



BOURNEMOUTH CIVIC SOCIETY

# NEWSLETTER

Mid-Summer 2015

## Euphoria Rules

Plans for the town and its future are being created continually, some of which are abandoned almost immediately as there is no appetite for the proposal but over recent years some more positive and practically achievable plans have come forward.

For those of us that have lived here for many years it has become obvious that many hotels needed a makeover to make them attractive to the present day tourist and business investor. Up to date bathing and sleeping facilities as well as modern communications such as Wi-Fi and comfortable rooms are the very least the present day visitor expects whether here for business or pleasure.

Progress is being made. Three hotels on the overcliff just to the west of Manor Road (the Bay View Court, the Cottonwood, and the Chesterwood) are due to be demolished and replaced with modern ones. Further to the west the three art-deco hotels (the Cumberland, the Suncliff and the Cliffside) are to be modernised and refurbished.

Nearer the town centre on Terrace Mount two new Hilton hotels are almost complete and work has started on the multi-screen cinemas being built on the former bus station in Exeter Road. The town has been spared the 'iconic' tower blocks of London and other major cities but those who approach the town by descending Richmond Hill will be horrified by the concrete and glass monster which will soon occupy Terrace Mount. (This last is a personal view of the editor and not necessarily of the Civic Society.) It could become the new Imax.

Years ago when Peter Challen was Director of Development for Bournemouth, the Society proposed that there should be a block model of the town centre which would enable planners to appraise the effect that a large building would have on its neighbours. Costs disallowed this proposal. Nowadays a computer generated image of a building can be interrogated from all sides and angles which should help to produce structures that respect their surroundings without threatening their neighbours.

Bournemouth is a vibrant town boasting a successful digital economy and a population getting younger each year and attracting visitors from far and wide. Together Brighton, Bournemouth and Poole are seen as the 'Silicon Beach' of Europe in a nod to the US Silicon Valley and their role of developing digital platforms and designing apps for banks and other financial organisations.

Bournemouth University is now rated as number 54 of the 140 or so British Universities. It's ambition is to become one of the top fifty in the country. The Civic Society visited the Talbot campus recently and was able to tour the latest additions to the facilities as well as those being added to the Arts University on the same site.

## Annual General Meeting

The annual general meeting of the Society was held at the Connaught Hotel on Wednesday evening of April 1st. A good number of members attended. After a welcome from the President, Ken Mantock the Chairman gave a comprehensive review of the work of the Committee over the past year and answered questions from members. His report and that of the Treasurer Peter Jackson were approved without dissent. The present committee was elected unopposed. John Pite who had served on the committee some forty years or so ago was also elected. It now comprises Ken Mantock in the Chair, Jean Bird his deputy, Peter Jackson (Treasurer), Paul Newsome (Minutes Secretary), Beryl Parker and Keith Barnes (Activities organisers) Sally McGrath (Membership), John Soane (Built Environment), Andre Thomas (Web master), John Barker, John Pite, John Walker.

The guest speaker was Neil Bichard whose father Derek was the Society's Architectural adviser at one time. Neil is also an architect and spoke about the work of Sir Edwin Lutyens, in particular, of his contribution to the design of the memorials of the First World War of 1914 to 1918.

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## The Roundabout Goes Round Once Again

As pointed out in the last Newsletter and probably the one before, some topics come round again and again. It is dispiriting that progress seems impossible for some of these topics but we must keep a watching brief on them to ensure that any major changes do not escape our notice.

## A Time for Congratulations

Ken Mantock is to be married on the 4th July at St Peter's Church to Debby Dupont and Members of the Civic Society will, I am sure, join with members of the Committee in sending them our very warmest congratulations and best wishes for their future.

Ken has been, for many years both before his election as a Councillor and since that connection ended, the driving force behind the work of the Society both as Secretary and as our Chairman.

He has a deep respect for Bournemouth and its history and a keen appreciation of what should be done to keep it in the forefront of the leisure industry.

## AFC Bournemouth

The unexpected (by the non-committed fans of Association Football) success of the town's football team to reach the Premier League after only three or four seasons and led by one of the younger managers, Eddie Howe, is another contribution to the general sense of euphoria in the town.

Those young enough to remember the two occasions when Manchester United played the Cherries at Dean Court during the FA Cup will also remember the excitement that invaded the town affecting all of us and our expectations.

## Throop Mill

Every so often there seems to be a glimpse of progress and Alderman Ron Whittaker has pursued all possibilities over many years but it seems the owners are obdurate in choosing only to do enough to keep the structure of the Mill safe and weatherproof but do not want to use the Mill in any other way.



### The Jellicoe Theatre

Although many people only associate Sir Merton and Lady Annie Russell-Cotes with Bournemouth it is often forgotten that they had an interest in Poole where they established the Russell-Cotes Nautical School on a site just below Constitution Hill. It later became a Dr Barnado's School.

Within the grounds they established a theatre for music and performance which has just celebrated nearly a century of progress and achievement with a multi-disciplined show. Now owned by the Borough of Poole it is now a well established Arts facility.

## Punshon Memorial Church

The Church in Exeter Road replaced that at the foot of Richmond Hill destroyed in the 1943 air raid on the town centre. Designed by local architect Ronald H. Sims it won an award from the Royal Institute of British Architects.

Its tower and slender spire was a distinctive addition to Exeter Road but did not attract the listing that many thought it deserved.

It has now (May 2015) gone to be replaced by a non-descript block of flats.

## Parking

Residents and visitors are alike in finding it difficult to find places to park their vehicles but this situation is common to all towns. One local resident sent us a diatribe for supporting a planning application for blocks of flats in Knole Road with limited parking for the residents but planning rules are set by the Government. A number of the smaller car parks in the town have been made available for development but the others have been enlarged so that the total number of parking places has not been reduced.

## Poetry - Guided Walk

Starting at 2pm on Saturday 12th September from the War Memorial in the Central Gardens local historian and committee member John Walker and Richard Hesketh will be leading a guided walk to celebrate the life and times of Cumberland Clark (1862-1941). He was known as "Bournemouth's Magnificently Bad Poet" and author of, among other publications, the Bournemouth Song Book.

Songs with accompaniment will be sung and poems read. Probable cost £3 per person. No need to book, just turn up. Further details nearer the time. Email John Walker at [johnwal@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:johnwal@hotmail.co.uk).

## VJ Day in Bournemouth

The Japanese Government surrendered on Tuesday 14th August 1945, not long after the atomic bombs had been dropped on them on 6th and 8th August. The surrender was announced to Great Britain on the radio by Clem Attlee who had come to power after the General Election held on 5th July 1945. A two day holiday for the country was announced, with Wednesday 15th August celebrated as Victory over Japan (VJ) day. Locally bands played in the Lower Gardens and on the Underrcliff Drive.

At 9pm a crowd of about fifteen thousand gathered in Westover Road to listen to a broadcast by the King, followed by community singing around the Pavilion forecourt. Members of an American band, the US Air Transport Command Contact Caravan, staying at the Carlton Hotel were roused from their beds to lead a cheering crowd to the Square, where they played on the roof of the bus shelter with several thousand people dancing below.

The celebrations continued over the next two days with the Lower Gardens floodlit and illuminations in the Square. Many neighbourhoods held local celebrations similar to those for VE Day.

John Walker

## A Postscript

*I think it's simply grand to listen to the band  
It makes the dear old show go, when they play the Ogo Pogo  
It brings me up to scratch: my arm I soon attach  
To a lady's waist and find her taste and mine divinely match.  
Her charm and grace my sentiments enamour:  
We both fall victims to the ball-room's glamour.*



From "Romance in the Ballroom" by Cumberland Clark.

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