

The JOURNAL

of The Shoreham Society

MAY 2025

Between the Downs and the Sea



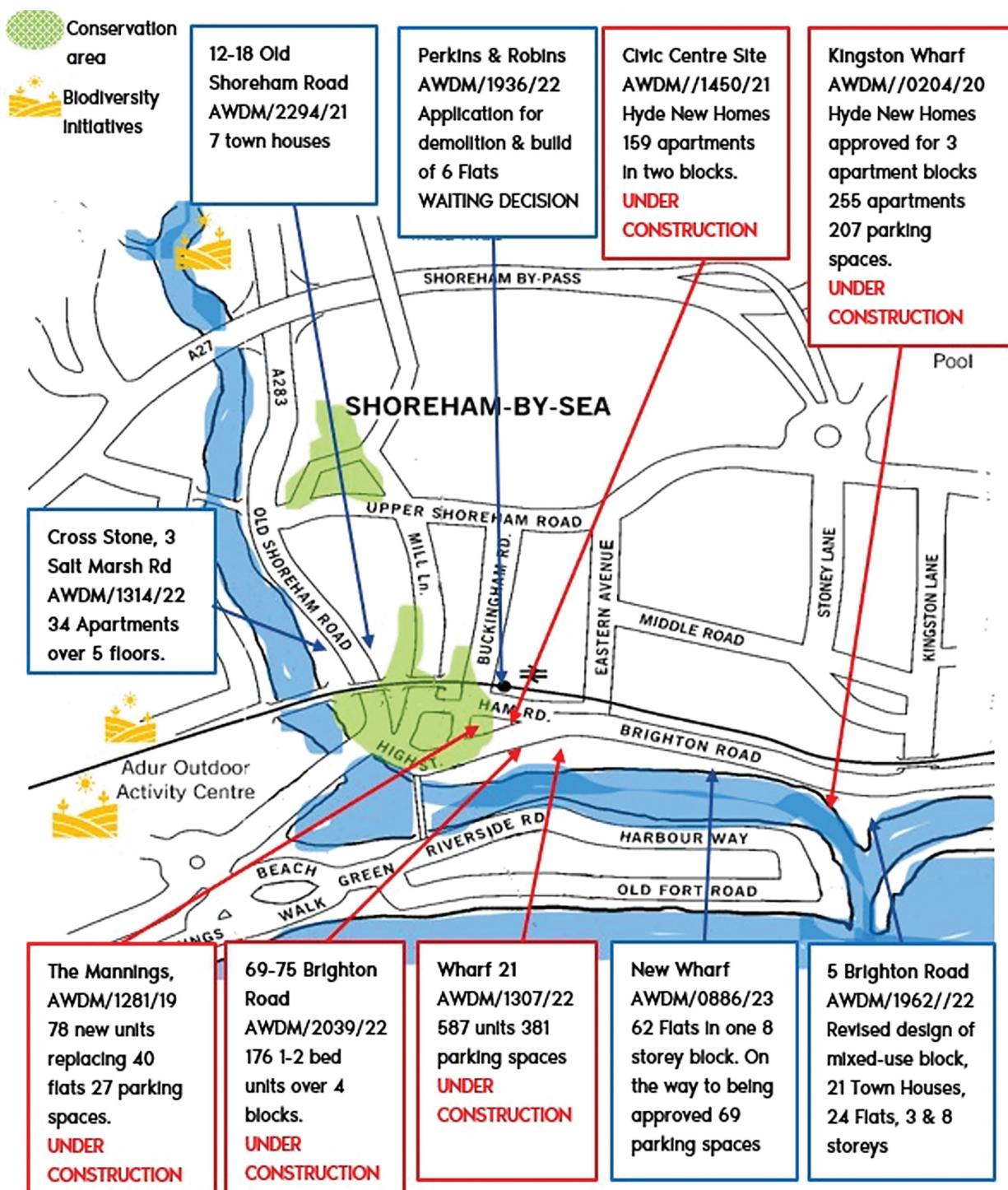
THE INTERVIEW
Joss Loader's Passport
to Shoreham Beach

FROM BEATNIKS TO AIRBNB
Life on a Houseboat

SURVEY 2025
"Horrendous Monstrosities"

 **Shoreham
Society**

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SHOREHAM-BY-SEA



Please contact the Editor if you know of anything that should be included. If you wish to look at a planning application, go to: <https://planning.adur-worthing.gov.uk/online-applications>



Dear Members

Spring is here, and Shoreham is looking particularly beautiful in the sunshine.

In this edition of *The Journal*, we thought we'd celebrate the season by featuring a few of the things that make our town so lovely.

We sail along the estuary to meet a couple of brave women who swapped the landlubber lifestyle for a houseboat.

We take a leisurely stroll along the beach to meet Marine Councillor Joss Loader, who shares with us what it is that makes the Beach such a special community.

We also look forward to the Tree Festival this Summer, when The Shoreham Society joins forces with The Countryside Charity and others to promote all things arboreal.

Our Shoreham Society 2025 Survey found that it is the natural environment and the bustling sense of community that people love most of all about living in the town.

But, according to our Survey, both are currently under threat from the over-development of the Western Harbour Arm. You can find out more on page 5.

And yet there are so many things to celebrate about living in Shoreham-by-Sea. With book reviews and another fantastic poem by Dick Dixon, we hope this edition of *The Journal* really does add to your own joys of Spring!



Richard Bingham

Join us

Shoreham is changing – and fast. Local people need to have a say in how the town develops. That's why The Shoreham Society exists.

- The Society is an independent voice for all who care about the town of Shoreham-by-Sea. Its remit covers planning, conservation, development, the local economy, environmental issues and general local interest. It's strictly non-political and free from commercial interests.
- Members receive free copies of *The Journal* biannually as well as the *Quarterly* update which together keep members in touch with what's going on in the town. They are also first to know about our popular series of talks on local issues.
- Attending an AGM, volunteering at events, or even becoming a member of the Committee – there are many ways you can get involved.

To find out more, and to sign up, visit www.shorehamsociety.org.uk

THE SHOREHAM SOCIETY ON-LINE

Our website and social media are the best way to get a flavour of the range of things The Shoreham Society does. Here are some highlights available via the QR code:



CONTENTS

Page 2	The Shoreham-by-Sea Development map
Page 3	Letter from the Editor
Page 4	The Big Interview – Joss Loader
Page 6	The Shoreham Society Survey 2025
Page 7	Tree Festival
Page 8	Living on the Houseboats
Page 10	Book Review – Life Between The Tides
Page 11	Meet the Team & Creative Corner





Photography: Colin Day

PASSPORT TO SHOREHAM BEACH

In the second of our series of interviews with local politicians, Marine Councillor Joss Loader tells Richard Bingham what makes Shoreham Beach unique.

In that classic British film comedy *Passport to Pimlico*, residents of the London suburb declare independence from the rest of the United Kingdom.

Readers might be surprised to discover that, some decades ago, the same thing nearly happened on Shoreham Beach.

“Someone had the bright idea of declaring UDI,” laughs Joss. “They wanted full independence for Shoreham Beach. And they were quite serious.”

Perhaps it’s not as ludicrous as it sounds. “The Beach is a distinctive community,” Joss explains. “It’s something to do with the geography. We’re a shingle spit, not an island, but we are bounded by the Fort, the lagoon and the estuary. So, it can

feel like an island at times.”

That tradition of independence has found political expression. For the past six decades, the Marine Ward has been represented by Independent Councillors.

“We are selected by the Beach Residents’ Association,” says Joss. “Our old MP Tim Loughton used to say we were one of the best organised Residents’ Associations in the country.”

HARD WORKING COUNCILLOR

Joss has been re-elected three times, the last time with an extraordinary 68% of the votes, the largest majority of any Councillor in Adur. “There’s a tradition of outspoken Councillors here,” Joss remarks. “My

predecessor was Liza McKinney, who was famous for not taking any prisoners.”

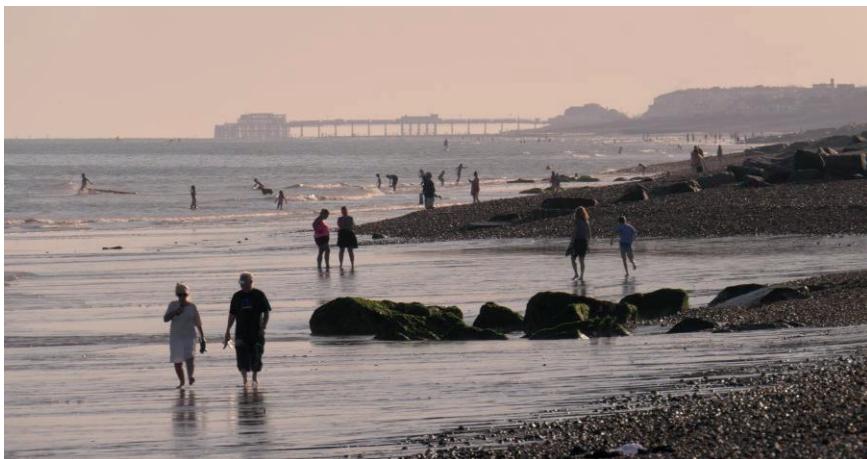
In The Shoreham Society survey, respondents commended Joss by name, praising her responsiveness.

“The Beach is a distinctive community!”

“I don’t like it,” comments Joss, “when people say they aim to respond to emails within seven days. It should be sooner. I also think it’s important to live in the Ward you represent.”

Together with her fellow Independent Marine Councillor, Julia Watts, Joss publishes Beach News magazine three times per year, as well as sending out a monthly email newsletter.

I wondered if being so closely aligned to a Residents’ Association – who also pay Joss’s election expenses – limits her action on wider issues, such as the housing crisis. The Box Park proposal to replace the crumbling toilet block on Beach Green with a two-storey restaurant



was the subject of much controversy. Is there a danger of becoming a nimbyist?

“I think there’s a real role for an independent voice.”

“There have been about three proposals to redevelop the toilet block,” says Joss. “I’m not against change. Not if it means we get a proper public toilet so people can enjoy being on the beach”.

But what really held back the Box Park proposal was a covenant banning the sale of alcohol on Beach Green. When that couldn’t be resolved, Box Park withdrew their application. Perhaps the Council should have consulted more proactively, from the start.

“I couldn’t represent a political party,” Joss goes on. “I also think there’s a real role for an independent voice.

“I’m joint Chair of the Joint Overview

and Scrutiny Committee. My background as a journalist means I like posing the difficult questions, which is useful when we’re reviewing the decisions the Council makes.”

LOCAL CONCERN

I meet Joss just after The Shoreham Society Survey was published. The improvement of public toilets was mentioned by respondents.

As well as toilet facilities, residents were also concerned about car parking. “When it’s a hot day,” says Joss, “people flood onto the beach. Adur has a good parking officer and when it looks like it’s going to be scorcher I’ll contact him to arrange more warden patrols.

“But we are hamstrung by the parking laws. We’ve repeatedly tried to persuade West Sussex County Council to issue a new Traffic Regulation Order so we can paint more yellow lines in strategic places, but so far they’ve refused.”

A third concern for local residents was the increase in anti-social

behaviour by young people.

“Individual police officers are really supportive,” comments Joss. “They will issue Dispersal Orders banning groups from gathering. But we’re also trying to find practical solutions. There’s a high wall separating Beach Green from residents’ houses that teenagers sometimes walk along. We’re arranging planting to ensure they can’t reach the wall anymore.”

Listening to Joss, it strikes me how she seems to spend less time on politics and more time with her constituents. Hard-working, responsive and a champion for the unique environment of the beach – Joss Loader seems like the perfect local Councillor.

WHO IS JOSS LOADER?

Joss has lived in Shoreham since she was seven years old. She began her career as a trainee journalist with *The Shoreham Herald*. Like many journalists, Joss moved into Public Relations, acting as the PR for Shoreham Power Station after a stint as Comms Manager for Worthing Council and then a local NHS Trust.

Joss has lived on the Beach since 1986, when she moved to Emerald Quay, with an interlude in Findon Village when her two children were young. But she soon returned.

“I love this town,” she says. “I was married in St Mary’s Church and my father’s funeral was held in the same place. Shoreham is my home.”



Growing Pains

Not everyone in beautiful Shoreham-by-Sea is happy. In fact, a lot of them are very angry.

And it's the new blocks of flats along the Western Harbour Arm that are provoking the most ire.

The 2025 Shoreham Society Survey found out that only 9% of residents found themselves agreeing with the statement "Recent new buildings have been well designed and built".

In addition, a measly 6% of respondents agreed with the statement, "My views about future building developments are listened to".

Published in January, The Shoreham Society Survey was completed by a record 836 respondents, spread equally across the five wards. One disgruntled respondent called the flats at Wharf 21 and Kingston Wharf "hideous".

Another used the word "monstrosities" to describe the buildings.

A FAILURE OF VISION

Residents complain about the size of the blocks of flats being out of scale with the town. But that's not the only issue.

The same month our report came out, local MP Tom Rutland asked a question in Parliament about the way Shoreham children are bused to attend school in Worthing because of a chronic lack of school places in Shoreham.

That week, two Shoreham Society members rang their local GP to make an appointment, only to hear the anodyne recorded voice telling them they were "99th in the queue". (Presumably, they stop counting at one



hundred!)

The A259 already grinds to a complete halt whenever anyone digs up the road, and the new developments will add to that pressure.

The flood defence wall along the Western Harbour Arm remains a gleam in the planner's eye.

It is the lack of master planning that is holding us back. The original plan in 2019 promised a new Western Harbour Arm that would create new facilities for employment, leisure and tourism.

To date, however, nothing but flats have been built. There are no new facilities for leisure and tourism. There is nothing to put Shoreham on the map, or to provide new amenities for existing and new residents. This is a regeneration project in name only. In short, it's a huge, wasted opportunity to do something special for the town.

Instead, as our Report suggests, the Western Harbour Arm has been a smash and grab designed to hit unrealistic central government housing targets.

The Shoreham Society has been making a fuss about all this. In addition to publishing the Survey, we have held a series of meetings with local Councillors. We have also been working with Adur Residents' Environmental Action (AREA) to seek to influence the planning process. Residents' concerns are to be the subject of an extensive article in *The Evening Argus*.

Add your voice to the campaign by joining The Shoreham Society today.

To find out what people in your Ward are thinking, view the full Survey Report here:



CALLING ALL BUDDING ARBOREALISTS



Tree Festival 2025 is a fantastic line-up of events across Sussex and the Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere. The Festival has been carefully curated to help us reconnect with nature and appreciate the incredible role trees play in our lives.

There's something for everyone – from walks, talks, music and storytelling to children's activities and our 'I Love This Tree Because...' photography competition. Whether you're curious about wildlife or simply love being outdoors, everyone's welcome.

A key event to look out for is Branch Out on 14 June in Shoreham, where Susan Raikes, Director of Wakehurst, joins local and national experts to share how we can all help – from planting and caring for trees to supporting initiatives like the new forests across Britain. To find out more, just use the QR code at the

bottom of the page.

Sponsored by The Shoreham Society, the Ropetackle Story Tellers will be joining in the fun with their take on the folklore, myths and legends of Sussex. The evening features local Forest School leader Heidi McNie.

We hope you will attend one or more of our events but of course the real reason for the Tree Festival is to make our local area a better place to live by planting trees! If you are wondering what you can do close to home to extend the goodness trees and plants can bring, here are some thoughts.

If you live in a flat, try planting cress or micro-greens on your kitchen windowsill, put a pot tree on a balcony or a hanging basket on an outside wall. For ideas look up Jenn-Growing Trees at Home on Instagram.

Already have an outside space?



Lift a flag, dollop in some compost and pop in some seeds or fill pots with shrubs and water often.

"The real point of the Tree Festival is to make our area a better place to live by planting trees."

Check out the tree sapling offers from The Birch Tree Project on Facebook.

Plant trees in your road? Do you want to live in a leafy avenue instead of a barren streetscape? Get together with neighbours to get trees planted in your green verges.

Search West Sussex County Council "donate a tree".

Tree Festival 2025 is the brainchild of the Campaign for The Protection of Rural England.

The Festival has been supported by The Shoreham Society and our long-term partners Transition Town.

To enter your own project for a prize, go to the Transition Town Shoreham website. A prize will be awarded for the best project at the 2026 Tree Festival.



From Beatniks to Airbnb ...

Photography: Polly Cole

Richard Bingham meets Polly Cole and Jessica Aidley, both long term residents of houseboats moored along the Adur Estuary.

It's not often that Shoreham makes the national press.

But way back in September 1962 that's exactly what happened when a reporter from *The Sunday Pictorial* – soon to be rechristened *The Sunday Mirror* – visited a group of "beatniks" who lived on the houseboats.

"We don't believe in marriage," one of the teenage bohemians told the reporter. "But we don't raise hell," insisted another.

Shoreham's bohemian riverbank has been a feature of the town for decades. What began as a cheap alternative to housing has become a rather gentrified place of late. You can find houseboats for rent on Airbnb now – "quirky" is the epithet they choose to describe their holiday let. Many readers will have seen the recent *Grand Designs* program on Channel 4, featuring Shoreham-based architect Howard Carter's extraordinary houseboat, which looks more like a Stealth bomber than a boat.

THE GOOD SHIP LUNASEA

It wasn't always like that.

"We moved here in 1980," says Polly



Photography: Jessica Aidley



Cole, who now lives on Fische, a former minesweeper whose grey bows dwarf the towpath. "We thought it would help us out for a few years until we could afford a house again. But here we are, nearly 45 years later."

Polly and her family first lived on the wonderfully named Lunasea, a former Navy Torpedo Boat. "Lunasea sank in 2003, by which time we had bought Fische."

Polly agrees that things have changed in the last five decades. "In 1980, almost all the houseboats were Navy ships that had been decommissioned after the Second World War. Gradually, the old boats have been replaced. At first, people built on the old flat-bottomed barges. Now they tend to build on floating platforms."

Originally, moorings along the riverbank were rented. In 1986, however, West Sussex County Council sold the freeholds to the residents.

PREJUDICE

Living off-grid has always aroused the suspicions of those who prefer the solidity of bricks and mortar. "When we first moved to the riverbank," says Polly, "there was a derogatory attitude. Our children were sometimes teased at school about living on an old boat."

Fortunately, however, things have changed. "The new flood defences have meant that more people than ever walk along the riverbank. Nowadays, we get more compliments than complaints."

It seems the houseboats have

become something of a tourist attraction. "I don't think I'd be able to afford one now," says Polly.

PART OF NATURE

Closeness to nature is what houseboat owners rate so highly.

"Every day is different," says Polly. "We have an almost 360-degree view of the sky. Depending on the tides and the weather, the light can be extraordinary. The sunsets are amazing."

Jessica Aidley has lived on Myrtle - one of the houseboats built on a former Thames lighter - since 2011. Like Polly, Jessica moved onto Myrtle because she could not afford more landlocked accommodation.

"We are very much part of nature," agrees Jessica. "The tides affect us far more than they would in a stationary land-side building. And, of course, we have wonderful views of the RSPB Adur Estuary Bird reserve."

According to the RSPB, many different wading birds and wildfowl

visit the estuarine and saltmarsh reserve during their winter migration. These include red-listed birds such as redshank and greenshank, curlew, whimbrel, godwits plus lots of teal, snipe and lapwings. Little egrets, herons and noisy oystercatchers can be seen more frequently throughout the year. Kingfishers can often be seen in winter.

The reserve is located at the intersection of two important wetland habitats - saltmarsh and mudflats - making it great for feeding and for nesting. Access to the reserve is restricted in order to protect these habitats. But the houseboat owners get a view of the birds that is up close and personal.

A CREATIVE COMMUNITY

The other thing Jessica values most is the community along the riverbank. "People here have really interesting histories, including exploring Tibet, living in Sri Lanka, working at Glyndebourne, making wedding dresses for larger women,



working with grey seals and helping dyslexic children to read."

It's a creative community, too. "There are musicians, writers and poets," says Jessica. "And there's a monthly 'Kollab' on the Verda, where people from all over Sussex share music, poetry, comedy and storytelling.

"We are very much part of nature. The tides affect us more than they would in a stationary, landside building."

"People are always ready to help each other when things go wrong," Jessica concludes. "Living on the river, things do go wrong - like the power going down. But we're an inventive lot and find solutions for each other."

SAME CONCERN

Landlubber or sailor, some concerns of Shorehamites remain the same. "Sitting here watching the new flats going up along the Western Harbour Arm has been interesting," explains Jessica, who is a Reverend in the Church of England. "The night view of their illuminated cranes is beautiful, especially at high tide.

But I am worried whether the infrastructure will keep pace.

For decades now, houseboats have been a remarkable feature of Shoreham. Long may they continue!



Photography: Jessica Aidley



CONSIDER THE LIMPET



A review of 'Life Between The Tides', Adam Nicolson's eye-opening new book about rock-pooling.

Rock pools are not just for kids. "A cupping of the sea, a stilling," Adam Nicolson calls them.

Four years ago, Nicolson spent time living in a house at the head of a bay in Morvern on the west coast of Scotland. Whilst there, fascinated by the life forms they contained, Nicolson built three rock pools. The first failed but the other two gained him access to startlingly different worlds.

Consider the humble limpet. It moves up to four inches per minute, using a "foot" hidden beneath its shell. As it meanders round the rock pool, it lays a sticky slime trail that becomes a breeding ground for micro-algae and other tiny vegetal life.

"Life between the tides is as much about humans as it is about sea-life. The final part of the book turns to the people who inhabited this part of the highlands."

Returning to the trail, the limpet hoovers up these sources of nutrition. "Gardening", Nicolson calls it.

Nicolson's description of the sea creatures he finds in his rock pool

are brilliant. Prawns become "transparent, glass-beings" that hover in the water "glimmer-still", shielded by their silvered "glamour-armour".

We are living through a golden age of nature writing, and the first part of the book joins the likes of Robert McFarland and Kathleen Jamie.

In addition to nature writing, however, Nicolson brings cutting edge scientific research to bear on his discussion of these tiny sea creatures, much of which questions the distinction we customarily make between 'conscious' humans and 'instinctive' crustaceans.

The second part of the book spins further out from the Scottish coast, exploring the influence of the planets on the tides. At one point Nicolson takes a limpet from a rock and houses it temporarily in an aquarium in his house.

Amazingly, it was only when the tide fell on the nearby beach that the limpet began its gardening. Of course, the water in the aquarium remained at the same level. And yet, like the other crustacea, the limpet had its own inbuilt tide timetable.

Life Between Tides is as much about humans as it is about sea-life. The final part of the book turns to the people who inhabited this part of the Highlands. It takes a deep dive into their mythology, including the story of Catherine Argyll, a medieval clan chieftain abandoned by her murderous husband on a rock to be swept away by the rising tide.

To this day, the rock is still called Lady's Rock.

Nicolson also traces the hardness of the life of the people, who, despite using seaweed as a fertilizer for the poor soil, experienced crop-failure and famine right up until the middle of the nineteenth century. He also explores the disappearance of enchantment – the belief in sinister fairies – under the slow onslaught of modernity.

The book is one of many recent publications that range freely across genres. Social history, literature, biology, ecology – all these become grist to Nicolson's mill. The digressive results can become a little wearisome in parts: not every marvel is as marvelous as the last.

But, enriched as it is by Kate Boxer's delicate line drawings, it remains a wonderfully written jewel box of a book, with many delights to reward the patient reader.

Low spring tides mean that rock pools on Shoreham Beach teem with sea creatures. You can find plenty of crabs, each with its own distinctive camouflage, colouring that indicates which part of the shoreline the crab habituates. Watch out, too, for prawns, sea anemones, cockles, edible periwinkles and tiny sea worms.

To find out more check out the wonderful website run by Glaucus at <https://www.glaucus.org.uk/>

The Back Page

In each edition of *The Journal* we will be introducing you to a member of the Committee. We will also be featuring some of the fantastic creativity that makes Shoreham-by-Sea such a great place to live

Meet the Team



NAME

Christina Robinson

WHAT DO YOU DO FOR SHOREHAM SOCIETY?

I sit on the Exec Committee and help produce *the Journal* and *Quarterly*.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN SHOREHAM?

I have lived here for 4 years, after moving from London, where I lived for most of my life.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT LIVING IN SHOREHAM?

Location, location, location! Where else can you have such easy access to the beach, to river life, to the beautiful South Downs and direct trains to London? It's a no brainer! I feel privileged to live here.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING ABOUT SHOREHAM, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

I would love to remove all those horrid blocks of flats that have been and still are being built along the coastal road. They are not just an eyesore; they are ruining the natural assets that drew me to the town. It's starting to look like a prison block!

WHAT WAS THE FIRST RECORD YOU PURCHASED?

Jackson 5 – 'Looking through the Windows'

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF

I retired five years ago after a long career in IT. I started in Mobile Telecoms Technology in the late 1980s and delivered many solutions to a variety of Network Operators across the globe. In later years I transferred my skills to work at Age UK and focused on delivering the transformation of their marketing platform. I now while away my time at a much slower pace and recently took a Foundation course in Art and Design at Brighton Met. I enjoy drawing and painting and when the weather is good, pottering around in my allotment.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO HELP PRODUCE THE PUBLICATIONS?

Essential components of this role are:

- Using MS Word to produce *the Journal* and *Quarterly* to the agreed style guide.
- Imparting and managing digital images and editorial
- Working with the Editor to publish according to schedule.

Creatives' Corner

Resident author Dick Dixon and his partner, the French artist Reine Mazoyer, have worked together since 2013.

SUSSEX WAYS

Up beyond this old and troubled world,
Summer breezes calm the frenzied mind;
Just look down through fluffy kitten clouds,
And watch the silent landscape left behind.

Patchwork quilt of grass and field;
Rocky outcrops – harbour's swelling mouth,
Mirrored blue of river Adur's flow,
And busy airport – gateway to the south.

On the Downs the barns and barrows
Clutch ancient Sussex secrets still; Gulls and gannets
swoop and screech at play –
An antique dance the sky aspires to fill.

They're guardians of undated land,
With coastlines stretching far and fast –
And stars appear near eventide,
To tell heroic stories of the past.

Lancing College: seat of learning,
Academic face of treasured words –
Made knowledge for such eager minds
That fly their nest like brightly-coloured birds.

Office blocks and tiny churches;
Slow-moving cars, but hard to miss,
And people – misty crawling dots from here,
From those who made our home now what it is:

Strong, courageous, bright of eye,
Quick of mind, adroit and deft of hand,
And always, as the past has shown,
Ready, aye, to defend their native land.

So people then, who made us men
And women worthy of the name:
Who brought us up in Sussex
To live and love this place from which we came.



Discover more of Dick and Reine's fabulous work at:
dick-dixon.com



Join us

Shoreham is changing – and fast. Local people need to have a say in how the town develops. That's why The Shoreham Society exists.

- The Society is an independent voice for all who care about the town of Shoreham-by-Sea. Its remit covers planning, conservation, development, the local economy, environmental issues and general local interest. It's strictly non-political and free from commercial interests.
- Members receive free copies of *The Journal* biannually as well as the *Quarterly* update which keeps them in touch with what's going on in the town. They are also first to know about our popular series of talks on local issues.
- Attending an AGM, volunteering at events, or even becoming a member of the Committee – there are many ways you can get involved.
- To find out more, and to sign up, visit www.shorehamsociety.org.uk

THE SHOREHAM SOCIETY ON-LINE

Our website is the focal point of the Society's communications. With topical news stories, an archive of our Journals and email newsletters, useful planning resources and reports, connections to many local community and voluntary groups, all our event information and ways to join the Society and contact us, it has everything. No wonder over 1000 people a month look at it!

