

BOURNEMOUTH CIVIC SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Mid-Winter 2014

Reflection

A reflection on the past year shows that the monthly agenda of your committee varies very little from month to month with reports on the Local Development Framework; meetings with the Planning department; the report on the current planning applications and the progress (if any) on the future of Throop Mill, the Church and the manse. To many members and locals it must seem uninspiring and really boring but without the Society's vigilance there is a danger that a building or a policy or some other undesirable activity might be agreed by the local authority. So we shall continue monitoring the activities of the Council but we do need your support so if there is something you consider needs checking please contact one of the committee and lay your concerns before them.

Commemoration of World War 1

The Heritage Library is mounting a monthly series of 30 minute talks about aspects of the war with emphasis on the impact it had on the local community. Two members of the Civic Society have contributed so far. Eileen Barker talked about the role of women and how this changed as many men left their jobs to enlist in the army and were replaced by women not only in offices but also in factories and on the land. Although the Suffragettes and other women's organisations had agitated before the war for the vote without success, Lloyd George at the armistice said that the part women played in the war effort justified the granting of voting rights to women. But at first it only applied to women over 30 years of age. This was amended to include all adult women in 1928.

John Barker spoke of how the development of the tank brought two organisations to this part of the country, the tank training ranges and eventually the tank museum to Bovington and the Engineer Bridging Establishment (later in 1947 the Military Engineering Experimental Establishment) to Christchurch. It was at the latter that the Bailey Bridge was designed and developed.

Other talks covered the provision of hospital and convalescent services for the wounded; the development of the cinema; the poetry of Wilfred Owen and other war poets and public reactions to the war. There will be further talks in the New Year.

Navitus

I write this on the first day of the Planning Inspectorate's public hearing being held at the BIC. This is the start of a long programme of public hearings which will visit not only Bournemouth but also the Isle of Wight and Purbeck with a final report scheduled for November 2015. Members of the public and representatives of local societies are each allowed 3 minutes to make their case and John Soane will be presenting the Civic Society's views.

There are many aspects to be judged; the effect on the environment; will tourism be affected, will the large number of wind turbines be visually detrimental, what will be the effect on the local economy and will it boost employment in the Hampshire/Dorset neighbourhood? These are only some of the questions which will be raised and need to be answered to allow local residents to make informed comments to the Inspectors. Another is what other sources of energy to supply our homes are there?

Throop

This long running saga shows no sign of coming to a conclusion either happy or disappointing. The problem of the Mill is that it is privately owned and the owner has little interest in selling it and his only obligation is to keep it protected from wind and rain. How different from many years ago when the Civic Society led by Ken Mantock assisted the villagers to open the mill to the public during a few summer weekends.

It does seem though that the future of the Church and the Manse may soon be resolved. Let's hope so.

Meeting with Head of Planning, Andrew England and Mike Holmes, Head of Transport, development and planning for some years has taken on some further responsibilities so that Planning is now the responsibility of Andrew England. The Society has at its most recent meeting raised a number of issues with him. These have included: the Cliff End Hotel in Boscombe; the future of the Information Bureau and the toilets in Westover Road; the repair of the Castle Point car park; the Design Panel and the commemoration of World War One.

Motorists

These also face problems on the roads. The exit from the Wessex Way to the top of Richmond Hill is marked with two lanes, the left hand leads to the top of the hill and is marked to Richmond Hill at the start but as you get to the top of the hill it leads to the multi-storey car park. The right hand lane points straight ahead with an exit to the left marked Richmond Hill. This ambiguity leads to motorists merging as they go down the Hill, a situation pointed out to Mike Holmes some time ago.

The improvements to ease the movement of cars, bicycles and people through the conurbation announced in the Three Towns policy will see the changes at the Horseshoe Common junction with Old Christchurch Road almost complete and the next phase of improvements to Palmerston Road and Christchurch Road starting soon.

Council Issues

Ken reports that the Council's Local Development Framework Steering Group held a number of meetings in 2014. This group helps develop local planning policy and comprises of Councillors with representatives from Borough-wide community groups. The Civic Society representative is Ken Mantock; the East Dorset Friends of the Earth is represented by Angela Pooley and Bournemouth Housing Forum by Martin Broad.

Important items which were discussed by the LDF Steering Group and then considered by the Council after periods of public consultation included:

The Community Infrastructure Levy: - a nationally inspired mechanism for local councils that requires developers to pay to them a fair contribution toward the impact of new developments (i.e. road improvements and community facilities).

The Parking Supplementary Planning Document: - a revised and updated set of local policies setting out the parking requirements which are necessary and should be provided when development takes place.

The Town Centre Building Design Supplementary Planning Document: - a new set of local policies to preserve the best architectural and design features in the Town Centre area. This also encourages excellence in new development and works affecting the streetscene.

Progress reports on the updated Conservation Area Appraisals for Holdenhurst Village, Churchill Gardens and Talbot Village plus an updated Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework Supplementary Planning Document. These policies are to ensure development does not impact badly on the Dorset Heathlands and SSSI's and requires developers to make fair contribution to local councils to help offset any such impacts.

Despite what seems to be the very nature of national government (regardless of who is in power) of giving local Councils no option but to provide really important documents with incredibly long and gobbledygook titles (such as those listed above) we encourage those interested in good governance and better planning of the town, to engage through the consultation process and not be frightened off by the 'Man from the Ministry' terminologies! Be assured that the Civic Society does review and comment back to the Council on consultations, but like so much else in life, it needs residents and other interested parties to chip in their ideas so the Council really gets to hear what people's views are when formulating new or updated policies.

Bournemouth - A Refreshed Book

A new edition of Mate & Riddle's, "*BOURNEMOUTH: 1810-1910. The History of a Modern Health and Pleasure Resort*", has been produced by Amberley Publishing of Stroud in Gloucestershire. It is entitled **Bournemouth, The Biography, Charles H. Mate**, and produced using scanning technology. The publishers accept that there may be minor errors in this edition.

The Society's President has been sent a copy. His first response was that the text is much easier on the eyes and is, thus, easier to read. But as an owner of the first edition he regrets the omission of Charles Riddle's name as Mr Mate's co-author and also the omission of the appendices which are a valuable resource for researchers of Bournemouth's early history. The photographs in the original book were black and white, in this edition they are in colour and acceptable as a record of the town's growth but I do not know why some are published by courtesy of the Library of Congress (USA) when they seem little different from those that many of us are familiar with. But no portrait of Lewis Tregonwell is included.

It will need an eagle-eyed reader to find many mistakes but I found a felicitous one in chapter 11. The original read; "Any villager so poor as to need assistance from the rates had to apply to a Relieving Officer who lived in Christchurch...". In the new edition the applicant has to apply to the "Believing Officer".

Visits

Beryl and Keith, the Activities Secretaries, continue to provide us with places to visit despite both having health problems which limit the time they can devote to organising the outings. Beryl has arranged some pub lunches which have been successful but at others some who have signed up have not turned up and this can be embarrassing if the landlord has brought in extra staff to expedite the serving of food.

Wimborne St Giles and Longford Castle, the first owned by the Earl of Shaftesbury, and the second by the Earl of Radnor, were visited this year. The former house had been empty for many years when the then owner lived in France and had been neglected. But his grandson who inherited the estate is busy restoring the house and the gardens. We were privileged to see some of this painstaking restoration and renewal work of plaster and timber decorations by a team of specialists and some that had been completed. In the beautifully restored formal gardens was a statue of Eros from the same cast as the one in Piccadilly Circus. The original commemorated the work that the 7th Earl had done for impoverished children.

The tours of Longford Castle which the Society last visited some 14 years ago are now arranged by the National Portrait Gallery. The guides gave us very good assessments of the fine paintings of which the Castle has many. I was pleased to see some painted by Henry Lamb, an artist local to this area.

Over the years members have visited many historic and architecturally interesting houses in Dorset, Hampshire and Wiltshire some are no longer accessible but new members might like to suggest possible revisits to the Activities team.

Bournemouth In Bloom Calendar

The Society sponsored the page for March which featured a photograph of wild flowers taken by Beryl. Congratulations! We also applaud Winnie and Andre Thomas for their efforts over many years for Bournemouth and particularly Westbourne in Bloom.



Cycling Routes

The Council is one of many that have implemented policies to make cycling safer mainly by redesigning cycle lanes and crossing points. But one that has puzzled regular cyclists as well as motorists is the one at the top of Richmond Hill. A keen and regular cyclist has told me that she and many of her fellows prefer to avoid that particular "improvement".

St Peter's Church

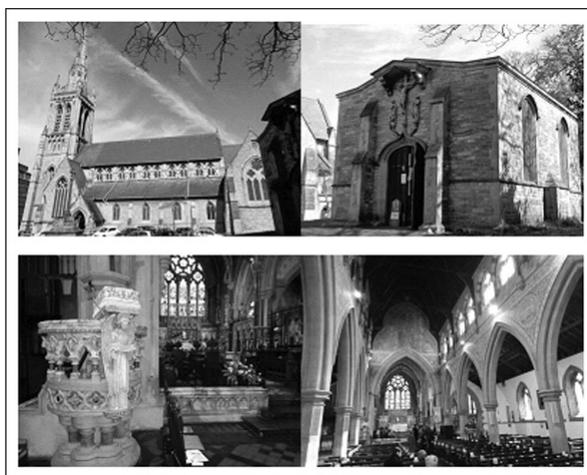
Discussion and planning continues to take place on proposals to restore and improve the Town's Grade 1 listed Civic Church of St Peter in the Town Centre. This magnificent architectural creation designed by GE Street, the eminent Victorian architect famed for the works including the Law Courts in London, was admired by our Founding President the late Poet Laureate and champion of all things English and quirky, Sir John Betjeman.

As noted in a previous newsletter, work is afoot by a team of volunteers to ensure the continued good future of St Peter's Church. After a series of working group meetings held last year and again this year, a group of Trustees have been appointed comprising of The Rev Dr Ian Terry (*Team Rector*), Brenda Dickerson (*Church Warden*), George Meyrick (*Patron*), Alan Frost (*former High Sheriff*) and Ken Mantock (*Civic Society Chairman*). Trustee meetings are also attended by Virginia Beck (*Church Warden*) and Cllr John Beesley (*Member of the Congregation*).

They are supported by a wide group of interested and engaged fellow partners including the Friends of St Peter's whose Chairman, the current Mayor of Bournemouth; Cllr Chris Mayne, recently hosted a dinner at the Mayor's parlour to garner support for the initiative.

St Peter's is a hugely important landmark and cultural beacon. It contains nationally important features, fittings and examples of Victorian high art and designs including the wall paintings and organ, however, it requires several million pounds worth of renovation works. These works include renovations to the building fabric such as the stonework, clerestory windows and the organ which requires a complete overhaul. Improvements are needed for the heating, lighting and audio systems. The café needs bringing into the 21st century and the grounds which include the Resurrection Chapel (designed also by another of John Betjeman's favourite architects, Sir Ninian Comper as a memorial to those who fell in the First World War) require improvement and opening up to greater public access and use.

Vital to the ever growing relevance and development of St Peter's is its links into the wider Bournemouth community and the fostering of partnerships with organisations such as Bournemouth University, Arts University Bournemouth, Bournemouth & Poole College and Bournemouth Council. All have been involved in helping deliver more public art, concerts, and events with a better and greater visitor experience during 2014. Such partnerships are vital to securing a sustainable future for St Peter's to achieve success in a Heritage Lottery Bid (HLF) with a wider fundraising appeal that will support the development project. These would not only see this gem of a building secured for another one hundred years, but its place at the heart of Bournemouth will be expanded as a hub for literary and music excellence.



News on the appeal launch, ways you can support the HLF bid and how you can get involved in the project will follow in further newsletters but if you have any ideas, suggestions, or wish to make a donation to the St Peters Development Project Fund contact Ken on kjmantock@aol.com.

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