

Throop

The physical state of the Mill at Throop has been of concern for many years. The Society have e-mailed the owners many times to express this and Ken Mantock has visited them but to no avail. They have done the minimum to keep it structurally sound. Its state is monitored by the Council. Councillor Whittaker has championed its use as a community asset by but also with no success. Another concern is the Congregational Church and its Manse. Both need protection from vandals as well as the weather. The possibility of another religious organisation taking the Church over as a meeting place is under discussion. The problems of protecting historic buildings such as these should be of concern to us all and emphasises the importance of Societies such as ours in keeping a watching brief on all such properties.

Information Boards

In January 2004 an information board about the West Cliff area of Bournemouth was unveiled by Councillor Anne Rey the then Mayor of the town. It was paid for by the Civic Society which also had an input to the design and the information on the board. The board was placed on the cliff top almost directly opposite the Highcliffe Marriot Hotel and the entrance to St Michaels's Road. Earlier this year it was vandalised. The damage was seen by one of our eagle-eyed members David Phillips who dismantled it and took it home. Ken Mantock was informed and he set about getting a replacement. Fortunately the Planning Office found a disk containing the design of the board and a duplicate was produced. Ken paid for this and David Phillips and his wife Jill met the cost of the glass. It is now back in position helped by Ken and David Bird. The Society intends to produce a similar board for the East Cliff district.

Other concerns

Committee members continue to meet Mike Holmes, Head of Development, to discuss the progress of current issues, such as the Surf Reef, the future of Westover Road and its cinemas; the future of the Waterfront Building and the refurbishment of the Pavilion. Current issues include changes to domestic waste collections, road repairs, mineral extraction in Dorset. Worries have been expressed on the future of conservation in the town as staff numbers in that department are being reduced.

Last year the Society helped finance the book "Men of the New Forest" by Major Roger Coleman MBE which listed all those men of the 7th Battalion (Territorial Force) Hampshire Regiment who died in the first World War. On Sunday 11 September 2011 at 4pm a service will take place at St Peter's Church for the Dedication of the Roll of Honour which will be erected in the churchyard. Any member of the Civic Society is welcome to attend.



BOURNEMOUTH CIVIC SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

August 2011

The Moordown Halifax Memorial

by David Atkinson (*Member of Parliament for Bournemouth East 1977 to 2005.*)

When Moordown's doughty champion Councillor Sue Anderson insisted in 2009 I join her Moordown 2010 Committee I hesitated. After all what was she proposing - that the Committee should organise a permanent memorial for the victims of what took place on the night of 22nd March 1944 as a Moordown Contribution to Bournemouth's Bicentenary - sounded a commitment that would require time and effort. In 2002 I had decided that I would quite like to retire from all that!

When I told the Bournemouth East Conservative Association that, after 25 years, I had fought my last general election and that they would need to select a new candidate I was looking forward to some peace and quiet after a 24/7 job, which I had thoroughly enjoyed because it was so fulfilling but which I had put before anything else. But the more I thought about the story and the concept behind the memorial the more I knew I had to take part. Why? Because it brought back memories of a very similar initiative I had taken 37 years before when I was representing the oldest and most historic part of my home town of Southend-on-Sea to organise a memorial to four local fishermen who had lost their lives saving others at Dunkirk. Thanks to the backing the organisation committee received we were able to unveil a splendid memorial to them at a Churchyard in Leigh-on-Sea with the Thames Estuary beyond on the 32nd anniversary of the event. An attraction to visitors and residents alike it was one of my earliest and proudest achievements and I thought that the victims of the Halifax crash deserved the same and I wanted to help in any way.

What happened on the night of 22nd March 1944? A little after 1am an RAF Halifax bomber took off from Hurn airport for an air base in Morocco but it was very soon clear to the pilot that an engine was misfiring and flames were visible from it. Over Moordown the pilot decided to return to Hurn, but the plane was losing height and as it descended rapidly it clipped the roofs of houses in Malvern Road. Making for an area of open ground behind Meadow Court, a block of flats on Wimborne Road it hit the ground, a wing struck the back of the flats and the two cottages beyond before coming to rest at the top of Priory View Road. An occupant of flat 9 and another in the cottages were killed as were all the crew of the plane.

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The views of contributors are not necessarily those of the Society.

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The site for the memorial that Sue Anderson had in mind originally was on a patch of open land opposite St John's Church but this was half-a-mile or so from where the Halifax crashed. The chosen site is on the corner of Meadow Court Close and Wimborne Road and almost directly opposite the Holly Tree pub. The close leads to bungalows built to replace the cottages destroyed in the crash.

The memorial produced by Rice and Tapper was dedicated at a service on the 10th July. Present were two relatives of the aircrew and a relative of the cottager who died and David Atkinson as Deputy Chairman of the committee invited them to unveil the memorial. Air Training Corps Cadets provided a Guard of Honour. He thanked the committee, especially Sue Anderson for a successful conclusion to all their efforts. Also present were Tobias Ellwood, his successor as Member of Parliament and the Mayor and Mayoress of Bournemouth, Councillor Christopher Rochester and his wife.

The dedication was followed by refreshments at the Holly Tree.

The Civic Society contributed to the memorial fund.

Hidden Dangers

A quote from "Bournemouth 1810-1910" by Messrs Mate and Riddle:- To the late Sir Florence Percy Shelley and Lady Shelley belongs the credit of being the first to cater for the amusement of the people of Bournemouth by putting on dramatic entertainments. One member of the Shelley circle, however, the Hon Grantley Berkeley - was not enamoured of Bournemouth and spoke thus of the local ladies, "... bobbing about from dell to dell as if they thought every bush concealed a serpent and a tempting apple, and that they were never safe unless at Church."

Thanks to Peter Treleven for this.

Visits

Beryl and Keith keep our appetites for looking at other peoples life styles, their houses both historic and modern, and their gardens well satisfied. However, over the years the Society has visited many properties in the South but not everyone has been able to join the visit for many reasons, other engagements, too many applicants and now some of the houses and gardens are no longer available due to change of owners or restrictions imposed by the insurers. The latest visit was to Wolfeton House just outside of Dorchester. For some of us it was chance to revisit the house after much restoration work. Not only did we see some of the changes that occurred but also some of the details forgotten since the last viewing. Beryl and Keith will welcome suggestions for return visits and new ones. Two that the writer would quite like to see again are Rotherfield House and Welford House. What about you?

A Society Thank you

A fortnight later came the opportunity to say thank you to Dr Fisher and his wife Rosemary for the use of their garden for Civic Day and we presented them with an Horticultural encyclopaedia and a cake. We also used the occasion to present Keith Rawlings with his President's medal which had been overlooked during his time in the post. It was an appropriate reward for his support for the Society over the years. We were also rewarded by a beautiful sunny day which showed the garden, the mill and the millstream at its best.



The New Planning Regime

The Government's revised planning regulations have been published and over a thousand pages have been reduced to just over fifty eight. The effect of these will need to be studied by all that use them. The purpose of the revision was said to be to make it easier for developers to get planning applications approved; to involve the public in local planning proposals; and to make more land (possibly in Green Belts) available to developers. Civic Societies will need to be vigilant to ensure that inappropriate developments are not allowed. Politicians seem to think that planning is an esoteric activity not within the understanding of the general public but those of us who take an interest can see not Machiavellian manoeuvres but a system that can have faults but in essence is understandable. It requires a little patience and diligence to divine the intentions of applicants and respond accordingly.

On the horizon

actually and not just a fancy is the prospect of a wind farm some ten miles south from the edge of our shore. The Society supports efforts to provide energy from renewable and sustainable sources but has to be convinced of their viability. The variability of wind means that another source of energy is needed to even out fluctuations in the output from a wind powered generator. Whether this means having some way of storing energy when the wind is strong and releasing it when the wind is insufficient to keep the turbines turning is a technical problem which needs solving. And these solutions could be very costly. The backers of the proposal believe that the visual impact will be minimal but whether that is true of the noise generated is not clear. The Society will monitor the progress of the proposal to ensure that the people living on the coast between the Purbecks and Southampton Water are not adversely affected in any way by this proposal. The Bournemouth Natural Science Society has already made its views known to the Council.

Civic Day

This was intended as a day to celebrate Civic Societies nationwide and introduce them to their local communities by organising events in their locality. We proposed three walks in the neighbourhood of Throop and the town centre and Dr James Fisher kindly allowed us the use of his garden as a meeting spot.

Beryl and her team organised coffee (or tea), ploughman's lunches and afternoon teas and Ken Mantock guided the walks along the Stour. Unfortunately John Barker was unable to lead the walk around the locally listed buildings of Moordown, another time maybe. The other two walks did not attract enough support to make them viable. But Ken's walk opened up new vistas to some who took part, which it is all about.

Next year we should have more notice of the Civic Day and more time to plan our response.

