



FOOPA

Review 2022



Featuring articles about the local area and its residents.

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We are happy to support FOOPA and welcome enquiries from members.



Note from the Chair

Staggeringly, it's been 2 years since we last produced an Annual Review. Despite a large proportion of that period being lost to a pandemic that curtailed our activities enormously, this 2022 edition demonstrates that many of us have been keeping incredibly busy. In that respect, hats off to the Southsea Coastal Scheme for progressing the sea defences work at

Long Curtain Moat so efficiently and diligently—we've all enjoyed standing on the King's Bastion watching the impressive engineering feats being undertaken. It's extraordinary to think this stretch of coastline will be open again later this year.

The pandemic also made it difficult for the community to connect face-to-face with the Council's elected representatives and officers—and vice versa—over the last 2 years. So we've included a couple of short articles by our more recently elected councillors, Chris Attwell and Ian Holder, which reveal some intriguing aspects of their working lives.

We have fortunately been able to re-organise some of the social events that got cancelled last year and I know members have been eagerly awaiting opportunities to get together again. If anyone has any thoughts or proposals for a future social event such as a talk, please get in touch. Thank you to all our committee members – Mary Tollow, Liz Winder, Anna Koor, Graeme Swinburne, Mike Dobson, Ann Wilson, Bob Stewart – for their continued commitment and dedication; without whom, we would not be able to function.

Gail Baird, Chair

Enterprise Car Club

We understand the Council is in the process of setting up a city-wide Car Club scheme by the summer with on-street parking pick-up/drop-off spots in every neighbourhood. Car rental company, Enterprise has set up a trial scheme in Southsea in which 2 Car Club vehicles are parked and available for use at Wimbledon Park Sports Centre.

Enterprise Car Club is offering FOOPA members a discounted introductory offer of £10 subscription for the first year's membership, as well as £10 driving credit when you book a vehicle using the Promotional Code: PORTSMOUTH10. Information can be found @ www.enterprisecarclub.co.uk and at this link: <https://www.enterprisecarclub.co.uk/gb/en/programs/regions/south-east-england/portsmouth.html>

Street Cred

Sustrans charity worker, Jenni Jones, writes about the recent St Jude's Primary School trial

School Streets is a national movement which makes the school run safer and more enjoyable by limiting the number of vehicles allowed around school gates at drop-off and pick-up times.

This creates a welcoming space for children and families to walk, wheel and socialise without worrying about traffic. In the past few years over 800 schools have implemented School Streets in England, Scotland and Wales, enabling thousands of happier and healthier journeys.

School Streets trials were introduced to Portsmouth in September 2021 by Portsmouth City Council in partnership with active travel charity Sustrans. St Jude's Church of England Primary School and Bramble Infant and Nursery School were the first two schools to take part.

We are very happy to announce that in May 2022, the second phase of the Portsmouth trial will launch at St John's Cathedral RC Primary School. The council is working with other schools in the city who would also like to implement a school street over the next year.

What is a School Street?

School Streets limit the volume of non-essential traffic entering the roads near schools during drop-off and pick-up times. Parents, children, school staff and visitors

are encouraged to walk, wheel or cycle to school. This results in a safer, healthier environment and reduced traffic congestion in residential areas.

Access is available for residents and business premises on the street, emergency services, school transport, blue badge holders and carers of residents who live in the street. People with specific requirements are able to pre-agree access with the head teacher.

Volunteer stewards place signs and barriers at the closure points and carefully manage the traffic, ensuring that children and their families can travel safely to and from school.

Why School Streets?

Although closing a road is primarily a road safety initiative, School Streets has many benefits for the whole school community:

Cleaner air and safer streets

In Portsmouth, exhaust fumes from transport make up approximately 36% of our carbon emissions, which is above the national average. These emissions have serious effects on our health and environment, so improving the air we breathe is a top priority for Portsmouth City Council and one in which we can all play our part. Experts say that there is no safe level of air pollution, so it is vital that we protect our children by removing toxic fumes from the school gates.

Removing vehicles from the



St Jude's pupils with local councillors and head teacher (centre), Rachael Osborne

school gates can also lead to a reduction in road danger. All of the schools chosen have a history of traffic problems around their gates. As the trial encourages children to walk, scoot or cycle to school, there is usually less traffic on the surrounding roads too.

Some families need to drive to school, perhaps on their way to work or because they have children in more than one school. These families can Park and Stride, leaving the car at a suitable place a few minutes away and walking or wheeling the rest of the journey. For others, this means leaving home a few minutes earlier; we know that those few minutes can make a big difference to the morning routine and we are very grateful!

A calm and sociable place

By preventing most cars from driving to the school gates, the street

becomes a fun and safe place for children to walk, scoot and cycle. Families have space to stop and chat, and local residents can enjoy the atmosphere of a street full of happy children.

"It was an opportunity to socialise as well as to get that community feeling... there was that atmosphere of a mini-community developing which was based on positive vibes, so that was definitely a plus." Parent / Steward, St. Jude's Trial
Active travel as a regular part of the routine

Children, parents and carers will be encouraged to make walking or cycling to school a regular part of their travel routine and leave the car at home.

Participating schools will also take part in the Pompey Monster Stomp to School Challenge. During the trial

parents and children will walk or cycle to school, guided by Stomper, with the Pompey Monster Stomp to School Challenge. Stomper's digital, seven week challenge, guides parents and children on a fun journey to school while earning rewards for walking, cycling or scooting at least three times a week.

About Stomper: "my daughter has never been so excited! It was very positive." (Parent/Steward, St Jude's)

Research also shows that children are better able to concentrate in class if they have done a bit of exercise first, yet another upside of School Streets.

The trial is being funded by the government's Active Travel Fund and the Travel Demand Management Fund.

St Jude's School Streets Trial

The 8-week trial at St Jude's was extremely successful, with feedback showing support for a continuation



of the trial from a massive 80% of families and residents. In addition, 76% of families agreed that Stomper encouraged them and their children to travel more actively to school.

The trial wasn't without its challenges; it proved difficult to get enough volunteers to man the three closure points and transport the signs and barriers. We would like to thank all those parents and local residents who braved all kinds of weather and gave their time so generously to support the scheme.

What's next for School Streets in Portsmouth?

The next phase of School Streets will be launching at more Portsmouth schools in May and September 2022. When these three trials are complete, all of the results will be analysed and plans for those schools that wish to continue or restart the scheme will be drawn up.

The plans will include design drawings for any bollards or signs, additional considerations (planning permission for conservation areas and electrical connections for illuminated signs), the requirements for volunteers and how many are required, and actions for the council and the school.

The council and the schools that wish to continue will then work towards implementing the plan and progress will be shared with local Councillors and residents.

Holding the Fort



Long Curtain Moat and Piling

The coastal works have been with us since September 2020 and the three huge storms in February 2022 have emphasised how important they are to protect the community. The scheme is the UK's largest local authority-led coastal defence project, worth around £130m. It will stretch for 4.5km from Old Portsmouth to Eastney and help reduce the risk of flooding to more than 10,000 homes and 700 businesses.

The scheme comprises six frontages. Work commenced on Frontage 1 (Long Curtain Moat) in September 2020 and is due for completion in autumn 2022. Frontage 4 (Southsea Castle) is the second phase of the Scheme with work getting underway and an anticipated end date of March 2024.

On 20 September 2021, some impressive statistics for Frontage

1 were revealed on the one-year anniversary of the start of construction:

- **525 linear metres of sheet piles installed, totalling 6300m².** If the piles were laid end to end, this would make a total of 12km of sheet piles driven into the ground.
- **11,474 tonnes of heavy, dense Anorthosite rock imported from Norway.** A coaster was used to ship the rock anchored in the Solent while a barge and tug brought the rocks closer to shore for offloading and stockpiling onto the beach.
- **20,000m³ of dredged material laid.**
- **10,200m² of geotextile installed** under the rock to prevent the rock settling into the existing beach.

The main contractor for the scheme faced complexities in the engineering and construction



Original masons' marks

elements which included the delivery of armour rock by sea to reduce congestion and carbon emissions in Portsmouth. Wessex Archaeology had the challenge of managing emerging requirements from the build and responsive construction techniques, while resolving stringent requirements from regulators and stakeholders. A Historic Environment Management Strategy (HEMS) was produced, and regular engagement was undertaken with Historic England, the Hampshire County Council archaeologist and others to identify any possible impacts or opportunities as early as possible.

There have been several unexpected discoveries made during the works at historic Frontage I, and the team worked closely with Historic England and Wessex Archaeology as finds were unearthed. Over the past year, the team has uncovered the remains of the 17th century city walls and defences, as well as original masons' marks inscribed on the stones. These have been recorded for posterity and will be included



Remains of 17C city walls and defences

on information boards for the public along the new promenade. A section of the original wall has been restored and will be a focal point of Frontage I.

Works to protect the historic Long Curtain Moat began prior to construction, and included repairs to the inner moat walls and preparation work for the new sea defences. Further enhancements were made after construction began, with an intensive steam cleaning process. The cleaning process was approved by Historic England and completely transformed the moat's inner walls, removing much of the staining to bring them close to their former glory.

Throughout Frontage I, materials have been meticulously sourced to ensure they closely replicated the original sea defences, with Purbeck limestone and granite units making up the new defences. Approval of the materials from Historic England came after more than a year of consultation and testing to ensure the new design was sympathetic to the historic area.

Meeting the needs of local wildlife

was another challenge, and the scheme worked closely with Natural England on mitigation strategies for the Brent Geese that inhabited an area used by the (now) Frontage I project office on a section of Southsea Common. An area of the Ministry of Defence field on Pier Road is now fenced off for the geese during winter. As the project moves to Frontage 4, the scheme works around the purple sandpiper birds that overwinter in the area around Southsea Castle, restricting noisier works to months outside the time the birds feed in the area.

Environmental considerations are paramount throughout the scheme, with a highlight of Frontage I being the installation of 18 tide pools to enhance marine life. The concrete pools are designed to create ecosystems that mimic natural rock pools found on rocky coastlines. Recycling is also a priority and a materials processing site has been set up on the Ministry of Defence field. The scheme plans to reuse material that will be broken and excavated out of the existing structures to provide fill material for the new sea defences. This will avoid sending more than 92,000 tonnes of waste to landfill!

The team has worked with the

community and has its own project information centre where visitors can drop in. The centre is based at the Pier Road office site and is open, where possible, on weekdays between 10am-2pm.



Tide pools

As the Frontage I (Long Curtain Moat) works approach completion in late 2022, works have already commenced on Frontage 4 (Southsea Castle). These works - whilst protecting this area - will also considerably improve access along the seafront.

Justine Brown, SCS

Planning Review

There have been fewer planning applications in the last twelve months than in previous years, which is probably a result of the pandemic and its effects on the logistics of organising applications and getting builders and materials to carry out the works.

FOOPA usually only gets involved with applications if they have a significant effect on the area, or they err from Portsmouth City Council's policies, in particular the Conservation Guidelines. Therefore, while many applications are reviewed, fortunately few require a significant input to respond.

FOOPA also makes representations to the National Planning Inspectorate, where an applicant, who being dissatisfied if Portsmouth City Council rejects an application, appeals the decision. The applicant and those objecting to the third appeal to the Planning Inspector on Fontenoy House, the property on the corner of High Street and Grand Parade, currently await an inspector's decision.

I would like to take the opportunity to draw residents, who are either contemplating either putting in a planning application or responding to an application, of the problems currently being experienced by Portsmouth City Council's planning department.

Our local authority is very short staffed and are backfilling posts with agency staff, all of whom I am sure are very professional and experienced. However, the staff rarely make site visits and by the nature of their peripatetic employment, have little empathy or ownership of the local area.

As a result, if you are proposing to make an application you will have to assume months rather than weeks to have your application considered, even if it is not controversial and is unlikely to receive any objections. You need to build this into your expectations as to when your new project may be completed.

Also, as the council officers don't visit the site, they frequently don't grasp the nuances of the relationship between the various ages of properties, with old and new next to each other. So, if you are aware of an application, please don't assume the officers understand all the issues with the development, as they are interpreting the information, be it good or not so good, presented to them by the applicant or their agent.

Make sure the application is correctly advertised with immediate properties consulted and green signs posted on a nearby lamp column. If you are unhappy, write to Portsmouth City Council, copy in your ward councillors, and make sure they are aware of the shortcomings of the information submitted.

FOOPA will do its best to look at all applications, but some may get missed, as we are all volunteers.

I hope this information is helpful.

Graeme Swinburne, Planning

Commemoration Restored

This year marks the 82nd anniversary of the evacuation of British and Expeditionary forces from the beaches of Dunkirk between 27 May and 4 June 1940. Many men were rescued by small craft from Portsmouth and the Solent including torpedo boats, the Isle of Wight ferry "Whippingham", Hayling Island ferries, yachts and fishing vessels.



Some of the vessels were owned and sailed by civilian crews, for example, The Bat from Portsmouth. This is commemorated, along with five Isle of Wight boats, on a memorial plaque on the Harbour Master's Office at Newport Quay, Isle of Wight.

After the War, the Portsbridge Cruising Club and the Dunkirk Memorial Fund campaigned for a memorial to the "Little Ships" of the 1940 evacuation. On 19 April 1970, a plaque was unveiled on the east-facing parapet of Portsbridge, on the old A3 opposite Hilsea Lido, by the Lord Mayor, which commemorated the part played by the small boats. Unfortunately, the plaque disappeared, presumed stolen, in about 2010.

The Dunkirk Veterans' Association was disbanded in 1999 and previous memorials have been lost or destroyed. So, the Society of Nautical Research (South) is very pleased to have the opportunity to work closely with Portsmouth City Council to replace the plaque.

The new plaque will be situated on the low wall opposite the Spice Island Inn at the Point, Old Portsmouth, next to three commemorating other events. It will be unveiled by the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth on Saturday 28 May 2022 at 11.00am. Everyone is welcome to attend and following the event, refreshments will be available in the Spice Island Inn.

Meanwhile, the Society would be very pleased to hear from anyone with information about The Bat and its Portsmouth crew of J. T. and F. Butchers, G. H. Brimecome and F. Botten. In addition, the Landlord of the Spice Island Inn has offered to provide space to display items of interest.

Sir Winston Churchill considered the evacuation to be "A miracle of deliverance". Certainly, our plaque will stand as a testament to the bravery and dedication of local civilians, fishermen and sailors at a time of national emergency. A time at which their prompt and decisive action made a difference to the outcome of the War.

For further details ring Jane Smith, Committee Member, Society of Nautical Research (South). Tel: 02392 873259. Email: pjs@theharbour.plus.com

Social Report

As with so many plans for 2021 the COVID-19 pandemic and isolation restrictions prevented FOOPA from having any social meetings in 2022 and the beginning of 2021.

We were able to kick start the Social programme in 2021 with a Fish and Chip Supper and Quiz in September at the Pembroke Garden Bowling Club. This was a fun evening with thirty-six members attending. The Fish and Chips were delivered from Brittania on the Hard and enjoyed by all.

We continued in November with a 'Ragtime to Jazz' short history from Chris Newman of the Gosport Jazz Club. An interesting evening with Chris interspersing his talk with playing on his keyboard. Thirty-four members attended.

A wonderful Christmas Buffet lunch brought the year to a close. The lady members of the Bowling Club prepared a magnificent three course buffet lunch for sixty members. Great fun for all.

The FOOPA Committee agreed to divide the proceeds from the two events and added to it from general funds. The EC Roberts Centre and the Portsmouth Family Association were the beneficiaries.

A full programme is being planned for 2022,

The Pembroke Garden Bowling Club has become our regular venue. There is parking available in Pembroke Road and the Club have made FOOPA very welcome. The very reasonably priced bar is and added attraction and the venue hire is very reasonable. Thanks go to Mary Tollow, Membership Secretary for circulating the programme to members and to Liz Winder for her role as Treasurer for processing the payments.

Ann Wilson

Spring/ Summer social events

An illustrated talk *The Triangle Girls*
by Cheryl Jewitt and Ian Barbeary,
Portsmouth Royal Dockyard
Historical Trust.

Tuesday 5 April 2022 at 7.30 pm
Tickets @ £10 per person

All Events will take place at the Pembroke Gardens Bowling Club, Pembroke Road, Old Portsmouth (Pay bar). Please do feel you can invite friends and neighbours, hopefully they may consider becoming members. For booking forms call Ann on 023 9275 2286; or ping an email to: ann.wilson6@ntlworld.com

Book early to avoid disappointment

A Life Behind Bars Cllr Chris Attwell

It is a great privilege to represent Old Portsmouth as a Councillor. In many ways, I consider it to be an extension of my 25 years' public service at the Home Office/Ministry of Justice before becoming one of your locally elected representatives. It was a working life almost entirely spent behind bars! There were many famous/infamous people I bumped into along the way and here are some of the more amusing/unusual situations I found myself in.



Myra Hindley was the first infamous character I met after starting work at HMP/YOI Rochester in 1989 and, at the time of our meeting, I had no idea who she was. We had a brief perfectly pleasant conversation in the Hospital Unit (she was waiting to see the dentist, having 'popped over' from HMP Cookham Wood to use our medical facilities) and I thought no more of it until a matter of days later when a story about her appeared in the press. Rather than using the familiar blond peroxide hair picture of her, the newspapers had obtained a recent picture...the penny dropped, it was the same person I had spoken with days before. My first encounter with a notorious prisoner.

At HMP Belmarsh, a Category A prison holding the most dangerous prisoners in the country, I looked after security intelligence in the late 1990s, a role I adored and one that gave me an up close and personal meeting with Charles Bronson – often described as “the most violent prisoner in Britain”, a description well earned. It fell upon me to go to his cell and talk to him about a matter of some sensitivity. Now, this would be very normal if it were any other prisoner, but the thing about Charles Bronson is that he takes people hostage and has a long history of violence against staff. It's the reason he is serving a life sentence (his original sentence was seven years). My twenty minutes with “the most violent prisoner in Britain” mostly consisted of us talking about art and him reading me his latest short story. Surreal.

In the mid 2000s I was back at HMP Belmarsh covering some duty governor shifts. I was doing my rounds of the prison and had reached the visits' hall. One of the prisoners, the 'Great Train Robber' Ronnie Biggs, was with his son and beckoned me over – by this time, he could hardly speak due to a series of strokes and was physically frail. As I approached him, Ronnie waved at me to come closer. Given his health I assumed he wanted to whisper something to me, but when he got as close as he could to my face, he stuck his fingers up at me and laughed, and to much merriment from those close by—including colleagues in uniform! Life behind bars is rarely dull.

Annual Accounts for year ending 31 Dec 2021

The table opposite shows the Income and Expenditure for FOOPA during the last year in comparison with the two previous years. There is a surplus of £190.12 and a healthy reserve of £9216.70.

Membership revenue is lower than in previous years but a saving has been made on committee meeting and AGM room hire. Covid-19 caused several meetings to be held by Zoom, as well as the 2021 AGM. This cost less than previous room hire at Portsmouth Sailing Club and Cathedral House, and since the lifting of restrictions, the alternative use of Pembroke Gardens Bowling Club facilities has also resulted in a considerable saving.

Following consultation with members, FOOPA made donations to charity equivalent to the total membership subscriptions for the year 2020 when our activities were put on hold due to the pandemic. These donations were paid out in 2021 - two payments of £250 each were made to the Roberts Centre and the Portsmouth Family Welfare Association.

The three social events which took place in 2021 have once more produced a small surplus overall, which will be similarly used. Although Covid-19, or the fear of it, took its toll on Christmas lunch attendance, it was still very much a celebratory feast. Feedback from those who did get together suggests it was very successful with numerous requests for it to be booked again for December 2022.

Owing to very little activity, we did not publish a FOOPA Annual Review for 2021, which generated savings in printing costs but, of course, no advertising revenue. But to conclude, FOOPA is in good financial shape to meet any challenges ahead.

Treasurer: Liz Winder

Membership and How to Join

At the year end 2021 FOOPA had 199 members (that is households) if you include the two honorary members (Emery-Wallis and Nesbit). Of those there are 90 households with 1 member; 99 households with two members; and 3 households with 3 members. This gives us a total of 297 members.

If you would like to join, FOOPA membership is £5 per calendar year (per household) which is payable every January. Please contact Mary Tollow to apply, by Email: foopamembsec@outlook.com or Tel: 023 92 833205. More information about FOOPA can be found on the website www.foopa.org.uk

Income and Expenditure

Year Ended 31/12/21

Income

	2021	2020	2019
Membership Subscriptions	988.00	1,026.00	1,011.00
Social Events	1,447.00	325.00	2,650.00
Advertising income	0.00	120.00	112.50
	<u>2,435.00</u>	<u>1,471.00</u>	<u>3,773.50</u>

Expenditure

	2021	2020	2019
Secretarial & AGM	0.00	0.00	142.70
Newsletters/ Printing	8.00	195.50	297.00
Committee Room Hire	30.00	70.00	279.00
Zoom sub	143.88	0.00	
Social Events	1,225.00	235.00	2,295.62
Web Site	288.00	288.00	288.00
Gift for Alastair	50.00		
Donations (1)	500.00	0.00	299.00
	<u>2,244.88</u>	<u>788.50</u>	<u>3,601.32</u>

See Row 20 formula below. = Double check >

Surplus/Deficit of Income over Expenditure	<u>190.12</u>	<u>682.50</u>	<u>172.18</u>
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Balance Sheet

	2021	2020	2019
Assets:			
Lloyds Current Account	9,216.70	9,026.58	8,344.08
	<u>9,216.70</u>	<u>9,026.58</u>	<u>8,344.08</u>
Liabilities:	0.00	0.00	0.00
	<u>9,216.70</u>	<u>9,026.58</u>	<u>8,344.08</u>

Represented by:-

Opening Reserve	9,026.58	8,344.08	8,171.90
Years Movement	190.12	682.50	172.18
Closing Reserve	<u>9,216.70</u>	<u>9,026.58</u>	<u>8,344.08</u>

Represented by:-

NB: Donations made from profit on social events include profits from last year.

The Tale of a Statue - or Two

Professor Tony Pointon, BSc, PhD, DSc

By an absolute fluke, linked to a search for a grave in Portsmouth's Highland Road Cemetery in a temperature well below freezing, I became interested, in 1993, in the relationship of Charles Dickens to Portsmouth. Interested, that is, to the point of wondering why there was no statue to this great writer in the City of his birth. In 1996, after some research, I managed to get Council Officers to arrange a meeting at which I could put a case for allowing a Dickens statue to be erected: I had little hope, because I had discovered that, back in 1904, the same proposal had been made by one of the Council's Alderman but to no avail. When I saw the group that was assembled to quiz me I realised that some were enthusiasts for the status quo, others thought that something unfathomable, like a "Henry Moore", would be preferable to a human figure, while something "representational" – like a giant pen or a book or a pile of books – would please others better. Remembering that "the proper study of mankind is man", it seemed that some shock tactic to put them off balance might be needed.

I decided to begin my presentation with a question, one that had puzzled me for some time after I came to Portsmouth, and that I suspected most of the thirteen officers and councillors and advisers before me would not have a clue about. So I asked whether, before we started on our subject proper, anyone could tell me where the statue of Nelson was, and I was shocked to find that not one could give an answer. (Some knew where Fareham's monument to Nelson was, but not Portsmouth's.) So I asked if, before anything else was discussed, a decision could be taken to give me the use of a strong fork-lift truck so that I could pick the hero's statue from where it was carefully hidden by the Clarence Pier entertainments park and the cluster of trees south of Pembroke Road, and move him to Grand Parade near the Battery where he could be seen and admired in good time for the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar and in an appropriate setting.

The confusion that I caused with my proposal to move Horatio was not resolved for some time, and I never did get my fork-lift truck, so our great naval hero did not get moved to Grand Parade until less than a month before the date of the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar, 21st October 2005, was upon us.

That statue was a co-operative effort between two men. Dr Herbert J. Aldous (1876-1957), LRCS, a Portsmouthian who lived in Paulsgrove



and was a Nelson enthusiast, made a design which would become the basis of the Portsmouth statue, and, from it, he had a maquette made in bronze. It was only three inches in height but was extremely detailed, and it is now lodged in the Royal Navy Museum in the Portsmouth Dockyard. Eventually, Aldous commissioned a well known and prolific artist, Frederick Brook Hitch (1877-1952), RA, who was a Fellow of the British Society of Sculptors. Aldous offered the statue to the City in October 1946, and it was erected in Pembroke Park, looking, until the view was blocked, to the Southsea shoreline from where Nelson embarked for the Victory. It was unveiled on

11th July 1951 by Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Sir Arthur Power.

It seems there was some debate about whether the City should have accepted Aldous's gift of the statue when it was offered, just as there is debate about some statues now. The IRA had blown up one of Nelson in Dublin, and some people thought his military support of royalty in Naples and the south of Italy had been brutal and unjustified, even if it meant he was elevated to be Duke of Brontë.

Later, there would be debate about where Nelson should be moved to when he left his original site – though I had already suggested where he should be put. However, it was feared he would not be able to see the sea from that site without him standing on tiptoe! And it was objected that the location was not on the route from the rear of the George Hotel - where he had eaten breakfast – to where he embarked, though it is thought to be nearer the point of his last steps in England than Pembroke Park is.

Today, almost everybody now seems pleased with the Portsmouth Nelson statue and the way it dignifies and completes the space in Grand Parade, just as they are pleased with the Dickens statue and the way it completes Guildhall Square.



Customs and Practice

Roger Boulton, a native of Portsmouth and currently residing in Beehive Walk in Gunwharf Gate, describes his first 6 years in the Customs and Excise (C & E) much of it spent in Portsmouth.

Customs at the Camber

Appointed as an Unattached Officer (UO) in 1963, and following a 6 month training period in London of both Customs and Excise procedures, I was sent initially to work in a London Purchase Tax Centre. This was followed by spells of duty at Whitbread's Brewery in the City of London, Dover Parcel Post Depot and Manston Airport in Kent. A UO could be posted anywhere in the UK and it was three years later before I could get back to my home town and to Portsmouth Customs based at the Camber in Old Portsmouth. The Customs building stood where Viviers Fish Market is now situated, right opposite the American Bar. Next door was M Bonded Warehouse run by Saccone Smeed and on the other side I Bond operated by the NAAFI (Navy Army & Air Force Institutes). Both housed duty free goods destined for Home Use and Bonded Removal deliveries but mainly for Ships Stores. A further Bonded Warehouse (F Bond) was located 100 yards away in Warblington Street operated by Brickwoods (the well known Portsmouth brewer).

Each warehouse was guarded by a Revenue Assistant or Watcher whose job it was to tally in and out duty free (D/F) goods, and ensure no pilferage of D/F goods occurred. These RAs were usually retired service men, mainly Navy. Some were expert at obtaining a "wet" in true Naval tradition from virtually anywhere. One story goes that one Watcher named Mac was so drunk that he fell off his cycle on his way home right next to the Cathedral. A passing cleric picked him up and escorted him and his bike back to the office exclaiming to the Senior Officer on duty "I believe this belongs to you!"

In those days the cargo arriving or departing from the Camber or the nearby Flathouse Quay was all lift on/lift off (some years later roll on/roll off was introduced at Albert Johnson Quay). It took several hours to load and unload boats with gangs of Stevedores with crane Drivers and fork lift trucks whizzing all over the place. There were several berths in use and several Bonded Transit Sheds surrounding the Camber where goods were taken for Customs clearance. Most of the traffic came from the Channel Islands or France, but fruit boats mainly from Cyprus and Morocco were discharged at Flathouse.

One of my earliest experiences was examining and clearing the produce of the French or Spanish farmers. The Transit Sheds were full of separate piles of onions and shallots etc, each sack marked with the distinguishing number of the owner. It was always absolute chaos with the French and Spanish arguing about what belonged to whom, especially if some of the sacks were split on discharge. Eventually it would be sorted out and off the sellers would ride with their onions tied around their necks or the handlebars of their bikes and anywhere else they could pack them. I always went home with a headache but one had to admire their fortitude and determination as selling on the doorstep in all kinds of weather must have been hard work. At this time we had not yet joined the Common Market.

The main cargo from France during the season was cauliflowers packed in wooden boxes. A Customs Officer and a Shipping Clerk would sit side by side in the transit shed with a set of scales. A box was weighed empty to establish the "tare" weight and then several boxes on a palette were weighed together to obtain the gross weight. Each consignment bore the growers "marque" and there would often be hundreds of cases for each grower. The number of cases shipped was established from Customs declarations, the tare deducted to establish the net weight, and the overall weight for that grower calculated. At that time cauliflowers were subject to a specific rate of duty, ie; £5 per hundred weight (other goods could be liable to Ad Valorem duty, ie; 5% of the declared value).

A regular export through the Camber featured kegs of Guinness on duty drawback (repayment of the Excise duty already accounted for). As Customs were potentially liable to sample the beer an extra keg was supplied just in case. If it wasn't needed it was left in one of the Transit Sheds and personnel on the quay could be seen there all day long in quite a happy mood!

Two episodes remain in my memory : as I was walking along the quay I heard a yell and on looking up saw a case or two of spirits being craned off on a pallet come loose and crash to the ground. Mac the Watcher, who was not known for his athleticism, took off like greased lightning and quickly appeared with a bucket or two. The damaged cardboard boxes were placed on the buckets to catch the whisky which filtered through the cardboard trapping the broken glass. The excise duty was written off and the spirit disappeared into all manner of receptacles. Needless to say Mac was very popular for several days.

On another occasion the metal wheel rim of a private imported car being unloaded suddenly dropped off and the ground was showered with loose packets of cigarettes. The importer had his cigarettes seized and had to settle a compromise penalty several times the duty evaded. Strictly speaking the

vehicle was also liable to seizure and if the product had been drugs this would have been considered.

Flathouse Quay.

On a Sunday a regular fruit boat arrived at Flathouse Quay during the season. The fruit was duly weighed and checked against the entered quantity on the paperwork prepared by the agent. I was often on duty and would look forward to sampling a peach or six during discharge. On one occasion I was taken aside and asked by the Foreman if I would kindly scale down my intake as it did not set a very good example to the Stevedores, he winked at me and added that I ate more produce than was loaded on the lorries. Suitably admonished I curbed my desire!

Customs Cutters.

Although it was somewhat later when I returned to Portsmouth as a Surveyor of C&E jointly in charge of the Continental Ferry Port, the aforementioned Customs Building housed the Cutter Control Teams, which circled the British Isles challenging yachts and similar craft entering UK waters. The smuggling of drugs was a growing concern at that time. The Intelligence was gathered there and cutters despatched to chase suspicious vessels sighted by passing commercial ships, the Navy and aeroplanes such as the Scottish Fisheries Protection Aircraft.

Brickwoods Warehouse.

Every year a full stock check was undertaken of all bonded spirits (cask and bottles) in Brickwood's F Bond. This check involved re-gauging casks of whisky and sherry etc. to see what had been lost to evaporation. One particular cask contained a very old and rare whisky belonging to a private customer, and the quantity gradually reduced year on year. However the value increased significantly more than the loss, so in the warehouse it remained.

Trade Cars.

A regular trade between the Channel Islands and Portsmouth was the supply of trade cars for hire by holiday-makers. As little mileage was done due to the size of the Islands these mainly brand new cars would return after the holiday season with low mileage on the clock. As tax free exports they were highly sought after so certain second hand car importers would pay any duties and purchase tax due and sell them on. I remember on one occasion when a private importer proudly arrived with the latest Jaguar model. The basis for the calculation of the charges was the tax inclusive wholesale value which could usually be calculated using Glasses Guide. However this model was so new that London HQ had to be contacted for the final assessment,

this turned out to be a higher price than the vehicle could be bought for in the UK. Nevertheless the importer left delighted telling us there was a 12 month waiting list over here and he just couldn't wait to have one!

The Waterguard.

Customs used the small office at the main gate to Gunwharf (opposite The Parade Tea Rooms) to challenge Sailors and Dockyard workers leaving HMS Vernon after a days work. They were asked if they were carrying any duty free alcohol or cigarettes, (especially Navy D/F "blue liners") and searched if replies were evasive or suspicious. Those caught smuggling were fined and had the goods seized and were reported to the relevant authority.

Portsmouth Airport.

The clearance of aircraft arriving from abroad with freight at Portsmouth Airport next to the Eastern Road was also laid to the Camber Customs Office. On one occasion a load of antiques arrived from Jersey and I was called to clear the goods. The Importer was asked for a "certificate of age" to prove their antiquity and justify their duty free status and he was quite indignant when I refused clearance stating "they were only worth a few bob". I finally agreed to release them against a deposit of £200 pending the completion of an entry and production of a certificate of age. He calmly peeled off the required money from a large roll of notes in his pocket. I reported the importation to the Police but there was no comeback, so I assume the transaction was legal.

Excise Traders in Old Portsmouth.

In addition the Camber area contained some excise traders namely Bookmakers and the odd business registered for purchase tax. These traders were visited regularly and records checked. It was true to say Bookmakers did not welcome these visits but felt obliged to offer an Officer a cup of coffee. I can declare that their coffee was generally the worst I have ever tasted. A not so subtle hint to send us on our way?

It was several years before I could get back to Portsmouth as a Fixed Officer when I was appointed to Portsmouth North Excise, but that's another story. However I thoroughly enjoyed my time in Portsmouth Customs, especially in Old Portsmouth with the variety of the work, the comradeship and the constant bantering with the Stevedores and regular traders.

“Once A Highway...

Our annual update on progress of the Camber Right of Way statutory process never went to print in 2021. However, while the pandemic may have brought life, as we knew it, to a halt; it enabled many of us to get out and about on foot. Some of us took pleasure in that – we took joy wherever we found it! And in the course of taking our permitted daily exercise, we ran into all sorts of local faces we typically only see at community meetings or events. All of a sudden we were converging on our own turf on foot and appreciating the many nuances of our environment, including strolling around the Camber appreciating life on the water.

We’ve now passed the 7th anniversary of the original application made in 2014 to have the established Right of Way around the Camber recorded on the Definitive Map. Since the application was resolved in February 2018 following our appeal to the Secretary of State— which directed Portsmouth City Council to raise an Order for a Restricted Byway—the process has been somewhat thwarted and stalled.

The exercise of reconstituting Portsmouth’s lost or missing Definitive Map and Statement took from December 2018, when the public was first told about it, until March 2021 when it was finally re-signed and re-sealed at Planning Committee. This exercise was used by the Council’s Legal Services as the reason for not proceeding with submission of the Order back to the Secretary of State for final confirmation, when all that was needed was the completion of a simple form.

For those who—understandably—find it difficult to keep track of this case... When the Order for a Restricted Byway was published by the Council in February 2019, the Council chose to object to it. The rules state that unless objections can be resolved locally by the Council, the case must be referred back to the Secretary of State (in practice the Planning Inspectorate), who will trigger a public inquiry to decide if confirmation of the Order should occur.

A ray of light emerged in March 2021 when we were informed that PCC Legal Services had formally requested assistance from Hampshire County Council (HCC) to progress the work of submitting the Order for confirmation and subsequent assistance with any Public Inquiry. All the necessary draft documentation was provided to Hampshire who duly submitted a quote for the costs of carrying out this work on Portsmouth City Council’s behalf. Thereafter, our understanding of PCC’s actions gets a bit woolly, until we were advised that PCC Legal Services had responded to HCC, stating that, due to changing resource levels, legal work was now to be kept in-house, but that PCC would require some expert Rights of Way input in order to take the case forward.

Over the Summer our local MP Stephen Morgan stepped in to help. He asked the Council’s Chief Executive for an explanation as to the lack of progress. A helpful response was obtained as follows: “Officers are in the process of instructing specialist Rights of Way officers from Hampshire County Council and a barrister to represent Portsmouth City Council at the Inquiry. As part of that process, the Council will give these advisors an opportunity to review documentation before applying to trigger the Inquiry process. To this end, the Council expects to apply to the Planning Inspectorate in November 2021.”

Concurrently, PCC’s Full Council meeting was abandoned in July owing to Covid concerns, so it was only when this meeting re-convened in October, that Ken Bailey had the opportunity to address Councillors and Officers with a question as to why no progress was apparent. Council Leader Gerald Vernon-Jackson relayed the news that HCC were not able to help in any way now, which might delay proceedings still further than the expected November submission. However he did give assurances to provide monthly updates on progress going forward.

It wasn’t until December 2021, that the Leader updated us with this statement from the Council: “The Council has received quotes from counsel for the inquiry work. The Transport Team have prepared a brief for a rights of way expert, and it is expected they will go to the market in the new year for quotes. Once the expert has been instructed and given a chance to view the materials for the inquiry the Order will be sent to PINS (along with those materials) to start the inquiry process. We aim to do this in the first quarter of 2022.”

The year ended with us knocking on the door of the Hampshire Countryside Access Forum, of which Portsmouth City Council is a member. At their December quarterly meeting near Winchester, we presented a deputation to a group of stakeholders, including the Ramblers Association, who we hope can help us clear a pathway ahead. Thank you again for your continuing support and encouragement to keep going!

...Always a Highway”

Ken Bailey and Anna Koor



Traffic

• **A fatality waiting to happen.** The FOOPA review for 2020 contained this stark prediction “Widespread speeding remains a threat to residents yet seems to be of little concern to the police or the Council - until someone is killed or seriously injured.” This year’s report is overshadowed by the sombre news of the death of OP resident and pedestrian Hildegard Emily Lowe killed by a hit-and-run driver in the early morning crossing the road in High Street by the Duke of Buckingham pub in the location where FOOPA and other concerned residents have been campaigning for over 8 years for a zebra crossing.

• **Shocking increase in pedestrian fatalities.** Between 2015 and 2017 six people (drivers, cyclists and pedestrians) died on Portsmouth’s roads. In the last 7 months seven pedestrians have been killed in Portsmouth after being hit by drivers or motorcyclists – a death rate six times higher. Is it an exaggeration to describe this as ‘carnage’? The responses of the authorities to date have been platitudes appealing for drivers to take more care. Unfortunately, those drivers who blatantly break exceed speed limits with no consideration for the safety of others are unlikely to heed - or even read - police and Council messages. The authorities’

weak responses so far need to be strengthened by action.

• **OPATS.** The long-overdue Old Portsmouth Area Traffic Study (OPATS) report has finally been published and approved by PCC. FOOPA gave extensive input and successfully challenged outdated and incorrect planning assumptions in PCC’s methods for assessing the need for pedestrian crossings and the need for speed reduction measures.

• **Illegal parking continues to blight Old Portsmouth.** Every day we see cars parked on double yellow lines (DYL) that increase road dangers by obstructing clear lines of sight at junctions, pavement parking (most prevalent during school runs) where drivers assume it is acceptable to break the law by driving onto footways and obstruct pedestrians, and drivers who assume they can park on shared access



Where to cross? Pavement parking and congestion on High Street

driveways and so force wheelchair users and parents with buggies off the pavement and into the road.

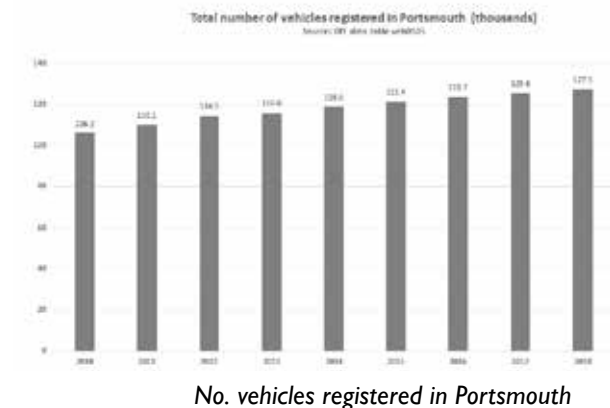
• **School Streets.** The School Streets initiative for St. Jude’s primary school operated for 8 weeks in the autumn and residents could see the short-term value of encouraging healthier active travel to school. We have yet to see the final report, and we hope that Sustrans and PCC will find a permanent solution that doesn’t depend on a cadre of volunteers.

• **PGS Deliveries.** Most school mornings Penny Street residents endure disturbance when a food delivery truck reverses up the narrow street to the Portsmouth Grammar School yard. The multiple nuisances of prolonged manoeuvring, excess diesel pollution and intrusive beeping of a reversing vehicle could be massively reduced if the school would allow the truck to drive forward into the yard and manoeuvre to drive out. Despite the welcome intervention of PCC Highways, PGS remains obdurate and won’t change its method of delivery to consider the detriment to its neighbours.

• **Need for highways enforcement officers.** Many of the traffic problems in OP could be countered if PCC was prepared to conduct

enforcement of road traffic regulations. PCC parking officers’ powers are limited to issuing parking fines. A solution would be to introduce highway enforcement officers who would have authority to deal with most traffic offences including pavement parking, illegal engine idling, pavement cycling and scooter riding. We understand that this suggestion has been made many times, not only by Portsmouth residents but also by PCC officers. Why PCC senior management have ignored this sensible measure has never been explained.

• **About 2000 more motor vehicles in Portsmouth every year.** The number of motor vehicles registered to individuals and businesses in Portsmouth increases relentlessly, averaging about 2000 more each year. PCC continues to ignore ‘the elephant in the room’ that Portsea Island remains the same size and can’t assimilate all these extra vehicles. The inconvenient truth is that the Council’s tolerance of this



unsustainable increase results in more congestion, more competition for on-street parking, more illegal parking, more air pollution, more driver frustration, more delays to increasingly expensive and infrequent public transport, more dangers for pedestrians and cyclists, and a disincentive for people to reduce car use and to walk or cycle instead.

• **Parking will get more difficult.** The shortage of parking spaces will get worse. PCC will never succeed in encouraging more walking and cycling and reducing dependence on the private motor car unless it can make active travel safer and more convenient. This requires making more space for walking and cycling. However, most proposals to create space for active travel are rejected because across the city, councillors are afraid of vociferous driver opposition to any reduction in parking spaces.

• **Clean Air Zone.** Despite PCC's objections, the government insisted that PCC create a Clean Air Zone. PCC has carefully designed a scheme that seeks to reduce the

city's illegally high air pollution to legal limits in the city centre but is ignoring the illegal levels of pollution elsewhere.

• **Bus services.** Bus services have always been under-utilised in Portsmouth. Covid and lockdowns made bus travel even less attractive. PCC deserves credit for maintaining the subsidy for these services. However, it is a nigh-insurmountable challenge to restore buses to being a mode of choice for many. The recent cuts to the government's 'Bus Back Better' programme threaten a further decline in public transport and increased reliance on private motoring – which is no use if one isn't capable of driving or doesn't own a car.

• **Long Distance Paths.** PCC remains ambivalent in its commitment to maintaining and improving long distance paths (LDPs) in the city. It is at least 10 years since PCC first made plans to complete the Shipwrights' Way <https://www.hants.gov.uk/thingstodo/countryside/>

Action in event of road traffic offences

A frequent justification given by the authorities for inaction is "We have had very few complaints". So.....

• If you see **blatant speeding**, try to note the registration number, vehicle make and colour (and for taxis and minicabs the licence

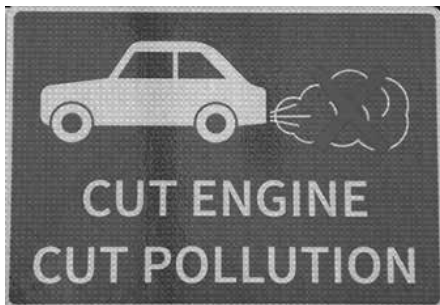


plate number) and report it to the Police by ringing 101 and email roadsafety@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

• If you see unsafe **parking on double yellow lines** (and check it's not a blue badge driver) complain to PCC Traffic Management Centre on 023 9268 8290 giving location and vehicle details.

• If you see dangerous and selfish **parking on the pavement then:**

* If it straddles double yellow lines, complain to PCC Traffic Management Centre on 023 9268 8290 giving location and vehicle details;

* If it is not on DYL but obstructs the pavement, report it to the Police by ringing 101 and email

roadsafety@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

• If you see **unnecessary engine idling** (check it is not a vehicle that needs to keep the engine running e.g. a refrigerated delivery van) note the make, VRN, location and circumstances (e.g. driver stopped whilst making a phone call, coach driver waiting for passengers), either

* email airquality@portsmouthcc.gov.uk or

* phone City Help Desk on 023 9283 4167

• If you see illegal pavement cycling report to the Police by ringing 101 and email roadsafety@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Mike Dobson, Traffic

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