supported housing apartments, both one and two bedroom.

Much internal work is being carried out on the old White Hart Public House in Castle Steet to convert it into a residential home for the disabled with accommodation for carers. This is being carried out without planning permission being granted yet! We questioned this at the recent CAT meeting in the Parish Hall but were told this is being done at the new owner's risk.

Fareham Borough Council owned Assheton Court, to the south of the main Precinct car park, is to be demolished and replaced by a much needed, more modern, high-quality provision for those over 55. Last year an Outline Proposal Plan was published, followed by local consultation events. Concerns were expressed about the bulk of the building and the overlooking of neighbouring houses. A revised plan is

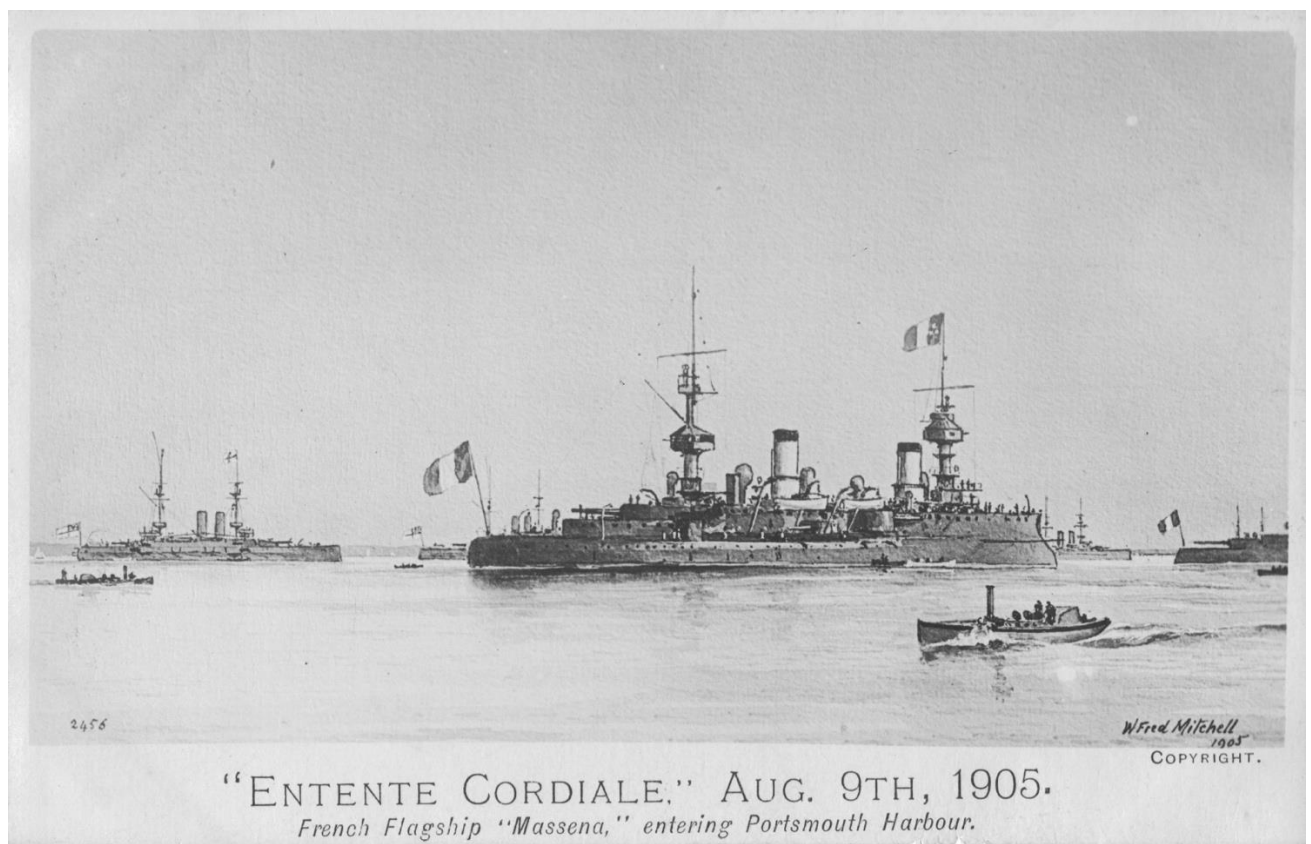
now available online, P/22/1012/FP, which seeks to address these issues. The number of dwellings has been reduced slightly to sixty, 5 one bedroom and 55 two-bedroom flats. This reduces the overall mass of the building and minimises overlooking. More lifts and car parking spaces have been added.

I do hope you enjoy reading Paul's piece on the French Navy's "Entente Cordiale" visit in 1905 when Portsmouth welcomed many of their Matelots.

Looking forward to seeing you all at our next meeting on 20th September when Judy Theobald returns for part two of her talk on '30 Years in the Media'.

Best wishes,

Hazel



The 'Entente Cordiale' Visit of 1905

I recently bought a leather-bound 'Programme of Events' of the visit of the French Fleet to Cowes and Portsmouth, August 1905, one hundred years after the Battle of Trafalgar.

In the Portchester Civic Society's photograph collection, we have pictures of French and British sailors visiting Portchester during this event, so I was very pleased to acquire this programme.

On **Monday 7th August**, the French Fleet of 18 ships; six battleships, five cruisers and seven destroyers, arrived at the Nab Tower at 11.30am to reach the proposed anchorage off Cowes at 1pm.

The programme reads;

"In case of fog, a Cruiser will be stationed 5 miles south of the Nab Light Vessel, and will fire guns at 2 minutes intervals." *No radar at that time!*

The British Channel Fleet of eleven battleships, nine cruisers and twenty-four destroyers, were anchored off Cowes, where salutes were returned as the French passed through to anchor. The French Admiral Commander-in-Chief and Captains of the French Fleet, on arrival off Cowes, visited King Edward VII on board the Royal Yacht. In the evening the French Admiral and Superior Officers dined with the King on board the Royal Yacht. At 9pm both Fleets were illuminated, followed by a fireworks display.

Tuesday 8th was set apart by command of the King for the French Admirals and Officers to witness the vessels of the Royal Yacht Squadron racing for His Majesty's Cup. In the evening the Wardroom Officers of the French Fleet dined the Officers of their opposite ships in the Channel Fleet.

Wednesday 9th at 10.30am the Royal Yacht, preceded by the Trinity Yacht and followed by the Admiralty Yacht, reviewed the French Fleet. On returning to the Royal Yacht's buoy, the King accompanied by HRH the Prince of Wales and HRH the Duke of Connaught, embarked on the French Flagship *Massena* for luncheon.

The French Flagship and French Fleet then weighed and proceeded into Portsmouth Harbour, whilst the Channel Fleet moved up to their usual anchorage at Spithead. On the *Massena's* arrival at South Railway Jetty, the General Officer Commanding the Troops, and the Mayor and Corporation of Portsmouth paid their visit to the French Admiral. In the evening, Dinners and a Theatrical Performance were put on for Officers of both Fleets.

Thursday 10th a special train conveyed the French Admiral and 80 Officers, 20 Interpreters and Members of the Board of Admiralty, to London to take luncheon with the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London at the Guildhall. Again, various events were arranged for the French visitors in Portsmouth, including sports, banquets and entertainments.

Friday 11th the King invited the French Admiral and 80 of his Officers, accompanied by 30 British Officers, to partake of luncheon at Windsor Castle.

The Prime Minister later entertained the French Admiral and officers to dinner at 10 Downing Street.

Saturday 12th the Mayor and Corporation of Portsmouth gave a garden party in Victoria Park. Picnics, etc. were arranged for Warrant Officers and Men of the French Fleet in the vicinity of Portsmouth. *This is probably when the French seamen, accompanied by British seamen, visited Portchester by train from Portsmouth.*

At 9pm a firework display took place on the Esplanade at Southsea.

Sunday 13th Motor Cars were put at the disposal of French Officers who wished to visit the surrounding countryside.

Monday 14th the French Fleet sailed from Portsmouth Harbour.

Paul Woodman



The French Fleet alongside the Portsmouth Dockyard wall



French Flagship Massena coming alongside at Portsmouth Dockyard with
HMS Victory afloat off Gosport



The Crown Inn, Ivy House and Cormorant Public Houses welcomed our visitors



Arriving at Portchester Station



British and French Matelots together



Strolling past the old Tea Room