



## By the Skin of our Teeth

It is surprising how we still take for granted today the buildings and townscapes that are a mixture of every age and appearance - from the banal ranges of shops built in the 1960s to the wonderful mediaeval cathedrals famous through out the world.

If we think more deeply about the buildings we pass every day without a thought, we could not properly imagine a world without such an eclectic jumble of built forms with which we are as at ease with as when we wear a comfortable old coat. If all the older buildings were to disappear suddenly leaving only those built during the previous fifteen years: how different we would feel within these unfamiliar and sanitised quarters. Studies that analysed the reactions of inhabitants of historic towns seriously damaged by warfare and rebuilt in totally different ways have proved that we would have become physiologically traumatised by the absence of well loved reminders of previous eras, which have always been an essential support to the full understanding of our contemporary and future existence.

It is only twenty years since the fall of the Communist satellite states in Eastern Europe signified the final defeat of an alien political philosophy which sought, by destroying every piece of evidence that linked the past with the existing built environment, to blot out any sense of the objective perception of the cultural birthright of millions of people.

Even today, the enormity of the imminent threat that existed for the greater part of the twentieth century to the accumulated riches of the urban structure of Europe is often not realised. The thee barbaric horsemen of the Apocalypse-overarching industrial technology, unalloyed Modernism and the terrible moral and physical destruction of two World Wars together - nearly destroyed the humane civilities of European urban life.

The excessive rationalisation of modern life styles by utilitarian design in combination with the banalities of totalitarian political creeds made the fight back to re-emphasise the moral worth of historic buildings and traditional street layouts during the 1970s, astonishing, when judged by the subsequent revolution in town planning in Europe that followed this courageous endeavour. Today as we contemplate the much improved aesthetic relationship between vernacular and modern parameters of contemporary design, let us not forget the efforts of countless concerned individuals and civic pressure groups throughout Europe who have laboured without pause to ensure the preservation and new creation of beautiful surroundings within which we are able to enjoy our daily lives.

John Soane

### Contacts

Chairman	Ken Mantock	Tel: 420199
Deputy Chairman	Jean Bird	Tel: 757051
Activities	Beryl Parker	Tel: 512717
	Keith Barnes	Tel: 397073
Web Manager	Alan Brown	Tel: 763318
Editor	John Barker	Tel: 292871



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

## Current Concerns

We were very pleased to hear the announcement in the summer that the new Coalition Government had revoked the Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) with their excessive 'top down' housing targets, threats to Green Belts and inadequate social and transport infrastructure provision. Locally this would have featured 1500 homes being built in Throop and Holdenhurst. Likewise the changes to national Planning Policy Statement 3, with the removal of density targets and the protection of gardens that had up to then been classified as "brown field" land and therefore ripe for development, also met with our approval. Very recently CALA Homes won a judicial review against the RSS revocation but the Government has confirmed again that they will be done away with through the forthcoming Localisation Bill. Long time members will recall that much of our campaigning has been against the negative affects and character changing impacts of national planning policy on our town that gave the upper hand to developers rather than the wishes of residents and the Council. It is good therefore to see the balance tipped back toward local needs and wishes and we therefore continue to take an active part in the development of the town's own Local Development Framework (LDF) since this set of documents will, when finalised, shape the future of the town whilst protecting those places and features that make it special.

The Core Strategy and Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) are parts of the LDF that we have contributed to and consultation is now ongoing on the latter document with feedback requested by the Council by 7th January. We have commented on earlier drafts of the Town Centre AA Plan, generally support its aims and ambitions, and have set up a sub-committee to study and respond to this latest version.

We have in recent months lobbied on some major proposals in the Town Centre. We opposed the overblown and unattractive hotel plans for the Punshon Church site; called for better design and landscaping treatment of the large hotel and residential development at the Terrace Mount site; supported the revised plans for extending St Michael's School; welcomed the improvements to the Pavilion and supported cultural and leisure uses within the Waterfront (IMAX) Planning Brief. We also keep a watching eye on the Pavilion and Westover Road proposals and have been in contact with Trevor Osborne and leading Councillors to ensure that the restoration and renovation works promised several years ago will not be watered down as a consequence of the review of the casino and cinema plans there.

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Other plans that we have taken an interest in and made our views known to the Council include the Ice Rink in Kings Park that we opposed on grounds of inappropriate loss of open space, inadequate highway network and impact on residents' amenity; the redevelopment of the Boscombe Centre for Community Arts buildings; the redevelopment of the very attractive Cape Dutch style villa at 37 Sandbourne Road with a new modernistic house and the vast scheme for retirement flats on the former Grange Hotel site on Southbourne Overcliff Drive.

In Pokesdown, as a natural continuation of the characterisation study we produced last year, we have supported the local residents association in their campaign against loss of family homes to houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) and flat redevelopments. We welcome the Council's plan to bring in local control to stop the rapid spread of HMOs here and in areas such as Winton, Wallisdown and Talbot Woods, as the Coalition Government's recent decisions to de-regulate such changes and drop the need for planning permission are wrong headed. We are also very disappointed that despite changes in national planning an Inspector overturned the Council's rejection of a flats and houses plan for the former Southbourne Conservative Club site that both the residents association and Society opposed as over-development.

We continue to welcome well designed and interesting new development on appropriate sites, but it is a pity there is so little of it about at the moment! Nevertheless we content ourselves that Bournemouth, at the end of this Bicentennial year, still has many attractive areas and features from ages recent and past so let us look to the New Year with confidence.

## The Roll of Honour of the 7th Battalion Hampshire Regiment 1914-1919

The two plaques of the Roll of Honour to the 189 men who died in the Great War used to hang either side of the Battalion's War Memorial in the Drill Hall in Holdenhurst Road. Apart from the façade the drill hall has been demolished in recent years and replaced by blocks of flats. The War Memorial remains within the perimeter but the Rolls of Honour are waiting to be relocated. Major Roger Coleman MBE of the Royal Hampshire Regiment has researched all the names on the Rolls and has collected the information into a book. It contains as far as possible the names and origins of each man listed together with their dates of birth, where they served, where they died and details of their families at the 1901 census.

The 7th Battalion was a Territorial Force unit with no requirement to serve overseas but when war broke out in 1914 Colonel Roberts Thomson, the Commanding Officer (and physician at the National Sanatorium) with many of his men and officers volunteered to serve overseas. Much of their service was in India and Mesopotamia and many were buried at Basra. The Society made a contribution to the cost of producing the book and it was presented with two copies. If anyone would like to consult one please contact John Barker on 292871.

## A Question of Meaning

A few years ago I was asked to speak at the annual dinner for the Old Boys Association of Bournemouth School. As a former pupil I agreed and was asked where I would like to sit. I replied saying "below the salt". This caused some consternation and I was surprised because this was a grammar school whose pupils, I thought would know what it meant which was "with the run of the mill pupils" and not on the top table. Recently I was faced with another quote, "of the same kidney". A book of quotations put its first appearance as 1598 in the play, "The Merry Wives of Windsor". But I still had to go to the Oxford English Dictionary to find its meaning.

## Social Activities

Beryl and Keith despite their very serious health problems have continued to provide members with varied programme of social events. Since the last newsletter there have been visits to Kingston Maurward, the Manor at Sandford Orcas, Sherborne Castle, Canford School and walks around Marlborough and Fordingbridge.

To celebrate the Bournemouth Bicentenary Beryl arranged an evening meal, itself a one-off for the Society, at the Hotel Miramar. It took place in the Library which was transformed into an 1810 style room with lots of flowers and candelabras and some guests dressed in costume. After the main course the August double firework display was viewed from the Hotel gardens.

The 2011 lunch club venues have been chosen with the present financial climate in mind so that those that no longer drive can use their bus passes to get there. Both Beryl and Keith do their best to provide members with a varied programme of visits and social events but both would appreciate help in either arranging visits or suggesting interesting places to go or things to do. Please think about helping and contact them.

## Moordown Memorial

Just after midnight of the 20/21st March 1944 the Fire Brigade received a warning from the RAF at Hurn Aerodrome that one of their Halifax bombers on a routine flight to North Africa was in difficulties. Minutes later at 12.35am it crashed at Moordown. The plane fully fuelled and armed came in low over Malvern Road one wheel striking the roof of the tram shed just to the south of the junction with Wimborne Road hit some cottages, and a small block of flats, just to the north and slid to halt at the top of Hillcrest Road. The seven man aircrew and two civilians were killed. A group of Moordown residents, led by Councillor Sue Anderson have, as a contribution to the Bournemouth Bicentennial events, decided to erect a memorial to those that died somewhere near to where the crash occurred. The Civic Society has agreed to give £50 towards the cost of the memorial.

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## Sad Passings

The past year has seen the death of two former committee members of the Society both of whom made positive contributions to its deliberations. The most recent was that of Brian Shuttleworth who served two spells on the committee. He was a loyal member who looked at the issues facing the Society with a critical eye which focussed on the crux of the matter.

Earlier in the year Graham Teasdill the former Curator of the Russell-Cotes Museum and Art Gallery for some twenty two years died. In the 1990s he was on the committee when Ken Mantock was Secretary. He recalled Graham as 'an energetic, enthusiastic and informative member. A real character and friend to the Society.'

Our sympathies go to their families and friends.

