

# FRIENDS OF GOSPORT MUSEUM

www.friendsofgosportmuseum.org.uk

## NEWSLETTER

MAY/JUNE 2009

### Summer Outing to Marines Museum and Portsmouth Cathedral

Saturday 26th September

More information on  
the Enclosed Booking Form.

### Talk in The Discovery Centre by Gill Arnott

In October

Information to Follow.

### Friends of Gosport Museum Informal Coffee Meeting In the Discovery Centre 10:30am

Every 2nd Thursday of the month

Meetings before next Newsletter

Thursday 14th May 2009

Thursday 11th June 2009

Thursday 9th July 2009

For around 1 hour meet at the

Readers' Rest 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.

### Subscription Reminder

Thank you to all those who have paid their 2009/10 subscriptions and welcome to the new members. All subscriptions are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> April and are the same as previous years, £5 single and £7.50 joint. If you are yet to pay your subscription and wish to continue as a member and receive this newsletter, please send your payment to Linda Hedley, 7 Fairhome Close, Elson, Gosport, Hants, PO12 4HZ, or if you wish to pay by standing order contact David Moore.

### Chairman's Report to AGM 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2009

It has been a quiet year; the lectures on "John Hutfield – Gosport's Aeroplane pioneer" by Brenda Gilbert and "Old Gosport in pictures" were well attended, Joan Russell has given talks about Thorngate Hall. During the summer Mary Duly and Joan Russell organised a Local History quiz in the Mezzanine, which was well supported, all the children received a Certificate. In spite of torrential rain the previous day which forced the closure of the Russell-Cotes Museum, we enjoyed a pleasant late summer day in Bournemouth with thanks to Mary Duly for all her hard work. The Christmas gifts collected at the Christmas party were much welcomed by the patients in the Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

Farther afield, Gisela and I attended the Open Day at the Harold Hillier Gardens, marking the retirement of Caroline Dudley, Head of Hampshire Museums & Archives. We were also at the Openings of "The Titanic" and "Myths & Legends" exhibitions held in the Gallery; I understand both proved to be very successful.

What for the future? The Museum Services are in the process of re-organisation; there are proposals that the Museum will be integrated with, but separate from the Discovery Centre. To this end it is envisaged returning to

the “old Museum” enlarging the displays to incorporate the Geology section. Local Studies will be centred in the building. The Gallery will continue to host touring and other special exhibitions, a Martin Snape Gallery will open and SEARCH will become part of the Museum Services. These are to be under the watchful eye of Janet Wildman, Manager of Museum Services. I have been in discussion with Alistair Penfold, Director of Museum Services and Janet Wildman, about how the Museum Friends could again become involved. Remember we started with a few stalwarts lead by Joan Russell, who helped behind the scenes, cataloguing some of the collection. With the willing assistance in training by the museum staff we can again help. Further involvement could be, acting as Facilitators or Stewards, explaining the exhibits and encouraging questions from visitors on Open Days and perhaps at weekends, during the holidays etc. and perhaps having a “Friends” corner to encourage membership. One or two Workshops could be held, topics to be decided by the “Friends” and the museum staff; these would be open to all, but limited to between 25-30 at each Workshop for which there would be a nominal charge. Finally Fund Raising to help in purchasing acquisitions for the Museum and support Conservation activities.

The “Friends” has been without a President for many years and I am pleased to announce that Bob Whiteley , who for many years devoted much time and effort to the “Friends”, has agreed to accept this position. I am sure you would like to thank him for accepting. Sidney Aynsworth 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2009

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## Report by Janet Wildman Manager of Museum Services

### **Changes to the museum services in Gosport**

From 1 April 2009, the museum services within Gosport Discovery Centre have been brought under the management of Janet Wildman, the SEARCH Manager, to create a single museums section including SEARCH hands-on centre. Oonagh Palmer, the keeper of collections, has taken up a new role at museums’ HQ, Chilcomb House, as keeper of social history. Alison Firth, the Community Curator, is going on maternity leave from April for at least 6 months. Until Alison’s return, Erica Munro will be part of Janet’s team, looking after the local museum store and the museum elements within the Discovery Centre.

Erica has a strong background in collections management and interpretation and is hoping to increase public access to the stored collections as well as working closely with Janet, Gemma and Wendy from SEARCH and Emma, the area education officer, to offer a range of activities across the two buildings.

### **How the Friends can help**

Janet and Erica are very keen to get the Friends involved, especially as volunteer stewards to help the public get more out of the Museum on the Mezzanine and the Geology Gallery. Please let us know if you would be interested in this stewarding role or in helping out at open days, family art activities. Once Erica has assessed what needs doing in terms of organising the stored collections, there will also be a need for behind-the-scenes help in the store.

A further area where you could help out is through donating objects to SEARCH. Due to lack of storage space, there is a very specific ‘wish list’. Please let Janet know if you have any of the following which you could donate for the children’s handling sessions:

- Pre-decimal coins (not pennies or ha’pennies) up to 1950s
- Victorian coins including pennies and ha’pennies
- Art Deco 1930s teaset (or just a cup, saucer and plate would do) with an Art Deco style pattern
- A Victorian tray
- A wooden sieve with horse hair mesh
- Old Marmite jar with ounces rather than grams!
- Poole china in ‘Celadon Green’ (sage green with cream or white interiors)

## Article on Count George Des Geneys

Apology from Mary Duly re article on Count George Des Geneys. It has been pointed out to Mary that Mellerstain, the home of the Baillie-Hamiltons, his mother's family, is spelt thus and not Mellerstein and that it is farther south in Scotland than she thought, nearer the Borders.

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## AGM Extra

The Friends of Gosport Museum balance to 31st March 2009 was £1, 804.29 a reduction of £43.67 in the year.

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## Memories and Photos of Gosport Railway Station and Gosport Railways Wanted

The St Vincent Local History Luncheon Club has received a grant from the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Community Foundation, for a 2 to 3 year project to produce a DVD and book about Gosport Railway and the Station's past present and the future development of the Station site. Any memories and photographs would be very welcome. You can contact me and I will pass your details on. Ian Jeffery.

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## Radcliffe – a nurse looks back – part 2 by Jean A Hill

This article was first published in the United Oxford Hospitals Chronicle October 1971.

The lives of nurses in the Radcliffe just after the 1939-45 war were very different from today (1971) Jean A Hill, who was Nurse Stone – inevitably nicknamed Pebble – at the time, looks back a quarter century.

The headline in a Sunday paper in 1945 read: “Cheer up – you still have Semolina!” And it managed to raise a laugh from the 17 new probationer nurses at Manor House on that May day so many years ago. Our diet seemed to consist entirely of sweet macaroni, semolina and rice. Thank goodness youth was on our side or we would never have survived.

Memories of those days include the presence of Sister Robinson, the housekeeper, much feared as well as loved by all who knew her. She had an ethereal quality mingled with a very Victorian image of severity. Tall with dark hair held in a bun, she sailed in and out of our lives majestically.

Our two tutors put us through our paces and let us out, occasionally, one of these being a day when we had visited a sewage farm. I recall it particularly because I finished up in the Magistrates' Court! Three of us had cycled into Oxford – our one desire to have tea cream cakes at the Cadena. With no thought for our bicycles we left them propped up against the kerb. Alas, we were soon informed by the local constable that we were breaking a by-law. No excuses prevailed and we were summoned and fined 10/- each. What is more, we hadn't got it, so had to plead for time in which to pay. In spite of my plaintive letter in the Oxford Mail, no one felt philanthropic enough to come to our rescue, so we had to pay that awful amount of money ourselves.

Other memories of training school come crowding back, the smell of the piggery being one, for it was a very hot summer. Sitting under the trees on warm summer days or walking up the long drive with an occasional jog trot for fear of incurring Sister Rob's displeasure is another.

Food rationing was still in force, so we all acquired string bags to carry our previous rations in. Something like 2oz of butter one week and 3oz the following with a few ounces of sugar. We felt that we were so starved that we rushed to the nearest chemist shop and bought Radio Malt and Peanut Butter, neither of which were rationed. They were rationed voluntarily when we discovered what they were doing to our figures.

After four days leave at the end of school we were posted to the Radcliffe.

Whenever I smell carbolic I smell the Rad. I will always associate it with coming in through the casualty entrance. When I entered it for the first clutching my few belongings, something thrilled and chilled me all in the same moment, and from then on I always had the same feeling on entering through those doors. There was and is, I imagine still an atmosphere of expectancy, a suggestion of the dramatic. People going about their duties, Doctors, nurses, porters and trolleys which had their own particular noise – click click as those wheels tried to point in one direction while the driver tried to force them in another.

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In 1945 Somerville College was still in use as an annexe for the nurses' home and we were given rooms there. That was the coldest winter I ever remember. I shared with "Bob" Graham and our room overlooked the Clarendon Press, whose clock chimed the hours and the quarters relentlessly. Christmas dinner in the nurses' dining room in January presided over by Matron, who carved the turkey, and the pantomime by the Tynchewyke Society. We used to have a fancy dress dance in the hospital as Blenheim Palace was still occupied by the Ministry of Food. Talking of food, ours was dished out by the home sisters.

Friends of Gosport  
Museum Committee

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023 9258 6575

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*Ian Jeffery*  
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*Joan Russell*  
023 9258 0072

Committee Members

*Joan Adams*  
*Michael Adams*  
*Mary Colyer*  
*Mary Duly*  
*Michael Leopold*  
*Giselle Aynsworth*

We had to line up and if one finished quickly enough there were seconds. Sometimes we came out in spots because a kindly benefactor had handed over his entire crop of rhubarb.

We had two weeks annual holiday. One day a week and a half day on a Sunday. Duties apart from one's day off included reporting on at 8am. Shifts worked were 10 - 1:30, 1:30 - 5:30, 5:30 - 9pm, with half-hour for meals and 15 minutes for lunch and tea break.

No allowance was made for the distance between the huts and the dining room, and often is the time I would have welcomed a bicycle or even a pair of roller skates to speed me on my weary way. Jean A Hill

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### Some Meetings and Other Events That May be of Interest to Members

If you come across other meetings or events that you feel may be of interest to other member, just let me know.

15th May 8pm Gosport Railway Society, Methodist Church Hall

28th May 7:30pm Discovery Centre Talk Martin Snape by Richard Martin

14th June Gosport's Big Day Out including Gosport Through the Looking Glass 1:30pm

17th June 7pm Gosport Society AGM '50 Years of the Hovercraft' by Brian Russell DC

18th July 7pm Gosport Society Summer Social Event Alverstoke Parish Centre

Exhibition of Martin Snape paintings in the Gosport Gallery to 20th June.

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If you have any information or photos that you think may be of interest to member of the Friends of Gosport Museum or others, please let me have them by post or email, details are below, by the 19th June for the July/ August Newsletter.

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. I also hope to be able to put the past newsletters and membership form on the site.

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Friends of Gosport Museum web site at [www.friendsofgosportmuseum.org.uk](http://www.friendsofgosportmuseum.org.uk).

Please send contributions for the Newsletter to  
Ian Jeffery, FGM Newsletter Editor  
11 Harcourt Road, PO12 3NR [ian@gosport.info](mailto:ian@gosport.info)  
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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Membership of the Friends of Gosport Museum is  
open to all - Please contact any Committee member.  
Annual Subscription Individuals £5 Families £7.50

This Newsletter was printed and produced  
with the help of the Discovery Centre (Museum)