



FOUNDED IN 1924

View from Poole

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



AUTUMN 2019

www.societyforpoole.org



The Society for Poole



@SocietyforPoole



SocietyforPoole

TAPPER FUNERAL SERVICE

A fresh approach to funerals



Our independent family business was established in Poole in 1904. We now have funeral homes throughout East Dorset and West Hampshire.

We provide traditional and woodland burial or cremation and are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In 2017, we were proud to open a spectacular new crematorium, based at Harbour View, our woodland burial ground overlooking Poole Harbour and the Purbeck Hills.

We also provide prepaid funeral plans, tailored to your requirements, and can assist with memorials and floristry.

TAPPER FUNERAL SERVICE

32-34 Parkstone Road, Poole BH15 2PG

Chairman's Note

Thank you for everyone who attended our Poole Quay events this summer. We gained more new members and spread the word about the Society with particular interest in our new Blue Plaque for Poole Hospital and in the old images of Poole on our display boards. I was also really pleased that the Poole Flag Trust, with whom we shared the space, was very successful selling the flags of our town so I hope we will see more flying from boats and buildings in and around Poole.

It seems that the BCP Council is now up and running. I consider the jury remains out on its effectiveness however the opening of toilets in Poole is a first indication that priorities may change slightly. Of great disappointment was the lack of celebration and promotion by the BCP tourism office of the role of Poole in the D Day landings. Whilst veterans of the event visited Poole and were welcomed by the Marines, many more people would have liked to have joined them and recognised the contribution they and the town made to the day. We hope to promote an event in Poole, by working with the Museum, Royal British Legion and others to make sure that Poole has an exhibition next Spring/Summer to celebrate VE/VJ day. Meanwhile there is a celebration of the Battle of Britain at St James church on September 8th, which is being promoted by the Royal Airforce Association. I hope people can attend with the Society.

Despite our best efforts Bournemouth & Poole College have withdrawn from our "then and now" photographic initiative. As such we will look



to see if we can work with local photographic clubs. If anyone is a member of one please let me know.

We continue with our talks however unfortunately a mix up with dates meant that the Cornelia Hospital talk was missed by some people. We tried through emails and Facebook to let everyone know but if we couldn't get through to you please accept our apologies! Other talks this period have been very well received but we are always looking for new speakers and topics.

Finally, it is our annual lunch on the 27th November. Last year we had 65 people attending and had a lovely meal at the Thistle Hotel. We plan to return this year and hope we can welcome more people; please return the slip in this edition of View from Poole and book your place and select your meal options. I look forward to seeing everyone at this enjoyable event.

Mike Pearce
Chairman
chairman@societyforpoole.org

The Society for Poole

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VIEW FROM POOLE DISTRIBUTION

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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/talks can be found on page 18.

MEMORIES OF POOLE DURING WORLD WAR II

by John Marsh

When Mr Chamberlain announced on Sunday 3rd September 1939 at 11am that we had declared war on Germany we were all a bit numb and did not really know what to expect. Mum started to make black-out curtains and Dad and I checked our gas masks that we had been issued with some time previous.

My 13th birthday was just after the start of the war and Henry Harbin school had just opened. The headmaster was H P Smith. For some time before war was declared the senior boys from South Road were at the new school helping to get it ready to go into use and then 3-4 days before 3rd September loads of tinned foods such as corned beef and beans and chocolate bars were delivered and we were told that 4000 evacuees were coming to Poole from London and Southampton. The last train had arrived in Poole on 2nd September. The school was a dispersal point and the boys had to fill carrier bags with the rations and hand them to families as they passed through the school.

Bombs dropped across Poole

Nothing very exciting happened for some months other than air raid warnings when nothing happened, and we would file out of school to the shelters that had been dug in the playing fields. On 21st August 1940 my sister, Sylvia and I were at home in East Street when the air raid warning went, and I stood at the back door looking across South Road to see a Junkers 88 flying

low and two things fall from the plane – bombs or parachutists? I grabbed my sister and dived into the cupboard under the stairs – they were bombs alright! Screaming bombs! The first fell on the playground of Lagland Street Infants School which was at the bottom of our garden. It hit an air raid shelter and blew it to pieces – the noise is indescribable, when the sound of glass and bricks subsided, we emerged from the cupboard to find all the windows in the house gone and most of the slates off the roof. The rest of the bombs had dropped across old Poole and luckily not many were hurt although Mr Landrey, one of our neighbours in South Road was killed. The second bomb landed on Fifty Shilling Tailors in High Street.

Junkers 88 bomber crashed in Herbert Avenue.

On another occasion [Nov 1940] at about 9.15am I was just getting ready for school when we heard machine guns, we rushed out into the garden to see a Junkers 88 bomber in a shallow dive with an engine on fire. It crashed into the garage at the end of Herbert Avenue. Parts of the plane also

landed on Stainer's shoe shop (which was still in business on Ringwood Road until quite recently). Some of the crew bailed out and I remember two were killed when their parachutes failed to open. I left school at 14 years and went to work at J R Woods. As shipping agents, we had convoys of ships coming in with coal for the Gas Works on the Quay. They usually came in about 4 ships at a time and if we looked towards Sandbanks and there were only 2 ships 10-1 that the other 2 had been sunk. I remember coal carrier Pitwines coming in with all the superstructure around the hold twisted and bent, a bomb had gone into the hold but the coal in the hold had deadened the explosion and she limped into Poole OK.

Fire watch duty

It was compulsory to do a fire watch duty at your place of work and our fire watching was shared between Cement Marketing Company, the Harbour Board and J R Woods. We used to spend the night in the small harbour office on New Quay and one night a German plane was flying up and down the harbour

firing its machine guns and it dropped a bomb on "Maia", a British Airways flying boat. This was the bottom half of a "pick a back outfit" that carried a seaplane "Mercury" on top. It was used for long distance mail hauls. The bomb sank the aircraft killing the night watchman on board. Meanwhile the gunners on a small Norwegian ship, "Mari" that had brought coal to J R Woods managed to shoot it down. It crashed within 100 yards of the flying boat that it had bombed. They brought the survivors up to the Quay and as I remember they did not look much older than myself.

I decided we ought to help the war effort.

My friends and I decided we ought to help the war effort in some way, so we joined the National Fire Service as Messenger Boys. Most of the boys were in the Sea Scouts and at that time there was a hall in West Shore Road called Edith Lyle Hall. We made this the messenger HQ and each



night there were about 6-8 boys on duty there and if any of the local fire stations required messengers, we would get a call and away we would go on our push bikes. On 25th September John Jones and I were on duty at the Hermitage at Constitution Hill where we had an observation tower and with the equipment, we could plot any fire quickly and phone the nearest fire station with an accurate location. On this night we saw a plane going down on fire and our calculation

said somewhere in Branksome Park. We were congratulated on being within 100 yards of the crash site - Underwood, Westminster Road. It was a Dornier bomber, 4 of the crew died and one was captured. The dead were buried in Parkstone Cemetery

Firebomb raid on Poole

On Wednesday 4th June 1942 there was a firebomb raid on Poole. I had to go to Hamworthy Fire Station which was in Harbour Road. As I went down to the bottom of the High Street, just before you get to Scaplen's Court there was a ship's chandler and a firebomb had set it alight and as I went by the heat almost knocked me off my bike. You could hear the windows cracking in the Antelope Hotel opposite. As I rode along the Quay, I saw that Bolson's shipyard was well alight. I went around the Quay near the bridge where sailors were getting off a ship called "Sona", a time bomb had gone right through the ship and 3 nights later the bomb exploded blowing the ship to bits and badly damaging the quayside. I arrived at Hamworthy Fire Station where the Station Officer was one Harry Coward. He asked me if I knew how

NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE
CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

Name (in full) MARSH John Michael Alfred
National Fire Service No. 530620 Date of discharge May 3rd, 1945
Rank on discharge Part-time Messenger
Cause of discharge Reduction in Establishment

	WITH LOCAL AUTHORITY FIRE BRIGADE	WITH NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE
WHOLE-TIME SERVICE	from _____ to _____	from _____ to _____
PART-TIME SERVICE	from <u>20. 2. 40.</u> to <u>17. 8. 41.</u>	from <u>18. 8. 41.</u> to <u>3. 5. 45.</u>

November 24th 1945. Ant. Brown Fire Force Commander.

to handle fire pumps. When I said yes, he said, "come with me" and away we went to the Shipwright's Arms. On the way we met someone who told us that the man lying in the road was Mr Pittwood who was fire watching at Bolson's, he had been hit in the chest by an explosive incendiary bomb and died later that day in Cornelia Hospital. When we got to the waterside at the Shipwrights there were 3 pumps each manned by a fireman. Harry said, "there you are John, I need these 3 chaps, you keep the pumps going" and then he was gone! There I was on my own with the shipyard burning and not another person did I see until daylight broke about 5.30am when the fire had subsided. During the night I thought I had heard a big splash in the slipway but no explosion. They informed Jake Bolson that there may be a time bomb in the slipway – he arrived and immediately picked up a long length of wood and started poking about rather

furiously in the water shouting "There's no bloody bomb here", we all ran very quickly away from the area I can tell you! Another time I had gone across to the ship that we had in at Poole Gas Works in our little outboard dinghy. As I was returning a Catalina flying boat burst into flames as it touched down on the water, rescue boats rushed but could only save 3 of the crew who were all badly burned.

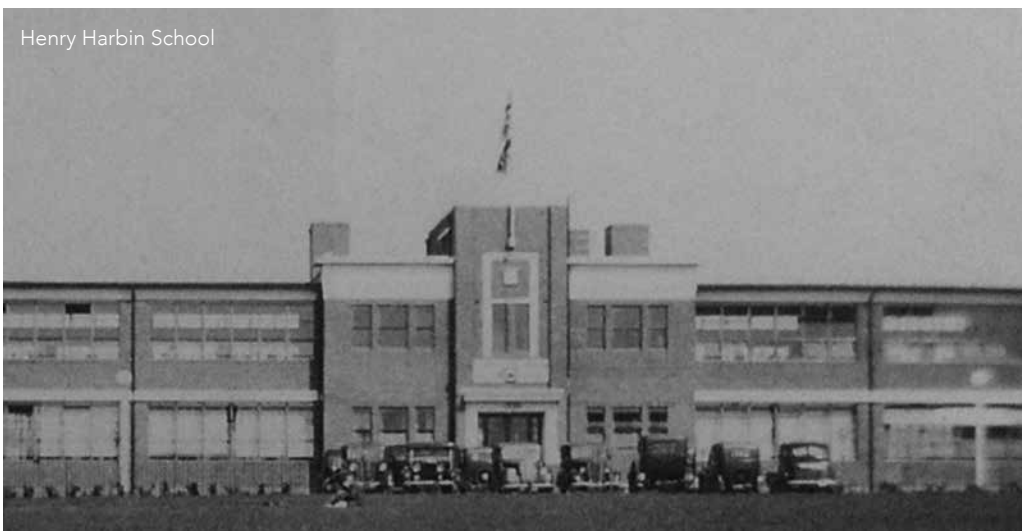
The Second Front

As the months went by it was getting near time for the Second Front. The harbour was full of landing craft and the US Coastguard boats. By tis time we had moved to Hamworthy to live on the corner of Blandford Road and Ashmore Avenue. From there we could see for days tanks and all kinds of military vehicles going down to Hamworthy Park to be loaded on to landing craft. On the night of 5th June 1944, I was doing my fire watch duty on New

"Jake Bolson arrived and immediately picked up a long length of wood and started poking about rather furiously in the water shouting "There's no bloody bomb here", we all ran very quickly away from the area I can tell you!"

Quay with 2 more chaps. We woke at about 5am with the sound of planes and when we went to the Quay there was a sight we will never see again, looking east and west as far as you could see either way were planes – fighters, bombers, Dakotas towing gliders, every type pf war plane you could think of was there. They came back later in the morning and then there were more on the way out. The other thing that looked strange was that after seeing so many ships in the harbour – now it was empty!

Henry Harbin School



VE/VJ EXHIBITION 2020

The Society for Poole is aiming to bring together an exhibition to celebrate the role Poole took during WW2.

We aim to work with Poole Museum, the armed forces, ex-service organisations and other interested parties to collate pictures and stories of activities in and around Poole. If anyone is able to contribute to the exhibition by providing pictures or written stories,

please let the Society know by emailing the Chairman Mike Pearce or President Andrew Hawkes.

To get this off the ground will require a great deal of assistance in a short period of time as we aim to display the stories next spring. We look forward to updating everyone as things progress.

Mike Pearce
Chairman



The Society for Poole on Poole Quay

During the summer the Society attended both the Poole Maritime Festival and Harry Paye Day. We shared our gazebo with the Poole Flag Trust and had 2 weekends talking to visitors, distributing our magazine and displaying more images of Poole from days gone by.

Of particular interest was the new Blue Plaque which will be placed at the entrance of the

hospital on the 12th September and the excitement which occurred when a small boy fell into the harbour and had to be saved!

Welcome to the Society for our new members, its great to have you with us, we hope to continue to participate in Poole events and to promote our past and future.



Excitement occurred when a small boy fell into the harbour and had to be saved!



MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

Buildings of Architectural interest Robin Moy

Your planning subcommittee has convinced Historic England with the support of Poole Flag Trust that our Municipal Buildings are of Architectural interest and are preparing a report to be submitted to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport for his approval.

The 1920s

In the 1920s Poole's population was increasing. The Branksome Urban District Council and Canford Magna Parish were absorbed into Poole Borough.

The administration offices and Courts were spread around the Town so it was proposed to centralise the administration which included managing the law courts and other legal duties prescribed in Queen Elizabeth's Charter which created Poole a county separate from Dorset. The Sheriff then was not just an honorary title.

We have a building whose design follows the style popular on the continent of stripped classicisms. Minimalism is

reflected as in the Art Deco houses etc then popular. Other examples of this style are found in Southampton in their Civic Centre, built between 1929 & 39, Architect E. Barry Webber won the competition in 1928 and Swansea Civic Centre 1932 by Jones & Thomas.

The site

The site chosen was at Park Gates East, a junction in the tram system which ran from Poole Station to Christchurch dividing here to go via Upper or Lower Parkstone. From 1929 the trams were being supplemented by buses, thus the site was easily accessible. In 1922 it had been proposed to build shops here on both sides of Parkstone Road, but Poole Borough bought this 3/4 acre field for £4400. Used previously as a fairground as part of Fairey Knowle farm on whose yard in Fernside Road contains Wimborne House - a home for the elderly.

Royal College of Art Architect

The principal Architect was Leslie Magnus Austin, a

graduate of the Royal College of Art (RCA), an employee of our Borough who also designed some notable Art Deco buildings.

Another graduate of the RCA Percy Wise, Principal of the Poole Art School, was a member of the design team. The 24 panels depicting Poole's History which are placed high up all around the facade were his creation.

The Government gave grants to Poole BC as a result of high unemployment.

Empire Stone was specified for the facing but in case the budget was exceeded the building was designed on a brick module to allow brick, the cheaper material to be specified. The building cost £62,500 which was within the reduced budget reflecting the omission of the Town Hall and Tower originally proposed, so we see the building faced in Empire Stone.

Empire Stone was a cast material with the appearance of Portland Stone. As can be seen in the photo above right, quite

delicate detail can be formed on the blocks.



Magnus Austin's wife - Winifred, also a graduate of the RCA, a jewellery designer, was the creator of much of the detailing inside and outside the building. Much of the detailing reflects Poole's history and environment and incorporates scallop shells, dolphins and waves from Poole's coat of arms, pine cones and needles, seaweed, crabs, rhododendrons and palms.

The building has a V-shaped plan consisting of a spectacular west-facing main central block with entrance and two wings, two & three storeys containing offices, one facing Sandbanks Road and one facing Parkstone Road.

The west-facing front elevation has a central gabled entrance block of three storeys which breaks forwards. It has an open pediment with faience plaque of the coat of arms of Poole by Carter & Co, a keyed semi-circular arch that breaks the second-floor level. The first-floor balcony has a curved, panelled balustrade and is carried on a large bracket with seaweed moulding which doubles as the keystone to the doorway below. Spacial design and the quality of materials specified in the

important parts of the central block are of the highest standards.

The entrance door and a vestibule leads to a large entrance hall from which the side wings and upper floors are accessed. The geometric-patterned mosaic floor included a mosaic by Carter & Co depicting the Quay and High Street and some of the Town's historic buildings. To each side of the hall is a wide dogleg staircase, wrought-iron balustrade in the form of stylised waves and bronze pierced scallop shells below the handrail, also bronze.

The conference room (courtroom with a judicial bench) beyond the hall has an oak-block floor, stylised triglyph dado with wooden panelling below, open-oak balustrade to the seating area; and compartmental, corniced ceiling, containing panels on the wall listing past Mayors and Sheriffs.

The first-floor landing which serves as an ante-room to the Council Chamber, has a floor mosaic of the Borough's coat of arms by Carter & Co. The octagonal Council Chamber has distyle in antis piers to

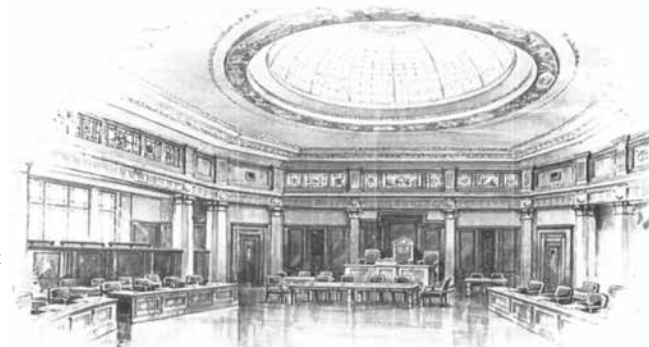
the recessed side bays and an entablature with triglyphs; public galleries with timber fronts to either side of the room, and a small balcony carried on four consoles accessed from the second floor. The oak panelling is decorated with carvings of pine cones, scallop shells, rhododendrons, dolphins, and mayoral chains and maces. The furniture is oak and red leather. The clerestory windows incorporate reset stained glass brought from the previous municipal building and also depictions of Poole scenes in coloured glass. The ceiling has a circular, domed lantern with decorative leaded panes, some with blue glass, and the cornices are enriched with carvings of rhododendrons, pine cones, pine needles and palms.

A large extension of similar design and materials was added to the rear (east) in the 1980s which created an enclosed courtyard at the centre of the building and a new main entrance.

The opening ceremony attended by the Earl of Shaftesbury (Lord Lieutenant of the County of Dorset) took place on Saturday 28 May 1932.



An illustration of the Municipal Buildings from the booklet 'The New Municipal Offices Souvenir' 1932



An illustration of the Council Chamber from the booklet 'The New Municipal Offices Souvenir' 1932

Focussing our Civic understandings in Poole

A new emphasis on public participation



make public engagement more effective and obvious. The moves have, so far, included :-

- 1 : publication of meeting dates, timings, venues and papers – raising concerns (being addressed, it is understood) about which subject should be considered where, in view of local concerns across our huge group of differing communities.

Many and various are the skills, knowledge and enthusiasms of the Inhabitants of Poole (whether they be resident or visiting). Consequently, our Society does appreciate all the help and support it receives from those who wish to help Poole flourish on its journey into the future.

We know (like The Cheshire Cat) that **“if you don’t know where you are going, any road will get you there”** and therefore agree that sound Local Planning must be about finding the optimum road to get us to the future environment that is needed and that should be attained.

As many of you are aware the Planning Group of our Society has been making comments about local planning issues over many years to aid all Elected Decision-Makers in discharging their

responsibilities to “accord with the good rules of government” (as required by the Royal Charters granted to Poole). Such comments have ranged from protection of public open spaces, through thoughts about improving local plans, policies and procedures, to prompting quicker delivery of approved new facilities and to ensuring that individual aspirations do not necessarily compromise the public interest : all in the spirit of trying to work together with those concerned with shaping our future.

Recent changes in local governance have meant a new emphasis on public participation (fewer Councillors, serving an increasing population, now seem to be keener to tap local opinions) and your Planning Group is impressed with the recent moves to

- 2 : publication of interesting forward plans.
- 3 : invitations to attend meetings.

In general the impression is given that greater public participation is being fostered – for instance, Councillors are now able to raise matters across the conurbation (not necessarily in their own Wards and no doubt prompted by some in our communities), which seems a practical approach, if not the solution, to the problems of finding volunteers to create statutory Neighbourhood Forums or Parish Councils promptly - say “quicker than five years”. In any event, it is hoped that consultations will be announced and timed to aid responses from Poole and that an early consultation will be progressed on “public involvement” with particular reference to our town’s

interests in flourishing within the ambit of the new conurbation Council.

Planning across our huge built-up area will involve preparation of a new and comprehensive Local Plan, which we would hope to ensure is an even stronger version of the adopted Local Plan for Poole : strong enough to prevent us keeping places like the derelict power station site (vacant since 1993) even longer than the current 26 years whilst regrettably losing greener land (largely to unaffordable housing) that creates ‘infrastructure difficulties’, amongst other

things. We know the nation has a 25 year environmental plan but practical interim targets need to be included in local government thinking, for any such long-term plan to have credibility.

As most people know, nobody has total knowledge / wisdom in preparing local plans, so if you can share some of your thoughts / concerns with us, please do not hesitate to let me know. Such sharing will help us in our efforts to find the right road to the future of our town that all of us want to see, if possible. Please note that whilst the Planning Group normally meets once a month,

your responses to this request will be welcomed by me at any time.

Lastly, as Lewis Carroll also wrote, **“No good fish goes anywhere without a porpoise”**. You can help ensure we keep our civic purposes clear and helpful to our Elected Decision-Makers as they establish their shoal of approved strategies for providing local governance ‘as it should be’ and despite the constant movement of the ‘goal posts’, as required by national politicians - ie **AD MOREN VILLAE DE POOLE**, in our case.

Gerald Rigler : Planning Sub-Committee Chairman



Annual Society for Poole Lunch

Wednesday 27th November Thistle Hotel Poole Quay

£22 per head 12.30 – 2.30pm

Please make your selection on the inserted form (if required please let the Chairman know and he will email a copy to you) and forward it with a cheque etc to Jan Marsh.



Starters

Carrot, potato & coriander soup chive crème fraîche, croutons

Chicken, asparagus smoked bacon terrine, red onion chutney, dressed leaves, beetroot and spelt bread crouton

Mains

Traditional roast turkey with roast potatoes, stuffing, pigs in blankets, pea shoots and gravy

Grilled sea bass fillet with crushed new potatoes, tomato and coriander salsa

Pumpkin, basil and pea risotto, served with ciabatta croutons and a rocket and parmesan salad (V)

All served with steamed panache of vegetables

Desserts

Traditional Christmas pudding served with a brandy custard

Cranberry and lime cheesecake, cranberry compote, almond biscotti

Tea, coffee and mini mince pies

The End of the Sands

The Haven Hotel Story

Jenny



Any account of Sandbanks seems to contain an element of nostalgia perhaps because its development has been so extreme.

From a lonely spit of sand dunes haunted by smugglers, it was transformed in not much more than a century into the present busy resort with traffic jams, car parks, hotels, luxury houses and (according to the press), millionaires every 50 metres. The story of the Haven Hotel is closely linked to this development and also includes drama, tragedy and scientific achievement.

Priceless views

The hotel was built in 1880 at the tip of the North Haven peninsula with a priceless view of the harbour entrance, passing vessels and Brownsea Island across the water. There was no proper approach road and guests had to make their way along a rough track or be landed by boat to reach it. The original owner, Peter Tuck, soon rented out the building and in the 1881 census John Odum and his wife were listed as proprietors. At this time there were scarcely any other buildings on 'the sandbanks', apart from the coastguard cottages on the other side of the peninsula. In 1887, a writer in the Bournemouth Guardian described a sailing trip out of the harbour, stopping at the



An early view of the hotel with the coastguard jetty and look-out in the foreground

Haven Hotel where they 'put down some of the obliging landlord's best. The hotel is placed in a rather lonely location for a restaurant, but I fancy Boniface does a good thing out of the visitors who, like we did, generally reach this spot beginning to feel hungry and thirsty.'

The following year, a tragedy occurred as the steam tug *Telegraph* was moving off after landing a couple of passengers for the hotel. A small boat was moored near the shore with Mr. A. Borrisow and his son Frank on board. Failing to see the sailing boat, the *Telegraph* hit her, throwing the occupants into the water and resulting in the death of

18 year old Frank. A Board of Trade enquiry found that the captain of the *Telegraph* was to blame in not keeping a proper look-out and failing to ensure that the lifeboats were ready for immediate use.

By 1889, the hotel was under the management of William B. Mullins and his wife, as a series of press advertisements showed. In April 1890, William Mullins and his sister-in-law were driving in a dog cart back to the Haven after taking two gentlemen to Poole. At 'Glass Cottage corner' near the junction with Ashley Road, the dog cart was in collision with a brougham belonging to Captain Turner Jones and both William and his passenger were

thrown out. The casualties were taken to the Haven Hotel and attended by Dr. Philpotts but William, who had been knocked unconscious, protested that he was not badly injured and did not need medical help. Later that night he died. He was 27 years old and had only been married about 10 months. The license of the hotel was transferred to William's widow Lilian but in December she was obliged to file for bankruptcy. Over the next few years the hotel had several different proprietors and in 1895, the owner Peter Tuck proposed that the license should be transferred from the Haven to Sandacres, (now the Sandbanks Hotel) which he also owned. He argued that the Haven Hotel was too remote and vulnerable to 'parties of roughs' making trouble. The proposal was turned down in the light of objections from neighbours of Sandacres. Contemporary press advertisements for the Haven showed that the hotel was now under the 'entirely New Management' of W. H. Witherington and offered 'Excellent cuisine, Choice Wines, Luncheons, Teas, Dinners always ready. Hot and cold Sea Water Baths. Terms moderate'. It seems quite a sophisticated offer for a rather out-of-the-way establishment. The hotel had already been extended with wings on either side of the original building.

In the 1890s there was concern that the shoreline at Sandbanks was eroding and that the peninsula might be cut in two at its narrowest point. Defensive groynes were needed. Another consequence of shifting sands was the build up of a bar at the harbour entrance which was seriously affecting trade. Impatient at



lack of action on the part of Poole Council, an association of merchants presented a bill to Parliament for the setting up of an independent Harbour Board and this became law as the Poole Harbour Act 1895. The new Commissioners, who included representatives of the Council and local business, acquired responsibility for the Quay and Sandbanks. To raise money for the necessary sea defences, they decided to divide part of Sandbanks into 40 plots and sell them for building development. The transformation of the peninsula now began to accelerate.



A map of 1896 showing the hotel and some of the plots for sale

Road access was still poor and although Sandbanks was the seaside place of the town, 'people were jolted out of their lives before they got down there'. In 1898, however, the access by sea was improved with the building of a pier 92ft. long by 26ft. wide, large enough to allow passenger steamers to call there. The pier was sponsored by Messrs. George Habgood and Sons

of Wimborne, owners of the Haven Hotel, to meet a long-felt want of 'excursionists' and visitors. Passengers were brought from Poole on board the S.S. Lord Elgin for the opening, conducted by the Mayor of Poole. The ceremony was followed by a luncheon in the hotel, hosted by Mr. G. Habgood junior who took the opportunity to stress the need for better roads.



The pier and paddle steamer

Cutting edge experiments

Meanwhile, the Haven Hotel became the site of a cutting edge experiment. The young Italian inventor, Guglielmo Marconi had arrived in England in 1896 and won support for his investigations into wireless telegraphy. His first transmitting station was at the Royal Needles Hotel on the Isle of Wight followed by stations at Bournemouth and Swanage. In September 1898, he arrived



at the Haven Hotel with masts and apparatus and set up his laboratory in an east-facing room on the ground floor.



The hotel and Marconi's mast

One of Marconi's assistants, Mr. H.M. Dowsett, recalled the wireless room as 'a business workshop, full of purposeful activity and with signals being continuously exchanged between the Needles station 14 miles away.' By 1899 it was reported in the press that 'Marconi's wireless telegraphy is now far beyond the experimental stage and recent trials of its practical utility have been crowned with success. . . . Recently one of the stations has been removed to the Haven Hotel, Poole and the signalling distance increased to eighteen miles.' Marconi continued to work at the hotel until 1926. He was a frequent visitor of the Van Raalte family of Brownsea Island and his yacht *Elettra* was frequently seen moored off the island. When he was in residence at the hotel, there were often convivial meals with his family, assistants, fellow scientists and other visitors, followed by musical evenings with Guglielmo on the piano

and his brother Alfonso playing the cello.

A reputation for excellent food and hospitality

The landlord during most of Marconi's time at the Haven was Frenchman Eugene Poulain, a native of Normandy. Under his management, the hotel gained a reputation for excellent food and hospitality. A lobster tea on the veranda for 40 members of the Yacht Club in 1901 was well within his scope. Over the next few years, guests of the hotel included local gentry, members of the aristocracy and even foreign royalty when the Spanish Infanta Eulalia and her two sons had 'a most pleasant stay'. The poet Robert Browning was a guest in 1899 and nurse Edith Cavell in 1903. M. Poulain provided motor boats to ferry guests across to Shell Bay and motor buses to bring people from Poole and Bournemouth. There was also a frequent boat service from Poole Quay.



Bus and party in front of the hotel

Articles in the press praised Sandbanks as a 'breezy and health-giving place.' 'The true lover of Sandbanks cannot wish it to become a fashionable resort with all which the term implies of bricks and mortar and suburban conventionality but we scarcely fancy that such will be its fate.' In 1909, the Bournemouth Graphic gave a glowing account of the Haven.

'This delightful spot is at the end of the sands, westward from Bournemouth, and can be reached by different means. . . The Hotel, of which Mr. E. Poulain is proprietor, is situated in a charming position overlooking the Harbour, Solent. Brownsea Island and the Purbeck Hills Everything necessary for an enjoyable holiday is to be obtained there, – fishing, swimming, boating etc.

By 1914, Eugene and his wife Francis had acquired a French partner, Raymond Louis Patenotte who later married their daughter, Marguerite. The young couple's son, Reynold was born at the Haven in 1916. At the beginning of the First World War, the hotel was requisitioned to house Belgian refugees and was left in a poor state with skirting boards and other fittings stripped out for use as firewood. The family continued at the hotel for several more years but in 1921, it was announced that M. Poulain was retiring and revisiting France for his niece's wedding. Transferring the licence to Mrs. Kate Eliza Dore, the Mayor expressed the hope that it would be run as well in the future as it had been in the past.

In 1925, Mrs. Dore was obliged to sue one of her guests for a debt of £24 18s 9d. The 'well dressed' Maurice Friend arrived at the hotel at the end of April for a 6 months' visit at 21s 6d (£1 15p) a day. Early in his stay, he offered to buy the hotel for £27,000 and started negotiations with Mrs. Dore, probably as a ploy to stay on, even when his bill was in arrears. He also defrauded James Harvey who operated one of the Sandbanks ferry

boat services by telling him that he had bought the hotel and would give him a 5 year lease of the pier for £200 a year. Mr. Harvey paid him £70 to seal the deal. Messrs Wyatt, Jewellers of Bournemouth were also patronised (or targeted) by Mr. Friend who bought goods from them on three occasions and in each case, paid by a cheque worth more than the purchase price and received cash as change. All the cheques were returned by the bank. It turned out that Maurice Friend was an undischarged bankrupt with debts of £7,146 and no assets, but he must have been a very plausible trickster to fool so many business people.

Act of Parliament was obtained to allow a car ferry to operate

Meanwhile, building development in Sandbanks had been proceeding at a pace and an advertisement for the hotel in 1923 mentions 'Bungalow Town' near by. Car travel was also on the increase and an Act of Parliament was obtained to allow a car ferry to operate across the harbour entrance to Shell Bay. A steam driven ferry started in 1926, and in its first season carried around 100,000 passengers.



The rebuilt Haven Hotel as seen from the ferry

The ferry's journeys to and fro have been a source of fascination to hotel clients

ever since.

In 1925, the hotel had been bought by Sir Arthur Wheeler, the latest owner of Brownsea Island who appointed Major Ruttle to run it. The country was in the midst of an economic recession but some with the means and confidence were bold enough to invest in the future. Starting with a major rebuild in 1926, the hotel was transformed into a large, luxurious building incorporating the most modern features such as a smoking room, sea water baths in the rooms and a sprung dance floor. Garages were provided for the guests' motor cars, with rooms for their chauffeurs above.

'At Sandbanks there has arisen . . . a new Haven Hotel, the like of which I have not quite come across in all Great Britain

An article in *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* in May 1928 gives a glowing description: 'At Sandbanks there has arisen . . . a new Haven Hotel, the like of which I have not quite come across in all Great Britain. . . . As a comfortable, modern, perfectly designed and furnished real hotel, in the best sense of the word, it stands almost in a class of its own, and I have no hesitation in recommending any of my readers who want the best of food and wines and sea air to try it for themselves.' The writer was particularly struck by the location 'facing blue water on almost every side, the only exception being the view that looks across the gorse and bungalow-covered ridge to the north. Ships – mostly yachts – pass immediately beneath its windows; across the strait stand up the blue Purbeck hills; within fifty yards one can bath from

golden sands in clear water and best of all, there seems always some place where one can sit entirely out of doors and yet out of the wind.'

The Haven had moved into a different league, to be considered side by side with establishments like the Royal Bath in Bournemouth. In the following years it would host big events like the British Rotary annual district conference with 150 delegates in 1930 or the 1935 Parkstone Sailing Club annual dinner dance for 180 members, as well as regular week-end dances.

The 'golden sands' were strung with barred wire

World War II put everything on hold. Sandbanks was a restricted area and local residents were summoned to the Haven to be issued with special passes. The 'golden sands' were strung with barred wire and many buildings were requisitioned for military purposes, including the Haven Hotel. At various times, it was used to accommodate the Green Howards, American troops, the Royal Navy and BOAC staff operating the flying boats from the harbour. During a bombing raid, the hotel kitchen was hit and the boiler thrown out of the building. After the war, work was needed to refurbish the building which was in a poor state and it was not until 1949 that it reopened under Major Ruttle's management.

In the postwar world, hotels like the Haven found themselves competing with affordable holidays on the continent. A low point for the hotel was in the early 1970s when plans were put forward to demolish it and replace it with a block of flats. Ironically, it was



Haven Hotel c.1940

the recession that prevented demolition, as a developer could not be found. In 1977, the prospects for the hotel improved when it was bought by FJB Group. Press articles announced that the Group planned to spend £250,000, add 25 extra bedrooms (bringing the total to 101) and install an open air sea water swimming pool and a roofed sun terrace. In the 1980s, a leisure club and business centre was opened. The Haven was once again aiming at the luxury market.

Disaster struck in 1988 when, as the press reported, 'a blaze



The Business Centre

ripped through the roof and third floor of the Haven Hotel, and over 100 guests had to be evacuated. 'The alarm was raised by pastry chef Dave Holmes who smelled smoke

while serving tea. Going outside, he saw smoke coming from the roof. Staff were quickly mobilized to check all the rooms for guests before the fire brigade arrived. No-one was injured but the damage to the hotel was serious as part of the roof had collapsed on to the third floor. It was a serious set-back but the hotel was rebuilt and restored. It went on to become an award winning hotel into the 21st century however new redevelopment plans mean that the hotel itself is fighting for its life!

1920s iconic architecture

The Haven Hotel story over 130 years has run parallel to the story of Sandbanks itself, once wild and remote and now developed and urban. The hotel's iconic building represents 1920s Poole architecture, a period of optimism against the odds. In spite of dramatic changes, the Haven's appeal still rests on the location and its simple, but spectacular blend of sand, sea and scenery.

Main sources: Morris, Iris Looking Back at Sandbanks / Waters, Jeremy Parkstone-on-Sea, Salterns, Sandbanks and Seaplanes. / Newspaper articles



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Dates for your Diary

Sunday 8th September

RAF Association remembrance of the Battle of Britain
St James Church 6.15pm



Tuesday 17th September

Talk: Lost road, railways and settlements around Poole By Ben Buxton
British Legion Hall 7.30pm



Wednesday 18th September

Dorset Architectural Heritage Week

At Poole Guildhall
10.30am - 12.30pm



Tuesday 15th October

Talk: D-Day & the New Forest By John Smith
British Legion Hall 7.30pm



Tuesday 19th November

Talk: The 1936 Typhoid Epidemic
By Mary Graham



Wednesday 27th November

Society for Poole Annual Lunch
Thistle Hotel, Poole Quay
12.30 - 2.30pm



December Happy Holidays



Tuesday 21st January 2020

Talk: The Formidable Women of the Bankes Family

By Dorset History Centre



Tuesday 18th February 2020

Talk: The Plague or not the Plague of Poole 1645/46

By Gary Edwards
10.30am - 12.30pm

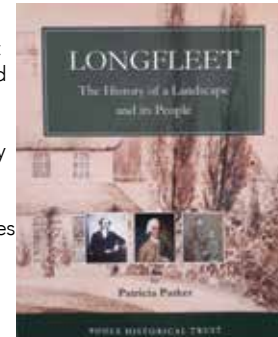


Book Reviews

Longfleet: the history of a Landscape and its People by Patricia Parker
Poole Historical Trust £15

Longfleet Parish was created in 1837 and included within its boundaries are the modern districts of Seldown, Sterte, Tatnam, Stanley Green, Fleetsbridge, Oakdale and South Canford Heath. Historically it would have also included Creekmoor, Waterloo and Upton House.

Patricia has been researching Longfleet for nearly 30 years and she covers its history from Roman times to the 21st century. Many of the names of roads and buildings are still in use and she explores how they originated. The book is packed with photographs, many of which have not been seen before. It also has many maps and family trees. There is an excellent index of family names as well as buildings, roads and areas. This is probably not a book that you will read from cover to cover but one that you can dip in and out of as there is something of interest on every page.



Charles Rolls and the 1910 Aviation Meeting
by Bill Hoodless

Charles Rolls Heritage Trust £9

This A4 publication includes a biography of Charles Rolls, a short history of Rolls Royce, a detailed description of the flying events at the 1910 Aviation meeting at Southbourne (part of the 1910 Bournemouth Centenary celebrations) including the death of Rolls. There are details of the various memorials to Rolls and information on the Charles Rolls Heritage Trust and their project to create a permanent memorial in Southbourne. This is an interesting account of a tragic event and its background of the early years of aviation in Great Britain. The book is well illustrated.



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