



FOUNDED IN 1924

View from Poole

The Society for Poole: promoting Poole; its history, culture and people



WINTER 2018

www.societyforpoole.org



The Society for Poole



@SocietyforPoole



SocietyforPoole

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Chairman's Note

As the evenings again draw in and the days are short we tend not to venture out quite so much, nevertheless the winter period is one where the foundations of the autumn and summer are laid. To this end the Executive team are trying hard to pull together exhibitions and events which will continue to support and promote the town.



Jan Marsh has been working with Andrew Hawkes to bring forward the blue plaque we hope to be able to locate at the entrance of Poole Hospital. The plaque will be dedicated to Lady Cornelia Guest who established the hospital on the Longfleet site back in 1907. Meanwhile we are looking to other locations and would welcome suggestions.

There are other issues which I know have motivated many of our members to raise their heads above the parapet. The merger of the local authorities of Poole, Bournemouth and Christchurch has been rumbling on for many months even years but has now got approval which will see a great administrative change for us. But now that the decision has been made, it is for us to maintain the identity of Poole, to keep our traditions and heritage alive and to support and promote the town.

Poole Park has also been in the news with the withdrawal of the train service over the summer, however we have a fabulous Park and I thought it a good time to remind ourselves in this View from Poole magazine about its origins and how important it has been and remains to the town. There is also a story in this magazine of saving lives at sea, something which has been synonymous with Poole for hundreds of years. I hope you enjoy them.

Meanwhile the Society continues to invite you, our members, and guests to our monthly talks about Poole and its surrounds. We don't always get it right but we hope that they are enjoyable, informative and a chance to get together. We will also invite our members to join Gordon Brown and friends on coach tours and to attend our Christmas event on December 12th, the Christmas event last year was a great success and this year will be even better! Indeed at the time of writing this we have well over 60 people booked to attend our annual lunch which is very pleasing as I hope everyone enjoys our get togethers.

As ever we are limited in what we can do without your support. Our Executive is short of members and so the burden of "doing" falls to a few. I hope that with your support we can do more and that the few becomes a few more. This help can be to assist in distributing this magazine as well as attending events, bringing forward ideas and projects themselves.

Meanwhile I hope you continue to enjoy this magazine, our talks and events. If you want to drop me a line with ideas and comments, please feel free to do so as any correspondence will be most welcome.

Mike Pearce
Chairman
chairman@societyforpoole.org

The Society for Poole

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VIEW FROM POOLE DISTRIBUTION

Jan Marsh
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Executive meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month at The Royal British Legion, North Road, Poole. Dates of meetings can be found on page 18.

A walk in the park

Jenny Oliver

In 1990, the late Lord Wimborne and his wife, Lady Venetia, came to Poole to unveil a Victorian style fountain which he had donated to Poole Park to mark its 100th anniversary. Lord and Lady Wimborne arrived in a horse-drawn carriage, the Mayor, Sheriff, and Town Clerk by limousine, and a ceremony with speeches took place in front of a flower bed where the fountain was to stand until it could be properly installed. Later the fountain was provided with an elegant pool, surrounded by flower planters and approached by a flight of steps guarded by lions.



Right to left: Ian Andrews, Town Clerk, Mayor Ann Stribley, Lord Wimborne, Sheriff Doreen Bugo and Lady Venetia

built across the bay, cutting it off from the open sea. This left what was described as 'a few marshy meadows over which a precarious footpath wound its devious way'. The Corporation acquired some more land in the area and planning began.



East Lodge and entrance with fields beyond

The chosen design was produced in house by the Borough Surveyor, John Elford and others in his department. One of the main features of the 109 acre park was the salt water lake, covering 58 acres. There were also two smaller fresh water

lakes, a carriage drive from one end of the park to the other and a network of footpaths. The carriage entrances were provided with brick pillars decorated with terracotta plaques, eagles and lamp standards. There were two lodge houses, a single story one at the eastern entrance, (known as Holly Bush Corner) and a two storey one at the Seldown entrance with a stable, store, greenhouses and cart shed. Both lodges contained waiting rooms for ladies.



Other facilities were the cricket pavilion and pitch encircled by a bicycle track, a bandstand, six tennis courts, five urinals, two drinking fountains, benches and a shelter on the mound near the Seldown entrance. An open-air swimming pool was planned near the railway line. Trees and shrubs, including the horse chestnuts alongside the main drive, were supplied by local nurserymen, J.K. Ingram and D. Stewart. At the south east corner, a brick tunnel, the 'keyhole bridge' was provided under the railway line in

co-operation with the railway company. The whole park was enclosed by 'unclimbable' iron railings.



The opening of the park was performed by the Prince of Wales on 18th January 1890 but due to a storm which had wrecked the special pavilion, this turned out to be rather an anti-climax. After a carriage procession through the park and the streets, the ceremony was performed in the station booking office as the Prince departed. Nevertheless, the park was now officially open and could start to play its part in the life of the town. It quickly proved its value as a resource for Sunday strolls, sports and games, boating, feeding the ducks, picnics and public celebrations. Previously, occasions of national importance had been celebrated in the cramped streets of the old town. The defeat of Napoleon, for instance, was marked with a dinner for 5,000 people in Market Street and adjoining streets. Now the park provided the perfect venue for such festivities.

The Poole Town Band

Only seven years after the park's opening, the nation celebrated Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee. A procession three-quarters of a mile long, described as 'the best ever seen in Poole', wound through the street to the park, where a gun salute was fired by the Reserve Forces and the Volunteer Band played the national anthem. A dinner was then held for 3,000 'aged poor'



(who had to be over 60) in a marquee on the tennis court. The children's procession also finished up in the park where they sang 'Victoria Our Queen' and a verse of the national anthem before sitting down to tea and bread and butter. Seating for the 3,000 or so children was improvised from 5,000 foot of timber supplied by the Poole Baltic and Quebec Timber company. The afternoon was reserved for sports and races, including donkey, wheelbarrow, and three-legged races, tilting the bucket and climbing the greasy pole besides more regular competitions. In the evening the park was illuminated with lamps and fairy lights conveying suitably patriotic slogans. The festivities concluded with a magnificent display of fireworks representing a full scale naval battle. During the course of the day it was estimated that there were between 20,000 and 25,000 people in the park.



Poole Carnival 1914

Another royal celebration was held in 1911 for the coronation of King George V. Ernest Bristowe remembered assembling with

other school children 'near to the summer house at the Seldown end of Poole Park, standing in rows in the rain to hear the mayor speak. Unfortunately, I was so far away that I had no idea what he said.' The park had become the obvious venue for such mass public events, but it was also an established part of everyday recreation. New facilities were added such as a refreshment house near the cricket pitch and an aviary. Sports days were held there and the Poole Carnival procession with its decorated floats ended up there after weaving its way through the streets.



After the First World War, a new dimension was added to the function of the park when the war memorial was built beside the salt water lake within a specially designed garden. After much debate about the form of memorial the final slender cross of brick and Purbeck stone was designed by J. S. Allner and unveiled on 16th October, 1927 in front of a crowd estimated at about 10,000. Annual memorial services have been held there ever since and in 2014, an event with images, prayers, poetry and music was held to commemorate the centenary of the outbreak

of war. It was also the chosen location for flowers following the death of Princess Diana.



Dragon's tooth

During the World War II, the park was selected as the site for a large air raid shelter for 1,000 people and anti-aircraft gun pits were dug there. Some damage was caused when a bomb landed near the swimming pool, failed to explode and had to be detonated where it landed. Another casualty was the rustic bridge between the fresh water lakes which was destroyed by a bomb which also killed two ducks. A few days later, Lord Haw Haw claimed that the Luftwaffe had inflicted serious damage to installations around Poole Harbour. The most dramatic change on the park produced by the war was perhaps the removal of the railings for scrap iron in 1942. Today, one of the few remaining signs of wartime is the solitary 'dragon's tooth' anti-tank barrier perched on the railway embankment near the keyhole bridge, part of Poole's defences of 1943.



Railway and Swan Lake Café

The post-war corporation was keen to develop Poole as a tourist

centre and so welcomed the offer of George Vimpany and Southern Miniature Railways Ltd. to set up a miniature railway in Poole. The park was chosen as the best location and the railway was opened on 9th April 1949 with the steam locomotive 'Vanguard' which George Vimpany had largely built himself. The attraction was a great success right from the start with long queues forming to take a ride. In the 1970s it converted to a motor driven locomotive in keeping with the times and is now not far off its 70th anniversary.



1952 Poole Pageant

In 1952, the park was the venue for the Poole Pageant celebrating the town's long history. The script was written by the historian H. P. Smith and local writer Margaret Scott and a large number of local people took part, including council members. The following year was Queen Elizabeth's coronation, celebrated with a procession, sports, entertainments and dancing in the park culminating in a torch-light procession and firework display, a sign that life was returning to normal. As prosperity returned the

Edwardian tea-rooms were replaced by the modern Swan Lake café, run initially by Anthony Forte. Fresh generations of locals and visitors flocked to the park to enjoy its attractions, natural and man-made.



Weed busting on the lake

The park has had problems over the years. A zoo was set up in 1963, incorporating the old aviary, attracting many visitors but also complaints. It finally closed in 1994 after a rather sad history of protest. Not surprisingly with such a marshy site the drainage in the park has always been difficult and modern planners are still trying to find a solution. The shallowness of the salt water lake seems to attract unwanted and hard to shift flora and fauna from mosquitoes to poisonous algae and clogging weed. One of the saddest events was the destruction of trees in the hurricane of 1987.



An exotic visitor

Having been fortunate to live near the park, I have visited

it in all seasons for all sorts of purposes. I have tried to list all the things I have done there with friends and visitors over the years but as I keep thinking of more, the following is not a complete list: boating, children's playground, crazy golf, eating ice cream and meals, looking at birds, flowers and trees (including a tree trail), memorial services, photography, picnicking, riding on the miniature railway, using the sports apparatus, walking (including health walks), watching Boo Bamboo, bowls, concerts (including the BSO concert for the centenary), cricket, dragon boats, fairs, fireworks, ice skating, majorettes, marathons, model yachts, tennis, zorbing . . . One of my favourite activities is 'visiting' different trees at different times of the year (eccentric but harmless) and some of the most memorable events I remember are the World War I commemoration at the war memorial and the BSO concert for the park's centenary.



In the 126 years of its existence, Poole Park has been a fantastic resource to the town. I'd love to know what you like best about the park and if you have a special experience of it to share.

Planning issues addressed this year

Thanks to all our Members who prompted the above. We could not have managed without such assistance whether directly or via the General Executive Committee. It now seems helpful, as the year comes to its end, to outline for you some of the matters that we have addressed on your behalf, as follows :-

1: The Borough received 1545 formal planning applications which were considered by us and which required 108 comments to be made for the benefit of the relevant Councillors. Our comments tried to be supportive when possible but some had to be strong objections. In particular we objected to inappropriate changes to three hotels at Sandbanks and objected to the undesirable bias towards proposals that inhibited the evolution of balanced communities such as accommodation for the over 55s only.

2: We commented on the proposed Local Plan for Poole (that is expected to be relevant for a generation) and will shortly examine the recent Planning Inspectors report that has an extensive appendix of detailed modifications which may have responded to our comments.

3: We have responded to various Borough consultations – eg Town

Centre North (including the bus station), the Harbourside park areas, Branksome Chine and the museum project.

4: We have expressed concern to the Local Government Boundaries Commission for England over aspects of the originally proposed ward changes.

5: We have noted the governmental initiatives for a “25 year Environment Plan” and plans for a “Civil Society Strategy” and await relevant details since they should affect our evolving local democracy as well as the plans of Poole’s two Neighbourhood Forums.

6: We have sought to contribute to the Raynsford Review, the National Infrastructure Commission and the evolution of the National Planning Policy Framework produced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government : all matters affecting planning in Poole.

7: We have sought to understand how local government reforms will deal with the ‘democratic deficit’ created by the loss of so many Councillors elected to represent the inhabitants of Poole. Relevant details are not yet available to us and will be appreciated as soon as may be possible. In the meantime our Society has publicly expressed the wish to see obvious signs of accessible local participation along the lines of Parish Councils that are to be kept / afforded across rural Dorset and in Christchurch.

8: We have expressed concern to Network Rail over the low standard of maintenance of the High Street railway crossing and adjacent footbridge and advised the Borough of their disappointing response.

9: We have advised our General Executive Committee of our concerns for local infrastructure services and facilities associated with plans for Poole hospital and the wider

campaign across Dorset and they have ensured that relevant initial information has been provided to our Members. It is noted that concerns still exist.

10: We are represented on the Borough’s Community Working Group and continue to foster ‘bridges of understanding’ with all community groups interested in the welfare and progress of Poole.

If at all possible, I look forward to further prompts / queries from Members next year, to ensure that our Society does assist our various elected decision-makers as they consider how best to plan the future of our conurbation of which Poole is such a significant part. Such action should help ensure the welfare and progress of Poole as a valuable and respected partner in our region.

Gerald Rigler :
Planning Sub-Committee
Chairman (2018/19) :
gerald.rigler@gmail.com



SHOWTIME



Society for Poole Christmas Show 2018

Wednesday 12 December, 7.30pm
Royal British Legion, 66 North Rd. Parkstone BH14 0LY

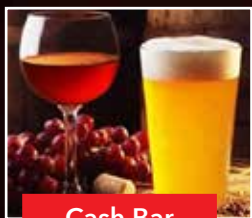
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Tel: 01202 742049

email: gordonharrybrown@hotmail.com



The Society for Poole

(Founded as the Society of Poole Men in 1924)

<http://societyforpoole.org>

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/TheSocietyForPoole/>

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Atlantic Rescue

Jenny Oliver

In the winter of 1822, storms and heavy gales out at sea took their toll of shipping and many losses were reported in the press.

The brig **Lester of Poole** had set sail for Newfoundland on 11th October and had reached longitude 38.00 (well over half way in her voyage) when she encountered heavy gales and tremendous seas. For several days she continued beating to windward until 17th November when she sprung her bowsprit and split the sails. The master John Lander decided that there was no alternative but to turn back to Poole.



Another ship embarking on a north Atlantic voyage was the brig **Mary Ann** of Aberdeen which set sail from Quebec on 4th November bound for London. On Saturday 23rd November, the vessel met a severe gale and struggled on under reefed sails. Around 5 o'clock in the evening, the wildly veering ship was hit by a tremendous wave which carried away the main mast and swept

her decks of 'boats, bulwarks and every thing standing'. Captain Moore who had been at the helm was also swept overboard and drowned. Desperately clearing away the wreckage of the mast, the crew discovered that the decks were damaged and the ship was half full of water. Pumping made no impression and within an hour the vessel was totally water-logged.

The following day the situation worsened as the decks broke up and the cargo, which was mainly staves, began to wash out of the hold. By now the decks were below the surface and the mate, eleven seamen and a boy called Davidson made for the foretop, their only possible refuge. In the process, the boy was swept away and lost but the others succeeded in reaching temporary safety. Their situation however was dire. They had no water and only a few biscuits, enough for half a biscuit each for a couple of days. By Wednesday 27th November, after three days and nights, they had run out of food and just about any hope of rescue. It was then that they were spotted by the **Lester** on its homeward course.

The hull of the **Mary Ann** was totally submerged and it was something of a miracle that the crew of the **Lester** chanced to see her remaining mast sticking out of the water. As they sailed closer they could see the survivors still clinging on. Captain Lander resolved to save them if he could, and set about what must have been a most perilous rescue mission, given the hazardous motion of the water-logged vessel in the heavy seas and the damage already suffered by the **Lester**. Somehow, all twelve men were helped from the mast and transferred to the Poole ship where 'every assistance and comfort was given them'.

The **Lester** reached Poole on 1st December bringing the news of the wreck and recovery. Their arrival happened to coincide with the launch in Poole of the Sailors' Union Bethel Society, an organisation founded by the Rev. George Charles Smith, known as Bo'sun Smith. Its aim was to provide religious services and spiritual support for seamen in port. Locally the Society had the



support of the Independent and Baptist churches and it was in the Baptist Chapel that the first service was held on Wednesday 4th December before a gratifyingly large congregation which included the surviving crew of the **Mary Ann**. During the service the Aberdeen men send a written paper to the minister asking for a public thanksgiving for their deliverance 'in a period of the most desperate peril'.

Later, the Poole Bethel Society gave an award of humanity to Captain Lander and his crew and the owners of the **Mary Ann**, John Catto, Son and Co. of Aberdeen, sent 20 guineas to be divided amongst them for their exertions 'to snatch these poor fellows from the billows which threatened every moment to overwhelm them'.

A silver cup was also sent to Captain Lander from the owners, engraved with the following inscription:



A Tribute from the OWNERS of the BRIG MARY ANN of Aberdeen TO CAPTN JOHN LANDER of the LESTER of POOLE as a testimony of their regard for his Humane & Meritorious exertions in saving from the foretop of the wreck of the Mary Ann in the Atlantic TWELVE OF HER UNFORTUNATE CREW on the 27th November 1822'.

John Lander continued sailing from Poole as a master mariner and eventually became Harbour Master. His death in 1854 at the age of 68 was reported in the Poole and Dorset Herald for 15th June of that year. The same issue also contained an account of the wreck of the Aldebaran of Poole on a voyage to Quebec with the loss of seven men, another reminder of the perilous lives of seamen in the age of sailing ships.

Main sources - Salisbury and Winchester Journal 9th Dec 1822, 27th Jan 1823, Bell's Weekly Messenger 8th Dec 1822, Sunday Times 15th Dec 1822, Poole and Dorset Herald 15th June 1854.

Tourism and the Change of focus

Mike Pearce

Poole continues to change however the organisational change which is due to happen next year will move us into uncharted territory.



Nobody really knows the full impact of the merger of the unitary authorities or the direction that the new chief Executive will take the conurbation however we hope that the promised significant savings that do actually transpire (*so we are told and indeed must happen as a major justification of the change*). Indeed, the doom and gloom about Poole and Bournemouth's already merger services appears to have been unfounded, the quality of our beaches continues to be high and Poole may in fact benefit from the clear skills and knowledge of the tourist team

now based in Bournemouth but it is still early days.

Change will nevertheless happen. Our Councillors will have to argue in a larger chamber for specific benefits and resources. They will have to overcome other priorities within the area to prove the benefit of any investment in Poole. It is hoped that our Councillors are of the quality to win such arguments, to be able to present the case for Poole and not to be overridden.

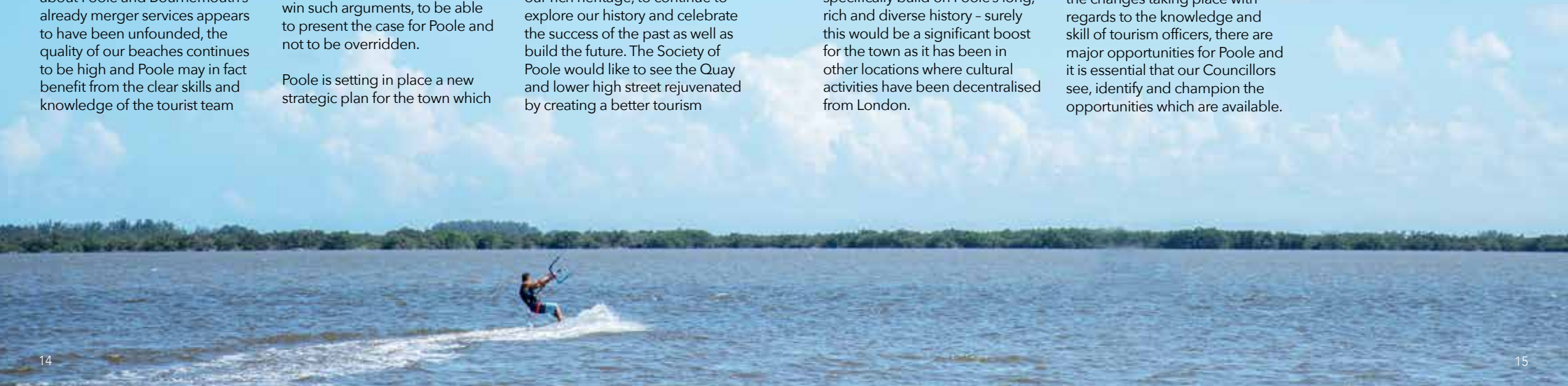
Poole is setting in place a new strategic plan for the town which

should carry us forward and our ability to manufacture will continue to grow as our key employers such as Sunseekers and Lush continue to recruit new staff. It is nevertheless concerning that resources around or heritage and indeed tourism could potentially be diverted. It is incumbent upon all of us in Poole to retain and build on our rich heritage, to continue to explore our history and celebrate the success of the past as well as build the future. The Society of Poole would like to see the Quay and lower high street rejuvenated by creating a better tourism

offering, by potentially expanding our museum and potentially to secure elements of the British Museum to be located within the Poole Centre North scheme. Yes this would reduce the office and residential element of the proposal which would provide immediate financial returns but it could create a long term destination for the town and specifically build on Poole's long, rich and diverse history – surely this would be a significant boost for the town as it has been in other locations where cultural activities have been decentralised from London.

We should also not forget other elements of tourism, our fantastic harbour and the watersport attractions which draw people to the town. On a bright day it is clear from the number of yachts and indeed sailing clubs in the harbour that the boat industry is significant. We also have one of the best windsurf and kitesurf locations in Whitely Bay at the bottom of Evening Hill yet this obvious attraction, which features on many of the Poole logos, is totally ignored by our tourist departments. There are no facilities or even toilets available yet on a blustery day over 100 kites and board can be seen ploughing up the waves and people arrive from over 100 miles away.

So whilst there are many items of change on the horizon and Poole can indeed benefit from the changes taking place with regards to the knowledge and skill of tourism officers, there are major opportunities for Poole and it is essential that our Councillors see, identify and champion the opportunities which are available.





The Society for Poole

Promoting Poole; its history, culture and people

Poole Shipping

A talk by John Smith

January 15 2019 7:15 for 7:30pm
Members £3 Guest £4.00 pay on the door



Charles Rolls Memorial Trust

A talk by Stephen Robson about Charles Rolls and Bournemouth's first International Aviation Meeting in 1910, where Rolls, co-founder of Rolls-Royce Ltd met with a fatal crash.

February 19 2019 7:15 for 7:30pm
Members £3 Guest £4.00 pay on the door



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Sandbanks

A talk by Frank Henson

March 19 2019 7:15 for 7:30pm
Members £3 Guest £4.00 pay on the door



Poole's Air Raids WW2

A talk by David Warhurst

May 21 2019 7:15 for 7:30pm
Members £3 Guest £4.00 pay on the door



Dates for your Diary

12th December
Christmas Extravaganza

15th January 2019
Talk on Poole Shipping
By John Smith

19 February 2019
Society for Poole
Talk on Charles Rolls
By Stephen Robson

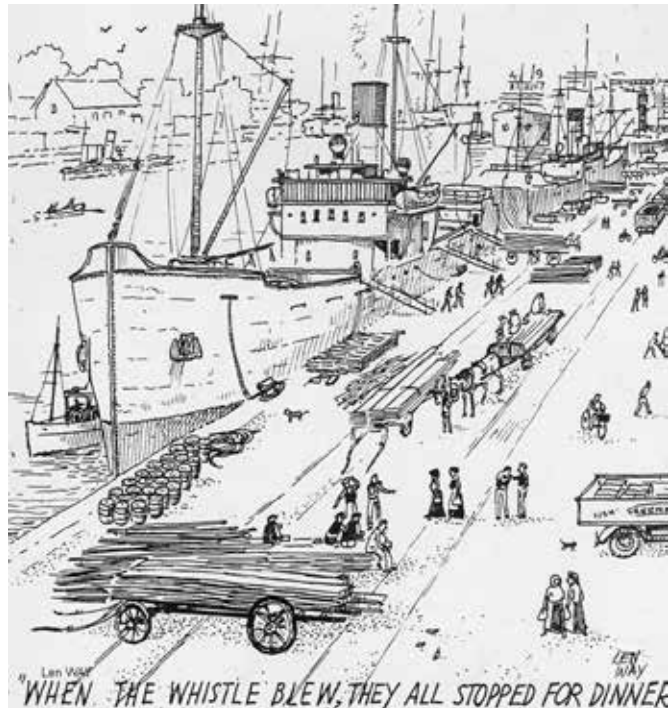
19 March 2019
Talk on Sandbanks
By Frank Henson

16 April
AGM

21 May 2019
Talk on Poole's Air Raids WW2
David Wadhurst

All members are invited to attend as guests at the Executive meetings held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7pm at the British Legion Hall in North Road.
NOTE

All talks are held at The Royal British Legion Club, 66 North Road, Poole, BH14 0LY. Entry is £3.00 for members and £4 for guests



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