



# Emsworth Maritime & Historical Trust NEWSLETTER

President: The Rt Hon. Lord Willetts of Havant  
Reg. Charity No. 1204910

Emsworth Museum

10b North Street, Emsworth, Hants, PO10 7DD  
Tel: 01243 378091 [www.emsworthmuseum.org.uk](http://www.emsworthmuseum.org.uk)

May 2025

## Emsworth Yacht Harbour Celebrates 60 Years

Emsworth Museum re-opened for the 2025 season on Saturday, 5th April. The first temporary exhibition in the David Rudkin Room was curated by Emma Gardiner and celebrated the 60th anniversary of the building of Emsworth Yacht Harbour. The exhibition was formally opened by Tom Marfleet, Managing Director of the Emsworth Yacht Harbour (EYH) Trust.

EYH is one of a select group of companies where the employees own and manage the organisation. This is just one of the significant changes that have taken place since the Museum hosted the 50th anniversary exhibition in 2015.

The yacht harbour's early beginning was as a millpond built in the 19th century by Andrew Bone Hatch to service his new corn mill. When the millpond was no longer required it was used by J D Foster as a pond for seasoning his logs. By the 1960s this by now defunct and decaying industrial infrastructure was rescued by Rear Admiral Philip 'Percy' Gick (1913-2002). Admiral Gick knew the area well both as a resident and as a sailor. Indeed, he had met his wife Aylmer at Emsworth Sailing Club. They were married in 1936 and had three children.



Rear Admiral Gick

In 1960, four years before retiring from a successful Fleet Air Arm career (he served on no less than eight aircraft carriers), Admiral Gick purchased Emsworth Shipyard. He had spotted the potential for a coastal marina where one could just walk down a pontoon to one's boat instead of having to row out to one's craft. He borrowed £1000, hired a drag line dredger with a driver and started digging out a small basin. He was a very hands-on boss, even building his own pile driver at one stage. The excavation of the first basin took three months. Money was tight but once Admiral Gick had proved there was a demand for berths, he was able to secure a bank loan and a further two basins were excavated. As more pontoons were in place, more yachts came, small businesses serving the needs of boats and their boat owners were set up and landscaping began.

In the succeeding years Emsworth Yacht Harbour became an effective enterprise under the leadership of Admiral Gick. He sold the business in 1990 but the new owner had some financial difficulties and Colin and Ann Wakelin became involved in 1993. There is a strong community spirit among the berth holders, 207 at present, and the marina is home to a number of boat clubs each fostering a sense of camaraderie and engagement.

Over 30 years the Wakelin family had never stopped improving the site and they were determined to ensure a successful succession. A chance meeting led to two years of negotiations and the transition to employee ownership.



Enjoying the exhibition are, from left to right, Alison Wakelin, Chairman of the EYH Trust with Ann Wakelin and EYH Trust Managing Director, Tom Marfleet

Continued on page 3

## Diary Dates

Summer Evening Walks (duration approximately 90 minutes) £5.00 per person. Walks start from outside the Museum at 6pm. Please register prior to the day by emailing Nigel Brown at brown.150@btinternet.com. Walks plus Museum visit outside opening hours £6.00 per person.

Exhibitions listed below are held in the David Rudkin Room.

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| May 10th – 26th       | <b>continuation of Exhibition</b> “Emsworth Yacht Harbour 60th Anniversary” |
| May 31st – July 6th   | <b>Exhibition</b> “Women of Emsworth” by Phoebe Atkinson-Eberle             |
| Wed., June 4th        | Summer Evening <b>Walk</b> led by Nigel Brown                               |
| Wed., June 18th       | <b>Treasure Hunt</b> organised by Gordon Braddock                           |
| Wed., July 2nd        | Summer Evening <b>Walk</b> led by Nigel Brown                               |
| July 12th – Aug. 25th | <b>Exhibition</b> “The Swing Riots of 1830” by Neil Spurgeon                |
| August 6th            | Summer Evening <b>Walk</b> led by Nigel Brown                               |
| Aug. 29th – Nov. 2nd  | <b>Exhibition</b> “Portsmouth to Chichester Canal” by Nigel Gossop          |
| November 2nd          | <b>Museum Closes</b>  |

**Emsworth Museum normal opening times are Saturdays, Bank Holidays and Fridays in August  
10.30am to 4.30pm, Sundays 1.30pm to 4.30pm**



## From the Chairman

### AGM

Once again, I start by thanking all those who supported the Annual General Meeting on 20th March. This includes the 44 members who voted by post as well as the 30 members who joined the meeting on the day, six of whom had already voted by post, so we only counted your votes once!

I was particularly pleased with the attendance at the physical AGM. Following the upheaval of the fire in the Community Centre two days earlier, we took the rapid decision to hold the AGM in the Museum. We were able to provide seats for more than 20, plus some standing room. My overall recollection was that it was a friendly meeting – friendly because space was quite limited; friendly because of the atmosphere at the meeting and afterwards.

More than a quarter of our members participated in the AGM by post or by their presence – an achievement of which we can all be proud.

### Museum Exhibitions

The first exhibition this year is to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Emsworth Yacht Harbour. Many of you will remember their 50th anniversary exhibition. This is not just a re-hash of old material – it is a new exhibition with new material. Some of the most exciting developments in EYH’s journey have happened in the last few years. So, do come and see what they have been up to.

This exhibition is another example of the symbiotic relationship we strive to have with the wider Emsworth community – we present exhibitions about particular groups. The members of that group will visit the Museum – many for the first time. We hope that they will be inspired to come back and spend time looking at our permanent collection. We also hope that the exhibiting group gains members as a result of the exhibition.

Now is also the time to come into the Museum and see the changes made during the winter and described in the last newsletter for yourself. There are new objects on display shedding light on important facets of Emsworth’s history.

Following on from the EYH exhibition, we have Phoebe Atkinson’s carefully researched “Women of Emsworth”. On this occasion, she is focussing on the 20th century, but many worthwhile candidates are excluded because we do not have sufficient data on them. So, visit this exhibition; see who has been included; and help us research those who have not been mentioned but you think should have been included.

In July, the exhibition will be about the Swing Riots of 1830. This is a serious piece of national history that disproportionately affected the Emsworth/Westbourne area; involving the Prime Minister (The Duke of Wellington) and the Home Secretary (Robert Peel) of the day. There were draconian punishments for a group of disaffected twenty-year-old farm labourers. What was the result? Come and find out.

The last exhibition for the year will be about the rise and fall of the Portsmouth to Chichester canal.

### 50/50 Club

Our attention has been drawn to the Havant Borough Council Statement of Principles relating to the application of the Gambling Act 2005 within the Borough. Combined with the Gambling Act itself, it is quite clear that we need to re-think the manner in which we operate the 50/50 club. We will have to formalise the rules and obtain a licence. Peter Morse who has run the 50/50 club for many years has indicated for some time that he wished to stand down.

Accordingly, we have decided to close the 50/50 club with immediate effect and to ask members to cancel any 50/50 club standing orders.

I am sure I speak for us all when I say I am deeply grateful to Peter for his dedication in running the 50/50 club. As you will have seen in the last Newsletter, the club has provided funds for many of the embellishments in the Museum over recent years.

As far as the unused part of your subscription is concerned, we will give you a choice of either donating the money to the Museum, or we will return it to the bank account of your choice.



*Peter Morse (left) with Terry Stubbington winner of the first prize in the December 2017 50/50 club draw. Terry is one of the EMHT stewards.*

*The August newsletter will contain a longer article on the 50/50 club.*

### Volunteers

I am pleased to say that this year we have trained eight new stewards, so the whole team now number 50 strong. This means that on average a steward will only be on duty once a month.

I am hoping that some stewards will be inspired by the Museum displays to embark on some of the outstanding research projects – leading to articles in our publications and possibly to an exhibition.

### Outreach

On Sunday 13th April we were invited to Amberley Museum with our ropewalk to demonstrate traditional ropemaking (see picture). Rope was made every half an hour during opening time.

*Trevor Davies*



### *Emsworth Yacht Harbour Celebrates 60 Years continued from page 1*

Emsworth Yacht Harbour Trust was set up in March 2024 and 80 per cent of the ownership was transferred to the employees.

Emsworth Marina has won a number of awards in recent years. It received The Yacht Harbour Association Marina of the Year accolade as Runner up in 2020, 2024 and Winner in 2021, 2022, 2023.



*Aerial views showing the logging pond c 1930 (left) and the marina as it is today*



## AGM Moved to Museum

Following the fire in the roof of the Assembly Room in the Emsworth Community Centre on the afternoon of 18th March, our 50th Annual General Meeting on the 20th was moved to the Museum. Thank you to all those who attended.

The meeting was held in the Main Room. Chairman, Trevor Davies reported on the winter working in his annual report and thanked all volunteers for their services. Emsworth Museum could not function without them. Trevor mentioned, in particular, long-serving members who are retiring this year. He praised Steve Miller who has masterminded changes in the research room and past EMHT Chairman, Tony Stimson who has looked after the building maintenance and liaised with Havant Borough Council.

James Melrose presented the Treasurer's report. It was his seventh set of accounts and his first now that the Trust is a CIO (charitable incorporated organisation). Because of the truncated nature of the evening there was no report from the Curator.

Sixty eight members participated in the vote either in person or by post, that is over 25 per cent of the membership. There must be very few organisations that can claim that level of participation in an AGM. Our thanks to everyone of you.

Trevor Davies, Trevor Smith and Sue Soames were duly re-elected. Trevor Davies said that this would be his final three year stint as Chairman as under the new constitution he cannot stand for re-election in 2028. Following the resignation of Steve Miller, Jane Sadler Kidd was also elected as a charity trustee.

The appointment of Cllr Charles Roberts as representative of Havant Borough Council was ratified as was the reappointment of Richard McMillan as independent examiner of the accounts.



*Minute secretary, Sue Soames and Treasurer, James Melrose discuss the AGM*



*Fire damage to the Assembly Room roof*

The evening ended with the monthly draw of the 50/50 club prizewinners followed by wine, nibbles and chat in the David Rudkin Room. Nigel Craig was the lucky winner of both prizes.

With regards to the fire, the Community Centre was evacuated and no one was injured. Crews from Havant, Cosham, Southsea, St Mary's and our neighbours downstairs attended and the fire was swiftly controlled. Approximately 30 per cent of the roof was damaged. The café, Lumley and Mountford rooms reopened on Thursday, 27th March. The Assembly Room and Library will remain shut. Parking at the Centre is limited.

### Treasure Hunt, 18th June

Save the date. The annual Treasure Hunt is back. This year will be the third such venture since Covid. A slightly longer route (c.3 miles) may be followed from Emsworth to Westbourne and back, starting about 6.30-7.00pm and finishing in the Friends Garden next to the Emsworth Medical Practice.

The questions will be aimed at groups of teenagers or teams of adults, as appropriate. Last year all who participated enjoyed the experience. It takes a lot of time and energy to organise so please do support it if you can. Children are asked to donate £1 each voluntarily and adults £5 each. Do not forget to have a team name and wear appropriate footwear and trousers for muddy paths. There will be prizes for the adult winners and the winning teenage team.

# Global Wars and Chaos

## How did we get there and what's the solution?

The first illustrated talk of the winter/spring season was the latest long-awaited lecture by General David Richards, Baron Richards of Herstmonceux. It was given on Thursday evening, 6th February to a sell out audience in the Emsworth Community Centre of EMHT members, fellow Emsworthians and friends.

In his welcoming address Chairman, Trevor Davies, reminded listeners that General Richards, former Chief of the Defence Staff, was uniquely qualified to speak about the subject of his talk because 'in short, he has been there, done that and got the T-shirt'.

While General Richards intended his discourse to be his personal view of various topics he wanted to conclude by engaging the audience in the debate and the evening talk ended with a lively discussion.

It began, however, with Lord Richards giving a resume of his career. He joined the Army in 1971, aged 18 for just three years. He ended up serving 42 years, becoming the professional head of the British Armed Services in the course of which he had to deploy the skills of soldier, political adviser, diplomat and negotiator.

He described himself as a cold war warrior where the acme of military skill was to defeat the enemy without firing a shot. He was based in Germany for 17 years. Later, he led operations in East Timor, Sierra Leone and Afghanistan liaising with other military forces. As Chief of the Defence staff he had a close relationship with prime ministers and Queen Elizabeth II. He was honoured to carry the Sword of Spiritual Justice at the coronation of King Charles III.

General Richards spoke of the fighting and the current political situation in Ukraine where one problem is that the Ukrainians have not been given

enough weapons to win. Here in the West it is not an existential issue; the consensus appears to be that the situation is dreadful but it is not of critical importance to national interests. Lord Richards considers the conflict to be a Verdun issue. That World War I battle was one of the most savagely fought engagements of that bloody war but militarily there were few gains.

We all want 'instant' success. A point to remember is that 'success' can take years and many forms. For instance, the cold war took over 30 years to reach some sort of conclusion. General Richards looked at other 'areas of disruption' including China and Seoul before focusing on the critical situation in the Gaza strip and the Middle East.

Having looked at both the past and present, General Richards reviewed other possible future problem areas including in Africa, global warming, cyber attacks and the use of artificial intelligence. These situations all come at a time when our land, sea and air services have been seriously depleted.

The wide-ranging debate which followed the talk covered areas such as corruption in Africa, the role of UN peacekeepers, NATO, psychological and cyber warfare and the possibility of World War III.

The evening concluded with the drawing of the raffle and the sale of signed copies of Lord Richards book, *Taking Command*. The profit from monies taken for books sold on the night was donated to the Museum by Lord Richards. We are very grateful for this gift.

The next David Richards lecture has already been arranged and will be held on 5th February 2026 in the Baptist Church. Tickets will be on sale at Bookends of Emsworth in September 2025.



*Lord Richards' incisive insight into global wars and chaos proved as popular as ever to his fascinated audience*

## Wodehouse and the Men of Tost

The second of this year's talks was given by Dr Christine Berberich of the University of Portsmouth on Thursday evening, 6th March, in the Emsworth Community Centre. Her subject was P G Wodehouse and his internment in WWII.

PG had been living in Le Touquet in France with his wife Ethel since the early 1930s. Following the fall of France, Wodehouse was arrested and interned with other male civilian detainees. He was nearly 59. Thus began his journey to Tost (now Toscek) in Upper Silesia by way of Loos prison, Liège and the fortress of Huy in Belgium.

Food was scarce, conditions were often horrific and some train journeys were made in windowless cattle trucks. The building in Tost where the men were housed was a converted mental asylum renamed Ilag VIII. The civilian detainees arrived there in September 1940.

In her talk, Dr Berberich evaluated Wodehouse's own writings on his incarceration along with the memoirs and letters of other inmates to paint a picture of life in the camp.

*'Tost is no beauty spot. It lies in the heart of sugar-beet country...There is a flat dullness about the countryside which has led many a visitor to say "If this is Upper Silesia, what must Lower Silesia be like?"'* (Wodehouse)

*'I can see outside, the kiddies with sledges and think then of my dear girls last winter. Can you imagine what it feels like to be locked up and see the people free outside!'* (Sarginson)

*'The walls are bare and the floors are bare, and when you go out you climb or descend echoing stone stairs.'* (Wodehouse)

*'The building and grounds are very much like your old college for size and disposition.'* (Sarginson)

*'The window sills were used as storage depots for tin cans, cardboard boxes, cold potatoes and other properties...The space between the double windows served as a Frigidaire.'* (Wodehouse)

*'We were thirteen hundred internees (Dutch and British) with but a single thought. A bevy of tapeworms could not have been more preoccupied with the matter of nourishment than the inmates of Ilag VIII.'* (Wodehouse)

*'I keep busy with different things'* (Sarginson)



Dr Christine Berberich

Everyone tried to 'keep busy'. No one knew how long they would be imprisoned. Wodehouse was given a padded cell as a writing room. While in Tost he finished one of his books called *Money in the Bank*. It seemed that the Commandant was a fan and with his help the book was later published in America.

The Nazis were becoming more and more aware that they held an important prisoner. In June 1941, Wodehouse was taken by the Gestapo from Tost to Berlin. The remaining detainees faced another four years of detention.

While in Berlin Wodehouse stupidly agreed to broadcast four talks. He was naïve at best and did not appreciate their propaganda value. He still lived in a pre-war world of 'light-hearted chums'. Little did he or the other inmates at Tost know that Auschwitz was just 30 miles away and Belsen-Birkenau less than a day's drive from their prison. Wodehouse did not return to Tost and was later reunited with Ethel. Internees over the age of 60 were not imprisoned.

The talk concluded with a question and answer session and the drawing of the raffle.

---

## Portsmouth Part 3 1850-1930

Just a few days after the reopening of the Emsworth Community Centre following the fire, Emsworth Maritime & Historical Trust was able to hold the April talk as usual in the Mountford Rooms. Andrew Negus, in the third of his illustrated Portsmouth talks covering the period from 1850 to post WW1, explored the rise of the town and dockyard at a time when the Navy was servicing an ever expanding empire.

By the 1850s Portsmouth had the densest population outside London. Millions of pounds were being spent to protect the Navy, and the dockyard was the largest factory complex in the world employing over 4000 people. The problem was that it was one of the few places offering work, pay was poor and in time of peace a man could be laid off.

The town itself was still filthy, with disease rife and no proper sewage system. But in the next 30 years due to some significant changes the town became healthier and wealthier. The first of these changes was brought about by the transition from ships powered by sail alone to those incorporating steam propulsion. This meant revolutionary alterations for the dockyard. *HMS Warrior*, the world's first iron-hulled warship, was larger, faster, and more heavily armoured than any ship before her. She was too large for the dockyard so to facilitate access for such ships land was reclaimed to enlarge the site. The dockyard was trebled in size and rebuilding and repurposing of existing areas continued throughout the 19th century. Parallel with the extension of the dockyard was the expansion of the dockyard walls.

Andrew posed the question, 'What did they do with the excavated mud?' Answer, 'It was dumped on Whale Island'. The railway had reached Portsmouth in the 1840s and a temporary spur was built to the island to allow for the transportation of MUD. The mud on the seabed was owned by the Diocese of Winchester who received £30,000 in compensation.

A change in the population's health occurred with the construction of sewers and a pumping station at Eastney. The mortality rate began to decrease

and by 1910 Portsmouth could claim to be healthier than many other towns. Its population also became wealthier. There were increased employment opportunities especially for women with the development of corset factories. Women could do piecework at home and still look after any children.

In 1884 the third reform act enabled more men to vote and they began to influence living and working standards. Welfare of sailors and soldiers improved. Andrew mentioned the sterling work undertaken on their behalf by Aggie Weston and Sarah Robinson.

In his wide ranging talk Andrew also alluded to authors such as Conan Doyle, H G Wells and Rudyard Kipling and the maritime artist, William Wyllie. He covered social improvements as in the building of hospitals, prisons and schools as well as hotels, theatres and churches. Emigration was another of his themes. Sports activities and sporting venues were developed. But all this went hand in hand with the development of the dockyard.

The Camber became an enormous coal depot following the construction of a coal-fired power station and a long coal conveyor belt. A new dock was needed to accommodate the Dreadnought battleships. The first was launched in 1906 and once again revolutionised naval warfare. By WW1 there were 15,000 workers in the dockyard. However, many joined up after Britain entered the war. It should not be forgotten that 650 Portsmouth-based sailors perished at the Battle of Jutland while some 5800 Portsmouth men were killed during the four years of often bitter fighting.

Due to a minor glitch, Andrew concluded his fascinating talk at this point as a laptop cable had malfunctioned. Instead Andrew answered many questions from an enthralled audience.



Andrew Negus

---

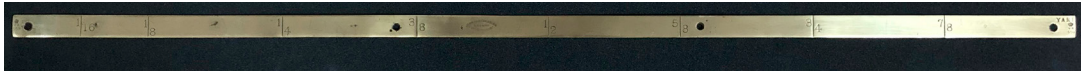
## RNLI Commemorative Book donated to Museum

On behalf of the Museum, Chairman Trevor Davies was delighted to receive a commemorative RNLI book from Chris Hallam and members of the Emsworth Slipper Sailing Club committee. The book, which is on display in the Main Room of the Museum, contains the signatures of individuals from all of the Emsworth Sailing Clubs and supporting organisations. The signatures were collected in 2024 to mark the two-hundredth anniversary of the work of the RNLI in saving lives at sea. The presentation was made this year on 21st January.

*Back row (L to R): Oliver Haines, Vivien Alexander, Charlotte Magan, Bob Gee. Front row: Rona Musker, Angela Haines, Sue Douthwaite, Chris Hallam, Trevor Davies, Barbara Rice, Caroline Tilley*



## Curator's Corner



This month the spotlight falls upon an object that does not qualify for acceptance into the Museum collection. This is because it has no demonstrable link with Emsworth and therefore is not in accord with the Trust's collections development policy. It is a dressmaker's or milliner's brass yard ruler and may have featured in an Emsworth outlet, but we have no proof that this was the case. I was extremely grateful to receive it for use in the Museum as a cutting guide for archivally safe card and foam when using a scalpel or a Stanley knife and at a time when steel/metal rulers are very expensive.

The rule is Victorian as shown by the VR (Victoria Regina) and 559 stamped at either end. The significance of 559 is unclear. It is a yard in length, an inch wide and about an eighth of an inch thick. The rule has four holes allowing it to be screwed to the edge of a wooden desk enabling the shopkeeper to measure out yard lengths of ribbon, tape or other material. The divisions inscribed into the rule are 1/16, 1/8, 1/4, 3/8, 1/2, 5/8, 3/4 and 7/8.



Our former colleague, Geoff Higgins died on 4th March shortly after his 90th birthday. A longer tribute will appear in the August newsletter.

It was manufactured by John Rabone & Sons of Birmingham who established a reputation for the excellence of their rulers and tools after setting up the business at Snow Hill in 1780 and later at the Hockley Abbey Works in 1871. The following year the company's newly patented spirit levels and rules were being exhibited in Moscow, Vienna, Sydney and Melbourne. In 1937, as a listed exhibitor, they were displaying measuring tapes, spirit levels and squares at Castle Bromwich for the British Industries Fair. The company merged with James Chesterman & Co., toolmakers of Sheffield, in 1963 becoming Rabone Chesterman and in 1990 Rabone Chesterman was itself taken over by Stanley Tools.



Many of the larger museums have for some time preferred to record objects like this as part of the handling collection and for use as described above or perhaps for handling in an educational capacity. This way at least the object is being formally recorded on the Museum database as belonging to the Trust. It does however create extra work at a time when we have enough of a challenge processing the core collection.

*Philip A. Magrath*

The views expressed by contributors to this Newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the General Committee. All rights are reserved. Please contact the editor for permission to use any material.

Website: [www.emsworthmuseum.org.uk](http://www.emsworthmuseum.org.uk)

Hon. Secretary: Dorothy Bone  
[dorothybone@btinternet.com](mailto:dorothybone@btinternet.com)

Membership: Shelagh Standen  
[shelaghstanden@gmail.com](mailto:shelaghstanden@gmail.com)

Newsletter Editor: Christine Bury  
01243 377870 [cmbury21@gmail.com](mailto:cmbury21@gmail.com)

If you would like to provide a news article or illustration, please send it to the editor, preferably on disk or by email.

Printed by SRP Design & Print, Leigh Road, Chichester, PO19 8TU Tel: 01243 782988

© Emsworth Maritime & Historical Trust