



**RCEA  
(SUSSEX)**

**An Association for Retired Professional Engineers**

# **NEWSLETTER                      March 2013**

## **PROGRAMME OF EVENTS    2013**

<b>Tuesday            9<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>Talk, Field Place, Worthing, "Capturing the sun - the thermal story."</b>
<b>NOTE Change of date</b>	
<b>Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>Visit: Network Rail Electrical Control Centre, Brighton (11.00am)</b>
<b>Thursday    18<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>Coffee - at Spotted Cow, Angmering</b>
<b>Thursday    25<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>Coffee - with Partners the Swallows Return, Worthing</b>
<b>Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> May</b>	<b>Coffee - at Spotted Cow, Angmering</b>
<b>Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> May</b>	<b>Outing: 14.30, St Mary's House and Garden, Bramber NOTE Change of date and time</b>
<b>Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> May</b>	<b>Coffee - with Partners the Swallows Return, Worthing</b>
<b>Wednesday 19 June</b>	<b>Outing: 12:00 – 15:00, Pub Lunch and Skittles, Henfield</b>
<b>Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>Coffee - at Spotted Cow, Angmering</b>
<b>Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>Coffee - with Partners the Swallows Return, Worthing</b>
<b>Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> July</b>	<b>Outing: The Royal Pavilion, Brighton</b>

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> July Coffee - at Spotted Cow, Angmering**

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> July Coffee - with Partners the Swallows Return, Worthing**

**Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> August Coffee - at Spotted Cow, Angmering**

**Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> August Coffee - with Partners the Swallows Return, Worthing**

All Talks and Meetings will commence at 2.30 pm and be held in the Chichester Room, Field Place, Worthing, unless another venue or time is indicated.

Timings for visits and outings will be as printed in the detailed description of the activity. Coffee mornings commence at 10.30 a.m.

Website for the RCEA

For latest information, log into [www.rceasussex.org.uk](http://www.rceasussex.org.uk)

## Membership

### New Member

J.E. Oldfield, TD, C.Eng, MICE, MISTrucE The Beeches,  
West Drive, Angmering, BN16 4NL  
John & Joyce 01903 783181  
johnoldfield@talktalk.net  
1959-1965 British Railways, 1965-1969 Greater London Council,  
1969-1995 Head of Engineering London Borough of Harrow  
*Interests* : Walking, Gardening, Eating Out

#### NOTE !

Can all members please check your own entry in the "new-style" Members Handbook, which you should have received by now, to ensure the entry is correct in every detail i.e. address, telephone number, e-mail address, etc. Any errors or omissions should be communicated to **Malcolm Hind, Membership Secretary** so that the appropriate corrections can be made to the master copy.

### RCEA Insurance.

Members need to be aware that the insurance policy that the Association holds is solely for the protection for the assets and liabilities for the Association as an entity. The policy does not provide cover for personal injury or loss to individual members. Members therefore attend any of the Association's events at their own risk; although under some circumstances there may be some cover from the insurance arrangements of the venue owner.

### Newsletter Entries

If you would like to provide an article for inclusion in a future newsletter it would be most welcome. We are always looking for new material. As a guide an article should be prepared as a Microsoft Word document, preferably in font size 10 and font style Times New Roman but this is not essential since all text will be 'standardised and formatted' when composing the newsletter. Pictures can be incorporated into the newsletter and are best supplied as JPEG images as separate files and separately from the text. (Word documents incorporating pictures can sometimes be very large files and are often not easy to manipulate into a suitable format for the newsletter.)

### SOUTHERN RETIRED CHARTERED ENGINEERS

***Below is a list of the events arranged by the SRCE and to which our members have a standing invitation. If anyone wishes to participate in any of the events, please email Tony Tomkins for instructions as how to do so.***

Details of the rest of the events for the year are shown below to enable you to note them in your diaries and application forms are included (in the SRCE newsletter) for the earliest ones. The committee has once again come up with some new and interesting places to visit and we hope you will be able to come along to at least one of them during the year.

Please note that early responses would be appreciated for all the visits but in particular there is not much time available before the Chichester visit on 18<sup>th</sup> April and early responses are needed for the Salisbury theatre visit on 4<sup>th</sup> May in order to secure the seats.

21 <sup>st</sup> March	Twyford Waterworks - forms were sent with the December newsletter
18 <sup>th</sup> April	Chichester canal and planetarium - form enclosed
4 <sup>th</sup> May	Salisbury Playhouse - form enclosed. Please note that these must be returned by 25 <sup>th</sup> March.
15 <sup>th</sup> May	Mapledurham House - form enclosed
12 <sup>th</sup> June	Emirates cable car and Siemens Crystal Exhibition - form enclosed
25 <sup>th</sup> July	Silchester Archaeological dig - form enclosed
8 <sup>th</sup> August	Sonning theatre - form sent with December newsletter
22 <sup>nd</sup> August	Royal Signals museum - form enclosed
19 <sup>th</sup> September	Hillier's Gardens - form will be sent with the next newsletter
3 <sup>rd</sup> October	AGM - form will be sent with the next newsletter
December	Hopefully we will be able to book a theatre visit in Salisbury as in the recent past.

## **Brief Detail – Talks, Outings and other activities April - August**

**Talk: NOTE Change of date.**

**Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April, Field Place, Worthing**

**"Capturing the sun - the thermal story."** by Mr Tony Lord RCEA.

Tony will give an illustrated talk on how he achieved the energy efficient conversion of a 1930s bungalow using insulation, heat recovery, solar thermal panels and heat storage.

**Visit:**

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> April, Network Rail Electrical Control Centre, Brighton (10.45am for 11.00am)** Currently fully booked and over-subscribed.

Contact: Derek Webb Tel: 01903 525969 or email derek.webb2@ntlworld.com

**Outing: St Mary's House and Gardens, Bramber, 14.30, Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> May**

A guided tour and visit to the House and Gardens at St Mary's House, Bramber, has been arranged to commence at 2.30 pm Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2013. We are not restricted in numbers since our party will be split up into suitable sized groups for the guides. Unfortunately, there is no access to the upper floor of the house for disabled visitors however it is possible to access the ground floor and gardens with a wheelchair. The visit is likely to last for 2 hours or more depending on how long you need to wander around the five acres of garden. Refreshments can be purchased in the café located in the gardens. There is ample free parking at the entrance to the gardens. The cost will be £9.00 per person and we would encourage you to bring along friends and family for an interesting

afternoon out. There is a booking form at the end of the newsletter which should be returned before the 17<sup>th</sup> May at the very latest.

St Mary's House is located in Bramber Village off the A283, 1 mile east of Steyning. Post Code BN44 3WE (St Mary's House is located very close to the excellent Tollgate Restaurant which often advertises reduced price lunch offers in the local press and on the internet. You may wish to combine a pre-visit lunch here followed by a walk around the house and grounds to work it off later. )

*Extract from the House and Gardens web-site:*

**The origins of St. Mary's** go back to the days of the Knights Templar when five acres of land in the downland village of Bramber were given to them by the widow of Philip de Braose, following his death in 1125. The present building was constructed in about 1470 by William of Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester and founder of Magdalen College, Oxford, as an inn for pilgrims on their way to the tomb of St. Thomas of Canterbury.

Through the centuries, the house has had a number of distinguished owners. Of note is Hon. Algernon Bourke, owner of White's, the celebrated gentleman's club in St. James's, London, who, with his beautiful wife Gwendolen, were the originals for the characters in Oscar Wilde's famous play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

In 1907, St. Mary's was sold to the wealthy socialite, Alfred Musgrave, the inspiration for Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes story, *The Musgrave Ritual*.

In 1946, the house was saved from demolition by Dorothy Ellis, who lived there for some thirty-five years, after which it was bought by Paul Smart, a lepidopterist and author of an encyclopaedia of butterflies.

In 1984, St. Mary's was purchased by author and composer, [Peter Thorogood](#), in collaboration with designer and landscape gardener, [Roger Linton](#), both of whom embarked upon a long programme of [restoration](#) of this lovely old house.

## **Outing:**

**Wednesday 19 June September 12:00–15:00 Pub Lunch and Skittles The Bull Inn, Henfield, East Sussex.**

The Bull Inn just north of Henfield, has a function room with a skittle alley adjacent to the main bar area. We have arranged to hire these facilities for the lunch time period to allow members and guests to enjoy a buffet lunch and try their hand at skittles.

No previous experience is required; teams will be selected on the day to include novices and any experienced players. If you would prefer to watch, come along and encourage those who are going to play while you enjoy the buffet lunch.

There is a large patio area adjacent to the skittle alley where, if the weather is fine, you can relax with a drink and your food while the players debate the performance of the teams.

The room will be available to us from mid-day until about 3 pm when the pub closes. Dessert and coffee are not included in the buffet, but will be available an extra charge.

The buffet will consist of:

Nibbles (Crisp, Peanuts, etc), Marinated olives, Bread sticks, on arrival to have with your drinks (not included); followed by a buffet of Garlic bread, Garlic bread with cheese, Dough sticks with garlic and pesto mayonnaise, Spicy chicken wings, and a selection of Pizzas and Salad from their standard menu

Some special dietary requirements can be catered for if notified in advance. See reply slip

The Bull Inn, postcode BN5 9AD, is located about 1 mile north of Henfield at Mockbridge on the A281 Shoreham to Horsham road.

The cost of hiring the room, the use of the skittles and the buffet will be £13.00 per person.

**Latest application 1<sup>st</sup> June 2013, Contact: Brian Buckroyd tel 01903 784926**

## **Outing:**

### **Wednesday 17 July 14.00 The Royal Pavilion, Brighton**

Another opportunity to visit this beautiful and interesting landmark building in Brighton. Built as King George IV's pleasure palace when Brighton was the heart of fashionable Regency society, the Royal Pavilion was also used by King William IV and Queen Victoria. Today it has been restored to its original 1823 splendour with Indian architecture contrasted with interiors inspired by China. The visit will include a guided tour entitled "An Introduction to the Royal Pavilion".

Cost £ 12.00 (including tour) The maximum number is 30 people.

A Tea Room is available within the Pavilion serving tea and biscuits, and cream teas.

Please assemble outside the main entrance to the Pavilion shortly before 2 pm.

Parking in Brighton is expensive but there is free parking at the Withdean Sports Complex - Park and Ride (BN1 5JD) and those possessing a bus pass can travel free on the bus to the pavilion (Bus no 27 every 15 mins).

Please complete the reply slip at the end of the Newsletter and return by 8th July.

## **REPORTS**

### **Talk:**

#### **Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2013. "Cecil Pashley - Pioneer aviator and joint founder of Shoreham airport." By Mr Alan Readman WSCC County Archivist and Mr Mike Wooldridge RCEA.**

The illustrated talk was split into two parts with AR's portion covering the life of Pashley; the development of early powered flight; and the history of Shoreham Airport. MW then talked about Pashley the pilot trainer.

AR explained that the majority of his talk was based on Pashley archive material held by West Sussex Records Office. Unfortunately WSCC had only been able to purchase about 30% of the archive, the remainder going to private collectors.

**Cecil Pashley:** Cecil Pashley was one of three brothers and was born in Great Yarmouth, Norfolk on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1891. He was an avid flying enthusiast and taught himself to fly in a Bleriot monoplane in 1909. In 1913 [Pashley](#) and his brother Eric (who along with the third brother was killed in the 1914-1918 war) moved from [Brooklands](#) to Shoreham to start the Shoreham Flying School. The two brothers also operated a commercial pleasure flight business.

Cecil went on to become one of the first Flying Instructors and trained many pilots. One of Pashley's students was F.G. Miles with whom he founded the Southern Aero Club, which remained in business after his death in 1969.

The Pashley brothers continued with their flying school until December of 1914 and then stored their machines in one of the hangars when they left; Cecil to the Northern Lakes and Eric to Vickers before joining 24 squadron in France. Cecil later moved to Hendon where he trained many pilots for the Royal Flying Corps.

During the Second World War Pashley was commissioned in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. He was awarded the Air Force Cross in 1944 and became a Member of the Order of the British Empire in 1948. Pashley was still flying aged 74. He died in 1969.

**Shoreham Airport:** Negotiations had begun in 1909 between George Wingfield's Aviators Finance Company and the Mayors of Brighton, Hove and Worthing to put Shoreham on the map as a centre of early aviation. In 1910 Harold Piffard, an amateur aviator, arrived from London with the remains of his experimental flying machine. He liked the 'capital ground' and strong hangar at the site adjoining New Salts Farm, Shoreham. It was George Wingfield, a solicitor and businessman, who provided the link between the amateur efforts of Piffard and the more serious intentions of the local mayors.

On March 7<sup>th</sup> 1911 Mr O. C. Morison was the first aviator to actually fly in to Shoreham in his Bleriot, all the way from Brighton!! The first Brooklands to Shoreham air race also took place this year, on May 6<sup>th</sup>. and was won by Gustav Hamel in another Bleriot. By June of 1911, ten wooden hangars and a grandstand for spectators had been built, together with rail access, known as 'Bungalow Town Halt' and on 20<sup>th</sup> June the Brighton (Shoreham) Aerodrome was officially opened.

Many illustrious names of early aviation came to use the aerodrome. A.V. Rose, Claude Graham-White, Gordon England, Horatio Barber, Graham Gilmour, John Alcock and the aforementioned Gustav Hamel and Mr O C Morison. Also arriving at Shoreham were some aviation experimenters, including G.M. Dyott with his red monoplane, A.V. Roe, Tsoe K Wong, one of the earliest Chinese aviators, and Cedric Lee and Tilghman Richards with their "flying doughnut".

In August 1914, the military requisitioned the aerodrome and all its assets. The airfield was used during the 1914-18 war as a RFC training base with 3 Training Squadron using Farmans, FE2s and later, Avro 504s. In the latter part of the war, the South East Area Flying Instructors School was located here to evaluate enemy aircraft. More hangars were needed at this time and were erected to the west of the original sheds built by Wingfield. Immediately after the war, a social and economic depression had set in and the once lively centre of aviation reverted back to grazing land for cattle. George Wingfield tried to revive the Sussex County Aero Club but, because of the economic climate, found that there was little support. In 1921 there was an attempt to sell the aerodrome freehold but this was withdrawn as there were no bidders.

By 1926 things had started to improve and Fred and George Miles, brothers from Portslade, had joined forces with Cecil Pashley (who had returned from instructing at Hendon) to form the Gnat Aero Company. By 1926 they had expanded to the north and west of New Salts Farm Road and become Southern Aircraft Ltd and the Southern Aero Club. Pashley taught Fred and George to fly and they then used their Avro 504s not just for their own enjoyment but also for tuition.

From this date until the outset of World War Two use of the airfield expanded. In 1929 the Miles brothers had started to produce their own aircraft designs and on July 10<sup>th</sup> 1929, the Southern Martlet took off from Shoreham. In October of this same year, another company on the airfield flew the Hendy Hobo.

In October 1932, the Portsmouth, Southsea and Isle of Wight Aviation Company started their first scheduled services with four flights a day, using Monospar ST4 and Wessex aircraft. Shoreham's first recorded opportunity to entertain royalty took place on July 4<sup>th</sup> 1933 when the then Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII) flew his aircraft in to land. A new terminal building was built in 1934 and by 1935, Olley Air Services of Croydon had been appointed to manage the now 'Shoreham Airport'. Railway Air Services had included Shoreham in its schedules and the Southern Railway had re-opened the old "Bungalow Town Halt" as "Shoreham Airport". The new airport was ready for use by 1<sup>st</sup> September 1935. Also in September of this year, the old Southern Aero Club came under the auspices of the Brooklands Aviation and was renamed the South Coast Flying Club, retaining Cecil Pashley as its Chief Flying Instructor.

The official opening of the airport took place on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1936. It was a two-day event which included an air display and, on the second day, the first South Coast Air Trophy Race. The last Empire Air Day was held at Shoreham on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1939

There was an impending sign of conflict in 1937 when the Air Ministry initiated the Martin School of Air Navigation at Shoreham to train RAF Volunteer Reserve personnel. Martins later became the 16<sup>th</sup> Elementary and Reserve Flying Training School and had Bellman hangars erected to house their Tiger Moths, Harts, Hinds and later, Ansons and Battles.

After the outbreak of World War Two on September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1939, all club and private flying ceased. Soon, however, Croydon's airport traffic was re-routed to Shoreham and foreign airliners came into the airfield. Albatrosses, Ensigns and old HP42s flew out to North Africa and Egypt, India and Europe. The airport terminal building and hangars were given a coat of "heavy green" paint.

In 1940 Shoreham was requisitioned by the RAF and used for anti-invasion patrols by 225 Squadron's Lysanders and through the Battle of Britain period, the field was used as an emergency landing ground for damaged Spitfires, Hurricanes and Blenheims. In 1941 the airfield was extended and other improvements made. Throughout the war Shoreham received its share of emergency landings from combat-damaged or malfunctioning aircraft as well as serving as a re-fuelling point.

Following WW2, Shoreham was made available for civil flying on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1946. Within weeks, the South Coast Flying Club was re-animated and the airport was officially re-opened to the public with an air display on 29<sup>th</sup> June. During these years, there were attempts at scheduled services and airshows, which failed mainly due to the condition of the buildings and the airfield with flooding and the lack of a tarmac runway mainly to blame. In the early 1950s Shoreham started to become well-known again as an air racing and air display venue and also because the Miles brothers had got back together again and leased the airfield for work on aviation contracts.

On 14<sup>th</sup> December 1953 Shoreham was the venue for the first flight of the Miles Sparrowjet, the first British light aircraft to use jet power. Also in the early 1950s, Chelsea College of Aero Engineering set up their premises here (now known as Northbrook College). East Anglian Flying Services employed a Rapide to fly services to the Channel Islands and Meridian Air Maps (another company with Miles involvement) used an Aerovan, Austers and Consul for its work here. The Miles Student/Centurion flew from Shoreham on May 15<sup>th</sup> 1957. The re-formed South Coast Flying Club transformed into the earlier Southern Aero Club with Cecil Pashley still involved.

Mike Wooldridge then took to the floor to talk about Pashley - the pilot trainer. Mike opened by saying how difficult it was to follow such an interesting talk about such a giant of aviation history. So he felt he ought to start by presenting his qualifications:

- 1) Was in RAF section of Brighton Grammar School CCF and won an RAF flying scholarship. This gave him 30 hours of flying time leading (in those days) potentially to the granting of a Private Pilots Licence. He did his Flying Scholarship under Cecil Pashley at Shoreham, in July 1960.
- 2) Whilst in the CCF, did a gliding course and gained A and B certificates. Went on to join Imperial College Gliding Club where he gained a Silver C.
- 3) Then became an instructor for 10 years, and finally gained a full category (allows one to become a Chief Flying Instructor) before 'retiring' for family reasons.
- 4) Has flown with maybe 2 dozen instructors, including Derek Piggott.

Derek was an ex RAF Central Flying School instructor, Film stunt pilot (Blue Max, Magnificent Men and their Flying Machines), and competition pilot. He was a wonderful instructor and CFI. Why? In Mike's opinion, because he believed there was no such thing as a silly question, and the fact that he could 'teach his grandmother to suck eggs' in the nicest possible way. This can fill small gaps in one's knowledge years later. He could charm a roomful of 25 experienced instructors with a simple lesson on something as basic as landing. Pashley, though very experienced and skilful, was not the same as Derek. He was less approachable - certainly this was how Mike, as a relatively timid 17 year old, found him. Things might be different today, as Mike reckons he would ask far more questions and drag out more of Pashley's rich experience.

Three cadet students – always in uniform – arrived at the Southern Aero Club, in the Summer of 1960. We called Pashley ‘Sir’ at all times. He was fairly brief with words. OK, its difficult in the air – what with speaking tubes and the need to throttle back to be heard. But things weren’t a lot better back at base – Mike could not recall Pashley amplifying things very much on the ground. We never did a flying test as such, and hence there may well have been some undetected gaps in our competence.

A few anecdotes:

- 1) On Mike’s first dual cross country to Portsmouth, Mike had a line drawn on the map from Shoreham to Portsmouth. But unfortunately Pashley’s line was from Shoreham to Hamble. This led to a bit of tension in the air, and a very steep turn northwards when we were about 5 miles off Portsmouth, as Pashley felt he had to put us on the correct track! But Portsmouth duly appeared in the distance under our left wing tip, and so he reluctantly then agreed to let Mike turn South. Pashley spotted his wrong line, half way back on the return flight!
- 2) The ball on the turn and slip indicator is a useful instrument for getting the rudder right in a turn, particularly a steep turn where the aircraft may start to slip or skid. Mike would have appreciated being taught earlier, the simple rule ‘Tread on the ball’ in order to rapidly improve his skill. He only learned this a couple of years later.
- 3) Cross wind landings and takeoffs were not properly practised – hardly a pressing need when one can virtually always point into wind given a large, empty grass airfield. But Mike remembers vividly learning about cross winds during a solo take off from Christchurch airfield, which had constraints on take off direction. This was a bit unnerving at the time.
- 4) And finally, a Pashley curiosity. He used to waggle the stick backwards and forwards on landing (presumably to ‘feel’ the decreasing airspeed over the elevator). But he always taught his pupils to land in the conventional way – namely, after levelling out, to apply a steady backwards pull, just keeping the nose up until the aircraft stalls neatly into a ‘3 point’ landing. Probably being self taught, Pashley had learned his method the hard way. It wasn’t dangerous – just curious. A question of ‘Do as I say, not as I do.’

Overall, it was a wonderful summer holiday experience. Mike (in common with all pilots?) clearly remembers his first solo. It was after an evening check flight – one knew solo was imminent when we taxied back to the clubhouse, Pashley climbed out, engine still running, and took his personal plywood box and cushion out (he was not the tallest of instructors). The flight was uneventful, apart from having to go round again, due to a Channel Airways Dakota on the approach.

Mike also showed some other shots he took at the time, and ended with a shot of him swinging the prop of a Tiger Moth - Pashley in the front cockpit, student in the rear, both with helmets and goggles. Lancing College was in the background, and the sun was shining. Somehow it seemed to mark the passing of a golden age of flying.

M Wooldridge and R Keir **Talk:**

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2013. “Longevity of the Portsmouth – Gosport Ferries built between 1895 and 1960.”** by Mr Philip Simons.

Phil gave an illustrated talk on a series of 20 similar vessels that were built for the Portsmouth-Gosport ferry service between 1896 and 1960. Unusually at least 16 of these vessels remain extant to this day, some in use, some as houseboats and the remainder as hulks. He also discussed the history of the ferry crossing and the evolution of the ferry companies from their early days.

**History:** Up until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and the advent of steam propulsion, all passengers and goods were transported across the harbour by watermen using wherries, a form of double ended rowing boat capable of carrying up to 8 passengers. There were two main routes across the harbour from Gosport, one to the Point (Old Portsmouth) and one to the Hard (Portsea - near the Naval base).

In 1840 a steam operated chain ferry, operated by the Floating Bridge Company, arrived on the scene. It was 100 feet long and 60 feet wide, with two steam engines driving heavy oak cogs which engaged on iron chains laid out

across the harbour. It transported carriages, carts, horses and even cattle as well as foot passengers, crossing the harbour from Point (Old Portsmouth) every 15 minutes for 14 hours a day. Its arrival was well timed, as in 1841 the railway came to Gosport and harbour traffic greatly increased as travellers from Portsmouth crossed to get to the new station. By 1950 the floating bridges were showing their age, their service was faltering, and with petrol no longer being rationed many users started to take the longer road route. Revenues fell, repair bills mounted and the floating bridge eventually ceased operating in 1959.

The response of the Gosport watermen to the introduction of the floating bridge was to invest in steam launches. These versatile little boats quickly became popular, and by 1870 had re-captured a great deal of the cross harbour passenger traffic lost to the floating bridge. The Floating Bridge Company then invested in steam launches of its own for foot passengers, complementing the floating bridge service. These were also an instant success, and the Floating Bridge Company was once again making healthy profits at the expense of the watermen.

In 1875 a group of Gosport watermen, realizing that they could not hope to compete with the steam launches of a well-organized company, decided to pool their resources and work together to provide a regular and reliable service to match the schedules of the Floating Bridge Company. They formed the Gosport and Portsea Watermen's Steam Launch Company (known as the Old Company), acquiring their first four launches from individual watermen in return for shares in the company.

In 1876 the rail service to London was extended from the Portsmouth & Southsea terminal to a new station alongside the Hard at Portsmouth Harbour. Furthermore, the Act of Parliament which allowed this extension required that a free public landing stage be provided alongside the station. This was an immediate boon to the Gosport watermen. They could now run their launches right up to the railway station, giving their passenger's access to the new direct train service to London.

The success of the watermen's company persuaded others to follow suit, and in 1883 a rival company was formed called the Port of Portsmouth Steam Launch and Towing Company. These became known as the Old Company and the New Company respectively. The New Company placed three steam launches on the same route as the Old Company. This led the Old Company to raise money for a fourth and fifth boat. Competition between the Old and New Companies was fierce, until collaborative arrangements were instigated in 1888. By the turn of the century the foot passenger trade of the floating bridge was beginning to suffer as the importance of Old Portsmouth waned and the new city centre grew. The Old and New Companies had their landing at Portsmouth Hard close to the dockyard, naval base, and railway station, and at the hub of a tram and bus network serving all areas of the city.

In 1963 the two companies amalgamated, with the New Company changing its name to The Portsmouth Harbour Ferry Company (PHFC) and taking over the Old Company. In addition to the ferries and other related interests, PHFC also owns Clarence Marine Engineering Ltd, which provides maintenance services for the ferries as well as general marine engineering services.

In 2001 the Portsmouth Harbour Ferry Company Limited (PHFC) became the Portsmouth Harbour Ferry Company PLC, a holding company for various subsidiaries, one of which is Gosport Ferry Limited, which continues to run the ferries. The green livery was changed slightly when the name was changed.

**The Vessels:** In 1963 the combined Old and New companies had eight vessels, [Vadne](#), [Vita \(1960\)](#), [Venus and Vesta \(1956\)](#) from the New Company, plus [Ferry Queen \(1959\)](#), [Ferry Prince](#), [Ferry Princess](#) and [Ferry Belle](#) from the Old Company. They were all diesel-powered, but otherwise the design had changes little in 80 years. Two modern new vessels were built by Thorneycroft's of Woolston, named [Portsmouth Queen](#) and [Gosport Queen](#). They entered service in 1966, and have proved very reliable once some initial teething troubles were ironed out. Initially, a number of the traditional ferries were retained for standby and excursion duties.

*Solent Enterprise* (formerly *Gay Enterprise*) was built in 1971 to provide cruise services and standby ferry duties. She looked similar to the other ferries built in 1966, but had a bar, dance floor, restaurant, deck shelter and was painted with an apple green hull and funnels, but instead of the red logo, with white PHF lettering, she had a dark green band, all the way round the white superstructure. This ferry was replaced in 2003 by the Spirit of Portsmouth

and was sold in 2005 to Capital Pleasure Boats, who renamed her *Sundance* for operation on the River Thames. *Solent Enterprise* is now in Denmark as a house boat.

The *Southsea Queen* was built in 1974 of 119 tons, to replace the three original diesel ferries *Vita*, *Vesta* and *Ferry Queen*. She was unsuccessful and was sold to White Horse Ferries Ltd just four years later, in 1978. She subsequently operated on the Hythe Ferry service where it was renamed *Hythe Hotspur*. She was withdrawn from this service in 1995. After a period on charter to Brownsea Island Ferries Ltd in Poole Harbour, she was bought by Clyde Maritime Services Ltd and renamed *Cruiser*.

**Present Day:** The company currently operates four vessels:

The *Spirit of Gosport* is the newest vessel of the fleet. It was built in 2001. It is painted in standard Gosport Ferry livery and is of the same design as the Spirit of Portsmouth, but without the covered roof and bar. During its first few months in service it ran alongside the two Queens due to teething problems.

The *Spirit of Portsmouth* is the second newest vessel of the fleet. She has a covered top deck and a bar, so it is normally restricted to cruise services. The vessel does, however, like her predecessor the *Solent Enterprise* also operates on the ferry service, *Spirit of Portsmouth* is painted in standard Gosport Ferry livery.

The *Gosport Queen* and *Portsmouth Queen* are the oldest ships of the fleet. Originally painted with apple green hulls and funnels, but instead of the dark green band, that the *Solent Enterprise* had, they had a red logo with white PHF lettering. They were built in 1966 to replace two of the four original, much smaller, Gosport ferries. However three of the original, smaller diesel powered ferries were kept and used for harbour cruises in the summer and standby ferry duties in the winter months, when *Gosport Queen* or *Portsmouth Queen* were being refitted.

**Gosport Ferries on the Thames:** Of the eight traditional vessels, [\*Vadne\*](#), [\*Venus\*](#), [\*Vesta\*](#), [\*Vita\*](#), [\*Ferry Belle\*](#), [\*Ferry Prince\*](#), [\*Ferry Princess\*](#) and [\*Ferry Queen\*](#), which passed to the Portsmouth Harbour Ferry Company in 1963, seven were operating on the River Thames in 1981, mainly on the Westminster-Tower Pier-Greenwich route. Only [\*Vadne\*](#) remained in the Solent area, in use as the headquarters of the Gosport Yacht Club. Now derelict, her remains are on the shore of Forton Lake. *Ferry Belle* ran for Coakley's Launches and then Pearlarn by 1981, along with [\*Varos\*](#) which had been sold before the Portsmouth Harbour Ferry Company was formed. They ran jointly with Thames Pleasure Craft (who owned [\*Ferry Prince\*](#), [\*Ferry Princess\*](#) and [\*Ferry Queen\*](#)) and Woods River

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Services who owned [Vita](#). Thames Launches ran the *Vesta* on the same service, so that seven exGosport ferries were running on the Westminster-Greenwich services in 1977. By 1981, [Venushad](#) joined them, running with Greenwich Pleasure Craft, making eight ex-Gosport ferries of which seven had passed to the Portsmouth Harbour Ferry Company in 1963.

The fleet was dispersed over the years; the last two boats running in the City being [Vita](#) and [Ferry Queen](#) which were converted to houseboats in 2009. The last working Gosport ferry on the Thames is now the [Duchess M](#), previously *Vesta*, which now operates the Tilbury-Gravesend ferry with the [Lower Thames & Medway Passenger Boat Co](#). Older Gosport ferries which moved to the Thames included [Viceroy](#) (1901) *Ferry Queen I* (1908) and *Vesta II* (1909). Of these, *Ferry Queen I* and *Vesta II* still exist as houseboats at Brentford.

For those interested in looking at photographs of many of the above vessels go to [www.simplon.co.uk](http://www.simplon.co.uk)

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One of the more interesting conversions is the *Verda*. She has been converted into a houseboat/artwork incorporating a coach!! by Mr Hamish McKenzie. She is moored at Shoreham and photos can be found at [www.shorehamhouseboats.co.uk](http://www.shorehamhouseboats.co.uk) (main page and click on Riverbank Moorings --- Verda (Mooring 20)).

R Keir (With thanks to:www.wikipedia.com and www.gosportferry.co)

## **Spring Lunch**

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March, Lunch at Northbrook College, Worthing, 12.00 for 12.30**

Forty eight people met at the Arundel Restaurant, Northbrook College to enjoy a connoisseur's meal. There was a choice of two starters, duck or salmon main courses and two desserts, prepared by students in a style not even matched by the best restaurants.

Sitting at tables for eight people, the main course was served under silver covers which were all simultaneously removed by four waitresses so that we could admire the presentation of the food.

The food was delicious, the company great making it an occasion that should be repeated next year.

Brenda Whitmell



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**REPLY SLIP 1 To:**

Ray Wort, 11 Roberts Marine Mansions, West Parade, Worthing, West Sussex BN11 5EB Telephone 01903 504305 e-mail [raywort@btinternet.com](mailto:raywort@btinternet.com)

Please reserve me ..... places to attend the **Outing , 2.30 pm Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2013, to St Mary’s House and Gardens, Bramber, West Sussex.**

**Full Name**..... **Telephone No** .....

**Address**..... **e-mail**.....

.....

.....

.....

Cheque enclosed for **£.....** at £9.00 per person, made out to the RCEA  
Are you likely to use the cafe on site to purchase tea, coffee, cakes etc? Yes/No

**Applications by 17<sup>th</sup> May 2013**

.....  
**REPLY SLIP 2**

**To:**

Brian Buckroyd, 6 Fosters Close East Preston BN16 2TL  
Tel 01903 784926

Please reserve me ..... places to attend the **Pub Lunch and Skittles, Henfield, 12:00 – 15:00, Wednesday 19 June**

**Full Name**..... **Telephone No** .....

Address.....  
.....

e-mail.....

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS IF ANY .....

Cheque enclosed for ..... at £ 13.00 per person, made out to the RCEA

Applications by 1<sup>st</sup> June 2013

.....  
**REPLY SLIP 3**

To: Glyn Mathias, 16 Tamarisk Way, East Preston BN16 2TF  
Tel 01903 859191, or email glyn.mathias@btinternet.com

Can you please reserve me ..... places to attend the **Outing, 14.00, Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> July** to **The Royal Pavilion, Brighton**

Name:.....(Block capitals)

Address.....  
.....

Telephone Number .....

E mail address.....

I enclose a cheque made payable to RCEA for £.....(**£12 per person**) (**Separate cheque for this event please**)

Applications by 8th July 2013

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Session 2012/15

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