

PORTCHESTER MATTERS



Issue 16

The Newsletter of the Portchester Civic Society (Founded 2000)

Winter 2018



by Paul Woodman

Planning still dominates the Borough, with the above map showing the major Portchester developments either under construction (Cranleigh Road) or in the planning process (Romsey Avenue and Down End East). These are just a small number of the developments that are threatening to concrete over even more of Fareham. Failure

to support these increasing housing numbers with suitable services, infrastructure, the increase in pollution and the loss of habitat for wildlife, are major concerns throughout the Borough.

Fareham Borough Council is set to tear up its Draft Local Plan in order to meet the Government's demands to identify more land for houses than was previously requested. The decision comes in the wake of the Government's changes to the National Planning

Policy Framework, announced in July 2018, which significantly increase the number of homes required to be built in Fareham by around 30%.

At present, planning applications that are not in the current Local Plan are rejected, however this will all change and almost certainly be included in the new version.

The Portchester Civic Society actively comments on all the local major planning issues but with increasing frustration at the enormity of our task.

Society visit to the D-Day map room

Southwick House, 12th September
by Bernie Lendon

Nineteen stalwart members massed in the car park at Southwick Park and approached the Military reception committee at the barrier with determination and gusto. Needless to say we gained admittance and made our way to the guardroom. There we were given the much coveted visitor passes and escorted to our rendezvous point with our guide at Southwick House for the much anticipated talk about the famous D-Day map room situated within this grand residence.

We were met at Southwick House by Richard Callaghan who gave us a very interesting talk on the D-Day map, which was displayed in a room on the ground floor of the house.

Richard talked to us for an hour and a half and related some astounding and humorous stories to us. The actual map was constructed under great secrecy by the well-known toy maker Chad Valley. The original construction was of the whole of the British Isles and the Norwegian and French coastline. This was so that anyone involved in the construction wouldn't know exactly where the invasion was planned. When it arrived at Southwick it was in 12 crates. The parts of the map that weren't required were destroyed and a lone carpenter was employed



The map room

to construct the map. The carpenter was then kept under house arrest at Southwick until 1944 being employed as the odd job man – certainly a most “odd job”. One strange fact was that the map has been given grade 1 listed status, but Southwick House is only a grade 2 listed building, so the map is more important than the building, which could pose problems in the future.

Richard also related the strange tale of a repatriated spy who was driven to Dover

in a car that had curtained windows, but unfortunately there was a chink in the curtain where the spy was sitting. What a view this spy had! As he was driven along he saw street signs indicating places around the areas of Folkestone and Dover and noted the great build up of armaments such as tanks, supplies and soldiers. On his return to Germany he related all this information to his handlers, enforcing the impression that an invasion was being prepared for Calais! He had in fact been driven



Southwick House

through Portsmouth and the surrounding area and all the signs had been put up so the spy thought he was being driven through Kent. A most elaborate deception, which worked a treat.

The whole visit was very interesting and hopefully Richard will be coming to give us a further talk at a monthly meeting in the future. Thank you as always to Hazel and Paul for arranging such an interesting visit.



Society members

Portchester School Ablaze

by Paul Woodman

School came to an abrupt halt for pupils when a glow appeared in the ceiling above their classroom stove and their wooden classroom caught fire. It was the morning of 29th October 1956 and the nine-year-old boys and girls in Mr. Gerald Durrant's class at Wicor Farm Primary School had been sitting waiting for their favourite lesson, physical training, when they were ordered to evacuate their classroom. With smoke drifting across the playground and the dry timbers crackling, the whole school of four hundred children was gathered safely outside for a roll call. One block of four classrooms was soon ablaze and eventually the roof collapsed.

While waiting for the fire brigade to arrive, teachers and senior pupils entered other parts of the wing and nearby buildings, salvaging books and equipment and piling it up in the playground. Mr. J. Ludford, the Headmaster, was full of praise for his pupils. "The children were perfect. They came out of the school quietly, without any fuss."

Those pupils whose classrooms were destroyed were accommodated at Cams School until they completed their primary education the following year and moved on to senior schools.

Wicor Farm County Primary School's four wooden classrooms opened in November 1938 on the site where Heritage Gardens now stands off Cranleigh Road. Nearby Gatehouse Road commemorates where the original school gates stood. The new Wicor Primary School in Hatherley Crescent was opened in 1962.

Pictures courtesy of the Evening News 29 October 1956



Origin of Christmas Cards

1862 seems to be the start of attempts to wish 'A Merry Christmas' and 'A Happy New Year' when they were the size of a gentleman's address card in this country. Later robins, holly and landscapes were

added and the printers were Goodall and Sons of London. Their real popularity began in Germany where they were very expensive.

As the habit of sending them grew the famous De la Rue printers produced

them and even after some years, by 1883 one half were printed abroad!

Bryan Jerrard from the Times of December, 2010 quoting the edition of December 27, 1883

Bedenham Explosion

A personal experience by Malcolm Cooper following on from the article in the previous edition of Portchester Matters

The evening of Friday the 14th of July 1950 was a beautiful sunny, warm evening. I was then a boy of 11 years of age and as such spent a lot of time playing along the foreshore and going out on the mud flats off Portchester. We were doing things such as walking out to Peewit Island and cockling and swimming in the creeks at low tide. We had a good understanding of the mud flats, knowing where to find the cockle beds and areas of mud to be avoided and where the path to Peewit Island started and such like.

That evening I made the decision to go and collect cockles for tea on Sunday, as the tide would be low early evening. To make cockling easy it was best to follow the tide out. As the tide ebbed and the water got low the cockles would close up. In doing so they would squirt a small jet of water and thus give their position away.

When we went out on the mud it used to be barefoot, as we couldn't afford plimsoles. For some reason that evening I decided to wear Wellington boots, something I'd never done before. So, clad in just a T shirt and shorts, off I went.

Anyone who has tried to walk in deep mud will know that when mud is deep enough it closes around the boot and makes it difficult to get your foot out of the mud. As my boots were a little on

the big side for me [I was told I would grow into them!] the inevitable happened. My foot got stuck and as I struggled to free myself I fell into the mud. Disgruntled, wet and muddy I decided the cockles would keep for another day.

So off home I went, covered with mud and wet, not an usual condition. Mum took one look at me and said, "You're not coming in the house in that state, get cleaned up", to which end a bucket of cold water was supplied. I proceeded to wash the accumulated mud off in the glass conservatory.

I had hardly started washing when a series of loud bangs were heard. They seemed to be coming from the direction of the shore where I had just returned from. Being curious and clad in just a pair of shorts and barefoot I went back to the shore, which was very near to where we lived.

On reaching the shore it was obvious that something was happening at Bedenham and a small crowd had gathered. After we had been watching for a little while there was a terrific explosion. Needless to say the gathered audience dropped to the ground. I remember looking up and seeing bits of the pier flying over us heading towards White Hart Lane. When it stopped raining debris I made for home.

On reaching home I went to go into what was left of the conservatory, which by then was just a framework as there wasn't a pane of glass left intact. If I had not been curious I would have been cut to shreds with flying glass!

Shortly after the first explosion there was another big explosion. Soon after a police car toured the streets advising people to take their valuables and leave the area. Our next-door neighbour, who owned a car, took my brother and me to safety to some of their relations who lived in Tipner.

Property generally suffered minor damage, mainly due to it being a fine evening and people having their windows open. Most damage was caused by falling debris and ammunition. One house near to us in White Hart Lane found themselves the proud owners of a 4.5 inch shell.

Subsequently naval personnel spent a lot of time searching the area for ammunition and scouring the mud flats for anything that could be a danger to the public.

Some months later, when everything had returned to normal and the incident was beginning to fade, certain small boys knew something that the naval search parties didn't. Namely, that any thing that falls into mud usually gets covered by it. So, just after an early autumn gale scoured the surface of the mud, we did our own search to see if we could find anything.

Success, we found a 20mm cannon shell. As everyone knows, shells are made to go bang, but you need something to fire it from! Our answer was simple; you light a fire, put the shell on the fire and wait. Fortunately for us we failed in our mission.

You don't get childhoods like that anymore!

Our Objection to the Romsey Avenue Development

Paul Woodman

The Portchester Civic Society object to this development of 225 dwellings.

The proposed access to this large site is completely inadequate i.e. through the narrow entrance from Romsey Avenue. We note that Highways have yet to produce a report. As the majority of traffic on and off this site will use Beaulieu Avenue, the junction with the A27 needs serious consideration as to whether traffic lights

or a mini roundabout should be installed to manage this increase in vehicular use.

The loss of environment for wildlife on the site is deplorable, given that the adjacent Cranleigh Road development has also taken away the habitat of many species. We regret the increasing loss of the countryside gap between Portchester and Fareham Town.

The ratio of affordable housing appears incorrect and the shortage must be addressed.

All new Portchester housing developments, either those under construction or in the

planning stage, are putting increasing strain on the local infrastructure. Schools are full, and surgeries and pharmacies are struggling to cope with increasing numbers of patients.

Air pollution is of major concern in many areas and 'hot spots' have been identified in this locality. There are no local convenience stores within easy walking distance of this development and the proposed larger development on land to the east of Down End Road, will only add to the problem of air pollution.

Everything - Including the Kitchen Sink

Paul Woodman

The expression 'everything but the kitchen sink' proved untrue when one was found on the foreshore during the Portchester Civic Society's Beach Clean event in September.

Nearly one hundred volunteers turned up at the bottom of Hospital Lane to take part, with some arriving from as far afield as Swindon, Oxford, Farnborough and London. The Society has participated in the Marine Conservation Society's annual survey of the state of Britain's beaches for

over 15 years, where they survey a one hundred metre section of beach, recording every individual piece of litter.

The top of Portsmouth Harbour at Portchester is often full of litter deposited by the wind and tide but this year we noticed a small reduction from previous years. We did however still collect 829 pieces of rubbish in the surveyed section. Volunteers were happy to carry on after the initial survey and cleared more than half a mile each side of the foreshore. We have never had so many volunteers, especially coming from a distance to help. Those who travelled from Swindon and Oxford commented that we were their nearest beach!

I believe the emphasis on plastic pollution in the oceans has focused people's minds on looking after the environment and how they can do their bit to help. It was great to see so many doing such a great job whilst enjoying the sunshine.



The kitchen sink!



Beachwatch volunteers 2018

Chairman's Newsletter

Dear Members,

What a wonderful summer we have just experienced. However, it was difficult to keep up with the watering of delicate plants but on the bright side the weather was ideal for holidaymakers and alfresco dining.

The Society had a very enjoyable visit to the D-Day Map Room at Southwick

House. I can't believe that I have never visited there before!

Our Beachwatch foreshore clean up this year had a record attendance with nearly 100 volunteers of all ages doing a fantastic job. You can read more about this elsewhere in the newsletter.

A big thanks to Bryan Jerrard for taking walks down Castle Street during Heritage Open Days in September. Always well attended, informative and amusing.

You can read all about the planning problems that we have in the Borough on the front page. Such a really difficult time we face with all our open spaces being vulnerable.

I went to a very interesting talk at the Fareham Society meeting in October by Bob Marsh, a retired planning inspector. He gave a fascinating insight into his role. It was interesting hearing it from a different perspective.

I do hope the planning problems will be solved before Portchester is destroyed completely.

Again, thank you to our committee and all our members for your support and I wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Hazel

A few differences between home and here...

Scott Eyre – Son-in-law of our committee member Alan Maddison

I'm an American from Wyoming, married to an English girl, and we're currently living in Portchester.

I first met my British born wife, Joanna, in November of 2013, whilst we were both working for Disney Cruise Lines, onboard the Disney Dream. The ship is Disney's 3rd in the fleet, and it is massive, measuring about 3-football fields in length from bow-to-stern. The ship began sailing in 2010 and voyages from Port Canaveral, Florida, to destinations within the Bahamas, twice a week, year-round. Furthermore, it accommodates about 4,500 guests per cruise, whilst also boasting a crew of around 1,500 at any given point in time. Life onboard was an astonishing experience. Indeed, working for Disney Cruise Lines was a fascinating ordeal, one that Joanna and I will never forget.



Disney Dream cruise ship

Alas, though I could without difficulty delve further into the dynamics of working for Disney, the purpose of these next few paragraphs is to highlight a few of the major differences in day-to-day life from my home state of Wyoming, the least populated and 2nd most rural state out of all fifty of the US States, to that of dwelling within the pleasant provision that is Portchester, nearby which I have been living for the past two years.

To begin, Hampshire county, England, in its totality, has around 1,455 square miles of land, and an estimated population of 1.8 million, and with that, a population density of about 1,237 people per square mile. On the contrary, Wyoming's population density is about 6... people... per square mile... With this drastic difference in population density comes a significant number of day-to-day variations. For example, residents of Portchester, and likewise, England, are well familiar with public transportation services such as trains, buses and taxis, that can deliver an individual to their preferred destination without too much worry (although I am well-aware of several detailed public discourses towards the state of the trains in this country). To continue, the availability of this public transportation undoubtedly lessens the necessity of obtaining a driving license or owning a vehicle. This is in stark contrast to Wyoming, where most teenagers begin to get



Scott & Jo's wedding - October 2016

their driving license at the age of fifteen due to the rural, far-reaching landscapes. Owning a vehicle is a must, and preferably one that has 4x4 capabilities to accommodate safer driving practices during times of heavy snowfall during the winter periods, which seeming last about nine months. Though, I must here say affirmatively that there is nothing more terrifying than a busy Tesco supermarket on a Sunday afternoon in England, especially in comparison to the wide-open aisles of an American Wal-Mart, which I grew up with...

Moving back to the weather, whilst the previous statement about a nine-month winter has been made mostly in jest, Wyoming's high elevation (at a state-wide average of 2,042 metres above sea level), in combination with its location (a 13-hour driving distance from the ocean), result in the subjection of its residents to frighteningly frigid forecasts and frequent heavy snowfall during the winter months. For comparison purposes, the highest village in Hampshire can be found in Ashmansworth, at 240 metres above sea level. Similarly, the



Traffic Jam! A Buffalo in Yellowstone Park

ocean, a known atmospheric temperature regulator, is only a short drive from any location for any resident of the UK. The combination of low altitude and proximity to the ocean, I argue, makes England a far more pleasant (albeit still frosty) location to endure the winter. In fact, England is still greener in the deepest troughs of wintertime than Wyoming ever is even during its most fertile moments. However, the far-North latitudinal location means that England has much shorter days and much longer nights, for far more fortnights, than Wyoming.

Nevertheless, Wyoming's wild climate can be accredited as a crucial component of the

state's identity. Contemporary Wyoming is known best for its cowboy culture, as well as its rich Native American history. The state also boasts the nation's first national park in Devil's Tower, a mesmerising monolith of ancient fossilized magma. Though, even better known is the terrifying super volcano that is Yellowstone National park. Yes, a combination of cowboys, Indians and gobsmacking geography make Wyoming a truly bizarre spectacle. Yet, Wyoming's modern history and present architecture begins largely with the Western advance of the USA during the ideo of the Industrial Revolution; whereas England's rich history begins long, long ago.

If it is one thing that I can emphasise to residents of England, it is to visit your castles and explore your Roman ruins. These are fascinating features and priceless perspective enhancers. Residents of England are well familiar with the knowledge that the history of humanity reaches far beyond the Industrial Revolution. On the contrary, most American's have never in real life seen a building that is more than 300 years old, based upon the fact that less than fifty per cent of Americans have a passport. Observing ancient architecture first hand is something Americans cannot easily do. This brings me to my final note; the observable pride of British people and their propensity to defend British values.

From what I have seen thus far in England, there is a plethora of monuments that describe various wars and tragedies through the ages. Laterally, it has become clear to me that the entire country was severely impacted by WW2. However, as boots were never "on the ground" in America during the world wars, I would argue that many American's today are largely detached from any observation of actual impacts on landscapes, cities and families that the war brought with it, with a few notable exceptions (veterans, Pearl Harbour and mistreated Japanese Americans). This is unfortunate because living in England has enabled me to see that war has caused real and great widespread distress.

To conclude, I have very much enjoyed my time here, sipping tea, trying fish and chips, talking about the weather, driving on the left and lastly, interacting with members of the community, who have largely been most lovely. Bob's your uncle.



Scott's dad's ranch in Wyoming

Other events throughout the year...



Heritage walks - September 2018



Gala parade 2018



Clash of the Romans - Summer 2018

PORTCHESTER A Community History

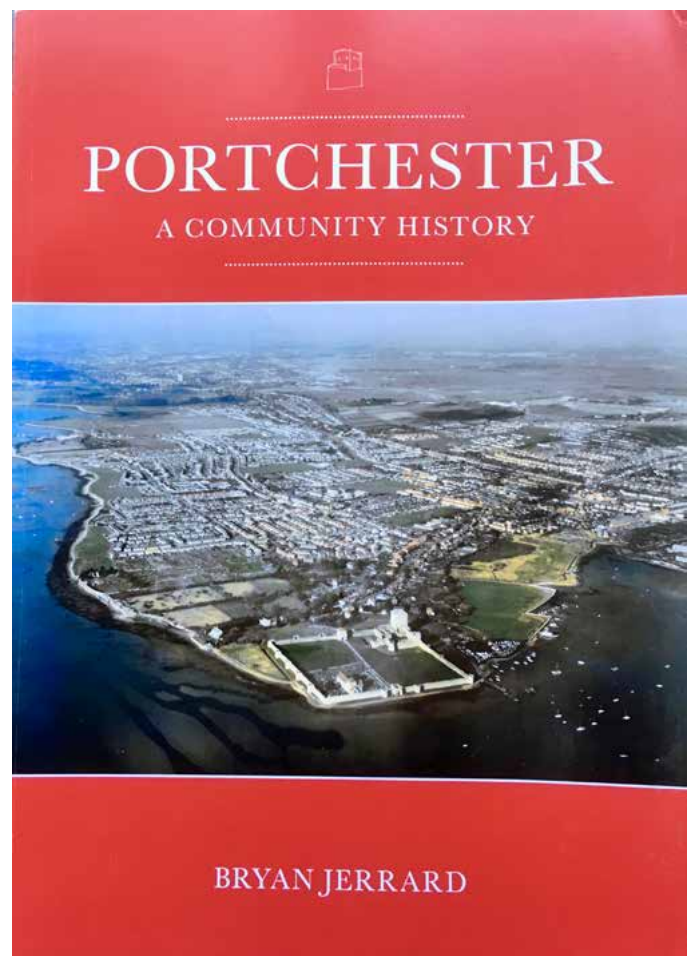
2nd Edition - A4 format
by Bryan Jerrard

Makes an excellent Christmas present for grandparents and parents, friends abroad or at home

Available at
The Cormorant, Castle Street
The Hub & Library
in Portchester Precinct
St Mary's Church Tearoom
in Portchester Castle

Still only £10 and all copies signed by the author, Bryan Jerrard

Telephone orders -
01329 236274 or 07817 653181



Summer Litter Pick

by John Morgan

We decided in May to have another litter pick up somewhere in Portchester and after careful deliberation we decided on the Wicor Recreation Ground to be worked on.

We chose Tuesday 5th June and as luck would have it the weather was kind to us. We had a good turnout for this, 9 people came along, (7 members and 2 non-members) and from asking people Facebook does help in getting these events exposed to a wider audience. After a quick run down of do's and don'ts we set off in all directions to rid the



area of litter. In total we collected 10 bags of assorted rubbish/litter.

It was noticed that along the shoreline the banks are starting to erode causing them to expose what the banks are made up of. It seems that when the area was built up landfill and rubbish was used which is now

beginning to escape. We have advised the Eastern Solent Coastal Partnership (ESCP), who are dealing with costal erosion, for their awareness on this for the environment.

All in all we had a good evening and enjoyed the view after we had finished. Thank you to all those who helped.

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 2019

Tuesday 15 January

The Truth about Commander Buster Crabb

by Dr John Bevan

Tuesday 19 February

History of the Watercress Line

by Dr Becky Peacock

Tuesday 19 March

Flying Boats and the Solent

by Steve Alcock

Tuesday 16 April

'A view from the wings'

by Brian Freeland

Tuesday 21 May

Royal visitors to Portchester

by Brian Jerrard

Tuesday 18 June

ATS Girls and Portsmouth

by Barbara Bennett

Tuesday 17 September

Titchfield Haven

by Phil Gould

Tuesday 15 October

Flora & Fauna of Farlington Marshes

by Chris Lychett

Saturday 9 November

'Memories of Portchester' Exhibition
Parish Hall, 10am - 4.30pm

Tuesday 19 November

AGM and 'A Butler's Christmas'

by Bob France

Tuesday 17 December

Christmas Party!

WE WELCOME
NEW MEMBERS
AND VISITORS

PARISH HALL
CASTLE STREET
PORTCHESTER
PO16 9PY

PORTCHESTER MATTERS

The Newsletter of the Portchester Civic Society

Founded 2000 | Registered Charity No. 1090509

Member of:

CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England); BTCV; NCVO; Solent Protection Society; Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust; Portsmouth Harbour Conservation Group

For further information please contact our Chairman Hazel Woodman: 02392 382778

www.PortchesterCivicSociety.co.uk