

FRIENDS OF GOSPORT MUSEUM

www.friendsofgosportmuseum.org.uk

NEWSLETTER

January 2008

Next Meeting 13th March 2008.

Gosport Discovery Centre

7:30pm

Talk on St Marks Church and
Church Yard

By

Toby Streatfield-James or
Roy Harris

AGM 22nd April 2008

Discovery Centre 7:30pm

Friends of Gosport Museum

Informal Coffee Morning

In the Discovery Centre 10:30am

Every 2nd Thursday of the month

Meetings before next Newsletter

Thursday 10th January 2008

Thursday 14th February 2008

Thursday 13th March 2008

For around 1 hour meet at the Wings Café
Informal meeting to discuss local heritage
and perhaps extras such as gallery visits
and opportunities to discover
what is available at the Discovery Centre.

Apologies

Thank you to all who advised me of errors in the last newsletter. I will do my best to check that the correct information will be used in future. The main apology is to Janet Wildman (I put Wilding) another to anyone who went to the Coffee Morning on the 11th when it should have been the 13th December. Also the error in the name of Chilcomb House. I have been asked for some information on the AGM on October 31st – Bob Whiteley, as the retiring Chairman, gave a full Chairman's and Secretary's report. The new committee, listed on the back of this newsletter, were elected. Janet Wildman gave a very interesting talk on the work on SEARCH both with children and in recording history and memories of the distant past. The minutes will be circulated before the next AGM in April. Please note there are still vacancies for a Chair and Vice Chair, so are there any volunteers.

Christmas Party

There were about 30 members at the Christmas party at SEARCH on the 19th December as well as the Mayor of Gosport Councillor Keith Gill. I understand all enjoyed the event. There was a presentation to Brenda Whiteley for both herself and Bob for all their help in the past and their hospitality at Grange Farm for both the Summer Socials of the past and showing members around their refurbished home. Thank you to all who helped with the event and those who came. Also a big thank you to the Mayor and Janet Wildman and all the staff at SEARCH. Three bags of presents were taken to the War Memorial Hospital the following day

Project Where You Can Help - by Mrs Joan Russell

Any Friends of Gosport Museum who can spare an hour, are asked to visit the "Museum on the Mezzanine". Then please take a copy of the quiz entitled "MUSEUM ON THE MEZZANINE-TRAIL", and go round, taking a good look at this excellent collage of photos covering old Gosport history during the past two centuries 1800-2000.

You don't have to show anyone your answers, but I would be delighted to see them. Your important part is to write what you personally think of those quiz questions. Easy? Difficult? Interesting? Dull? Or Frustrating? Any comment you make about them will be of value to us. Any of your views on any aspect of the bits of Museum within the Gosport Discovery Centre is welcome. There will be a post-box by our notice board, or just tell us at the "Friends' Coffee Meeting", at 10.30am on the 2nd Thursday in January and February 2008.

A new Community Curator will be appointed to replace our hardworking Alison Firth when she departed on maternity leave from 5th December 2007. We thank her for all she did for us, and wish her all the best until we meet again. Joan Russell

Fort Gilkicker

(continued from November Newsletter)

The reconstruction of the fort will commence with two phases. The first will see the removal of the concrete topping which was placed on the roof of the fort during the reconstruction of 1902-1904. This will allow the conversion of the roof as an upper level of bedrooms for each apartment in the gun casemates beneath. The iron work of the single remaining 9.2-inch gun emplacement will be removed as it has been declared dangerous and beyond repair. As the concrete is removed from the roof careful studies will be made of any underlying structures that are uncovered. This may mean that the plans for the upper level accommodation will need to be revised to incorporate any finds. The newly formed roof will look as much like the original roof of the fort from a distance as is possible. A sea view will be provided by a balcony inserted in the southern aspect of the apartments under the re-profiled roof. High pressure cutters will be used to extract the concrete from the gun casemates which were infilled during the 1888 reinforcement of the fort, allowing all twenty two casemates to be utilised in the conversion. Communication between the upper bedrooms on the roof and the lower living rooms in the casemates will be by an internal spiral staircase in each. The second phase will involve the careful partial removal of the earth embankment from the sea facing side of the fort. This will be re-sited nearby, where it may be used to reform the embankment between Monckton and Gilkicker. In the latter stages of the conversion the bottom third of the embankment will also be re-sited so that the occupying wild life will be conserved. An expert biologist has been appointed to look at the careful removal and relocation of any organisms found on the earth bank during this process. He is currently engaged in this investigation and is analysing and identifying any organisms found. Once the earth has been removed the granite façade of the fort, hidden for over a hundred years, will again be revealed in all its impressive splendour. It will be visible from the sea by anyone passing by in the Solent, just as it was during its heyday. A portion of the embankment will be retained at either end of the fort with another section left to form the profile of the original ditch to the front. On this section gorse, bramble and natural vegetation will be allowed to establish and form habitats for indigenous species.

In each spacious gun casemate the living accommodation, consisting of 1,400 square feet, will be provided with a picture window through the granite wall in the position of the gun embrasure, giving spectacular sea views across Spithead to the Isle of Wight. Bathroom facilities at half height of the brick vaulting will allow the beauty of the construction to be enjoyed by the residents. The basement ammunition stores will provide some measure of storage for each apartment but only two of them will have direct access via existing spiral stairs.

The barrack block is to be converted to seven smaller apartments with four on the lower floor and three on the upper floor. The bathroom blocks that were tacked onto the block during its conversion to married quarters in 1904 will be removed allowing flush, low impact windows to be inserted to provide views to the north and allow light to enter. The residents' entrance, with disabled lift facilities and machinery, will be hidden within the remaining east embankment of the fort. Access will be from the parade which will serve as the car park for

residents. The parade will provide 44 car parking spaces for residents.

The impact on the local environment has been considered in great detail in order to answer any concerns by local residents. A traffic impact assessment will be carried out as part of the planning process. The road to the fort will not be widened in any way, apart for an extra passing point mid way. It will be re-surfaced with bound gravel in order to help retain its rural character. Where the road borders the lake wooden piling will be used to prevent cars from running into the lake to prevent any possible pollution of this designated Site of Special Scientific Interest. The turning from Fort Road to the Fort Gilkicker approach road will be layed-back and recessed to provide safe, gated access. At all stages Gosport Council and the Stokes Bay Golf Club have been consulted and will continue to be involved in the process.

Askett-Hawk Developments intend to continue with their regular contact and consultation open days at the fort to keep local and national interested persons up to date with each phase of the conversion. Once the conversion is complete there will be public access to the interior of the fort via the main and only entrance, which will not be a gated access, so that the rear of the casemates can be viewed. There will also be public access to the verandah which runs around the rear of each of the gun casemates. There is also an intention to provide public viewing platforms on the remaining portions of the earth embankment possibly utilising portions of the iron 9.2-inch gun emplacement which needs to be removed. Members of the public have been invited to choose which option they would prefer from some suggestions provided by Askett-Hawk Developments. Residents of the apartments will be bound by strict regulations, under a section 106 agreement, governing what they can and cannot do to, and in, this Scheduled Ancient Monument, thereby ensuring the historical integrity and protecting the status of the Fort. The two remaining iron shield frames currently in place in the extreme east and west gun casemates will be re-sited within the conversion as objects of interest. The two 6-inch shell lifts will be placed inside the residents' entrance. Interpretation boards will be provided to ensure that the history and significance of the fort will be explained to visitors and residents.

Currently there is no provision to incorporate into the conversion the two ancillary buildings which lie outside the Fort's main entrance, the Artillery Store and the Fitters Shop, although this may be reviewed in light of the fact that they formed an integral part of the history of the fort throughout its life and should be included in the Scheduled Ancient Monument. Askett-Hawk intend to publish a full history of the conversion on completion of the project.

The full cost of the conversion will be reflected in the final price of the apartments. The freehold of the fort will be passed to the developer on completion of the scheme. The affordable housing aspect of the development will be provided off-site because of the restriction imposed by the nature of the site and its status as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

This fort does not solely belong to the local residents, or to the people of Gosport. It belongs to the Nation as a whole. This conversion of the fort to modern usage is the only viable way forward for the structure. Letting the fort decay and collapse is not an option and never will be. It is inconceivable that the fort could be demolished or filled-in as suggested by an insignificant, minute group of local protesters. Public funds are not readily available for a project such as this and the future of the fort is paramount, taking precedence over local objections that do not look at the bigger picture and the status of the fort in the history of the defences of the United Kingdom. By David Moore.

FGM SOCIAL NEWS & A NEW DIRECTION FOR THE FRIENDS?

If you feel like dropping in to the "Friends 2nd Thursday Coffee hour", it is booked for January 10th, 10.30 to 11.30am in the Gosport Discovery Centre Cafe.

In December we were joined by our highly qualified and experienced Discovery Centre Manager Angela Gill.BA(Hons),DMS,MCLIP,MCMi.MinstLM. who booked in our Coffee meetings until Community Curator Alison Marsh returns from her one year's Maternity Leave, then sat and chatted with two or three of us.

We discussed with Angela the need for better MUSEUM integration within the Discovery Centre. We agreed that the scale of Gosport's 1000 years of richly documented history dating from 948 AD to 2008 is not yet reflected in

the visually pleasing Mezzanine Exhibition of collaged photographs covering only the last 250 years. N.B. Our FGM Members are asked to try out a copy of the "Museum Quiz" designed by Alison Marsh, and report impressions to Joan Russell.

2008 will be the 4th year since Gosport's own Museum closed for ever in August 2004. But Gosport's history is still the same. Many maps, records, archives and artefacts are still in store there. The "showcase" Hampshire Geology Exhibition is also there in The David Kemp Geology Gallery opposite the Discovery Centre. This is the one to which Hampshire Geology Researchers are directed. But fewer Gosport youngsters and families visit it than formerly. Why?

WHAT CAN THE FRIENDS OF GOSPORT MUSEUM DO TO HELP? There are TWO suggestions.

1. We can start by organising free drop-in monthly Local History Sessions from 10.30 to 11.15 am on each 2nd Thursday in the month, starting January 10th. 2008. Our 1st Year ambition will be to run through 12 documented samples of Gosport's 1000 years of history. Then perhaps put them on our website?

Friends of Gosport
Museum Committee

Hon. Treasurer
David Moore

Hon. Secretary
Ian Jeffery
Committee Secretary
Joan Symonds

Membership Secretary
Linda Hedley

Project Director
Joan Russell

Committee Members
Jo Adams
Michael Adams
Mary Colyer
Mary Duly
Michael Leopold
Sidney Aynsworth
Giselle Aynsworth

2. The second suggestion is for Angela to select volunteers to a Steering Committee to represent all main categories of interests served by the Gosport Discovery Centre and Museum. The Committee's job would be to work out the Main Aims and Objectives of a joint FRIENDS' organisation for GOSPORT'S DISCOVERY CENTRE AND MUSEUM.. The Steering Committee would then seek advice from the BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF MUSEUMS, (including LIBRARIES, GARDENS and DISCOVERY CENTRES, etc) Also help in drawing up an agreed constitution, and sorting out any financial or legal pitfalls. Finally all Gosport's Discovery Centre and Museum supporters would be invited to join, and the old FGM as such would be disbanded...Maybe a sub committee?

Requests

If you have any information or photos, memories of Gosport's past or other information that you think may be of interest to members of the Friends of Gosport Museum or others, please let me have them so that I may be able to add them to the Newsletter. I am happy to receive them by post or email, the details are below.

The Newsletters are also being put on the Friends of Gosport Museum web site after they have been delivered, so you will be able to look back at them. It will also have details of the committee, I also hope to be able to put the membership form on the site. If you are happy to send items in for the Friends web site, please also send them to me. Ian Jeffery

Friends of Gosport Museum web site at www.friendsofgosportmuseum.org.uk.

Please send contributions for the Newsletter to
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If you use email and would be happy to receive this
Newsletter by email, please let me know.
The views expressed are not necessarily those of
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