

FRIENDS OF GOSPORT MUSEUM

NEWSLETTER

February 2004

March Public Lecture

Wednesday 10th March at 2.30 p.m.
in the Meeting Room at the Museum

"People and Places in Wessex"

an illustrated talk by *Kay Ainsworth*

Kay Ainsworth is the President of the Hampshire Field Club and Archaeology Society and Tutor of Archaeology for the Hampshire Museum Service.

She is the leading authority on the history and archaeology of Wessex from the Stone Age to Medieval times and we are extremely fortunate to have such an expert for our speaker.

Places in the Meeting Room are limited so **Please contact Reception at the Museum to reserve a place - Telephone 023 92 588035**

Gosport's 800th Anniversary of its Foundation in 1204

by *JOAN RUSSELL*

Mentioned in the November Newsletter and launched at the Christmas Party by the Mayor although at that time only proof copies were available due to various problems.

Problems have been overcome and Joan has taken the opportunity to make some alterations and to give the booklet an entirely new especially commissioned cover.

The booklet in its new format is to be launched on **5th March** by Gosport's **Member of Parliament, Peter Viggers.**

Copies will be available in the Museum and from local bookshops from the week beginning Monday 8th March.

Friends of Gosport Museum - Renewal Subscription

Enclosed with this Newsletter is a form for members to renew their membership for the year beginning on 1st April 2004. Those wishing to join the Friends for the first time can obtain "An Invitation to join the Friends of Gosport Museum" from the reception desk at the Museum.

Gosport to celebrate its 800 years

Anyone who read "The News" on Wednesday, February 11th will know that the Borough Council is backing plans to make this a real year of celebration. A date to book now is **Saturday 24th July** when there will be :-

- ♦ **Community Carnival.** A Carnival procession on foot by groups around the old town centre following as far as possible the line of the original fortifications.
- ♦ **Alive & Kicking.** Showcasing opportunity with demonstrations, workshops, performances and information stands representing all types of community activity to take place on **Walpole Park.**
- ♦ **Sports Event.** A sporting competition, senior and junior (male and female) based on the Superstars format from BBC TV.

Discover the Museum in Gosport Discovery Centre

by Oonagh Palmer - Curator, Gosport Museum

The purpose of this article is to explain how the Museum services will fit into the Gosport Discovery Centre when it opens in March 2005. The Gosport Discovery Centre will be unusual in that it will be a two site Discovery Centre, both originally libraries, one built in 1901, the other in the 1970s. I'm afraid I haven't really got any illustrations of the proposals at this time but I am sure you are all familiar with the spaces I will mention below.

The main Museum display will move from the current Museum building to a space in the current library on the mezzanine floor, just in front of where the Naval Collection is now. The proposed children's library is just below the proposed Museum space which is really important for us as the new museum display will be targeted at families and older residents.

I am sure all the Friends of Gosport Museum are well aware that the current 'Story of Gosport' display needs refurbishing and this is one way of achieving that aim. The new display, which will be aimed at families and older residents, will be very different from the old one because ideas and technology have moved on. We will use many of the objects from the old display apart from those which need to have some conservation work done. Any other objects not used will remain at Gosport where they can be easily available for temporary display or used to replace others to ring the changes. The design planning is focusing on how to make the displays as exciting and flexible as possible.

N.B.. I'll write about the proposals for the 'Museum on the Mezzanine' in the next Friends' Newsletter.

As well as the 'Museum on the Mezzanine', it is planned to have showcases of Museum objects linking in with library books. We are calling these showcases 'interventions' (I know, terrible word!) for the present. An example might be as follows:

A bookshelf of books on photography could be accompanied by a showcase of cameras, together with information about photography exhibitions, photography classes etc. This concept can work with a wide range of themes and it is proposed that these 'interventions' should change frequently.

What is happening to the current Museum building ?

We all love the building and it will be fully a part of the Discovery Centre as the 'Local Studies Centre'. Hampshire County Council Architects are working really hard to restore as much of the ground floor as possible to its original state - in my view, if all goes to plan, it will be beautiful.

The space which is currently occupied by 'Gosport Story' will house 8 or 9 People's Network computers, microfilm reader, microfiche, photocopier, together with Local Studies material from the current Library and Museum. Work is going on to digitise as much material, such as the photographic collections, as possible. Study tables and chairs will be in the centre of the room so that they can be easily arranged for groups if required.

The Museum collections - the ephemera, watercolours, illustrations etc - will be housed on the first floor in new accessible storage built in the current meetings room. As part of the design of this storage (which has been funded from external museum sources), there will be study facilities available by appointment.

The maps, an important part of any Local Studies collection, will be housed in the current Museum Coffee shop.

Geology is also an important part of Local Studies, particularly in Gosport, so a display will remain but it will be changed. The 'Time Machine' will be converted into a Geology Resources area, with a People's Network computer. Many people will be sad to see the 'Time Machine' go but it is, literally, surviving on borrowed time. It would cost £10,000 (or more) to replace when it finally 'dies'.

The reception area will be refurbished and a disabled friendly toilet installed. A sales point for local history publications will be located in the reception area.

The Gosport Gallery will be refurbished after its period of being a library and a full programme of exhibitions will resume in March 2005.

What about the role of the Friends of Gosport Museum ?

The Museum 'package' in the Discovery Centre is significant:

- Museum display and 'interventions' in the current library building
- Local Studies, Geology, and accessible storage in the current museum building
- Gosport Gallery

These are all the components of the current Museum but they will be delivered in a different, and I hope better, way as part of the Discovery Centre. There are still a lot of uncertainties but I don't think that the role of the Friends will be diminished in any way. Lectures can be held in the flexible spaces of the 'big building' (i.e.. current library) but committee meetings can still be held in the 'little building' (i.e.. current museum). The resources for Friends who want to do local history research will be better.

Certainly, I as Curator, am anticipating that the Friends will continue to provide support for the delivery of Museum services to Gosport.

What is happening in the Museum during the 'transition period' ?

Four People's Network computers will be installed in the coffee shop, together with other library resources. Depending on the space, we may be able to keep a residual coffee service going. The coffee shop walls have been left free for the Gosport Society's 'D-Day Exhibition (April 3rd - June 26th (*to be confirmed*)) and the Friends 'Gosport 800 Exhibition'.

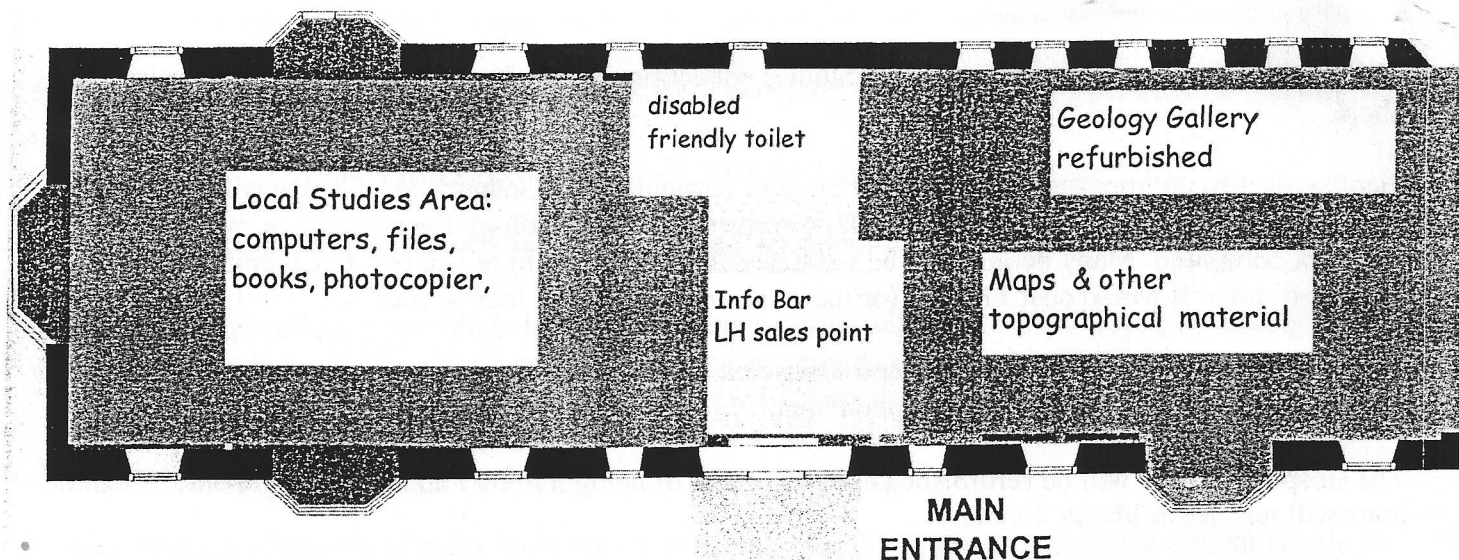
The Gosport Gallery is being used as a temporary library together with two Portacabins. There may be unanticipated difficulties but both library and museum staff will do their best to make it as bearable as possible. I think flexibility and cheerfulness may be the key words here !

We are not exactly sure yet when work on the Museum building will start, probably October/November, or may be earlier. The dismantling of the 'Gosport Story' exhibition will take some time so that has to be planned into the programme.

The Museum's meeting room won't be available after the end of March but Friends committee meetings will continue to be held in the coffee shop for the next few months.

If anyone has any concerns which they would like to discuss, please feel free to contact me.

Oonagh Palmer



**Friends of Gosport
Museum Committee**

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Assistant Hon. Sec.

Rosemarie Gibaud

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David Moore

Membership Secretary

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Mary Colyer

Mary Duly

Joan Symonds

Brenda Whiteley

**Plan of the proposed layout for the Ground Floor
of the present Museum building.**

New accessible store for museum collections will be on the first floor above the Local Studies area.

Message from the Chairman

Oonagh Palmer's very informative article about the changes which will take place with the opening next year of the Discovery Centre makes it clear that the Museum staff have a very challenging year ahead of them. I am sure she is right when she says " *I think flexibility and cheerfulness may be the key words here* " and I think *flexibility and cheerfulness* are going to be necessary attributes for Friends of the Museum as well.

Last month's Newsletter gave a list of Future Events which is as full - or rather fuller than ever with a Summer Social and the October talk being an "away fixture" for the first time. We are planning to have six Newsletters a year instead of just three and the occasional Newsflash, which we hope Members will enjoy.

How we can support the Museum in the future will become clearer next March once all the alterations have been completed. In the meantime perhaps the best support we can give is to the Museum staff who will no doubt have to face some trying times in the year ahead.

Bob Whiteley

**Please send contributions for the Newsletter
to Bob Whiteley, the Newsletter Editor
c/o Gosport Museum, Walpole Road, Gosport,
Hampshire PO12 1NS**

The views expressed are not necessarily those of
the Hampshire CC Museums Service or its staff

**Membership of the Friends of Gosport
Museum is open to all - Please enquire
at the Museum reception desk or ask any
Committee member.**

**This Newsletter was printed and produced
at Gosport Museum.**