

# PORTSMOUTH IN TRANSITION

The Changing Face of the City

Robert Hind

Portsmouth was a prominent target for German bombs in the Second World War. Much of the city had to be re-built so that post-war some parts of it were unrecognisable. However, for a variety of reasons, much of that mid-century reconstruction itself grew tired and unloved so that from the 1960s widespread redevelopment took place.

Using contemporary images from the 1960s and 1970s – many sourced from the *Portsmouth Evening News* – local historian Robert Hind compares the historic scene with current views to show just how much change has occurred within a single short lifetime. Whole areas of the city changed so drastically in the ten years between 1968 and 1978 that anyone who left the city before those years and returned today would have trouble recognising where they were.

Robert Hind has a fascination for Portsmouth which he shares in this totally absorbing comparison between the city of today and the city of 'the day before yesterday'

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

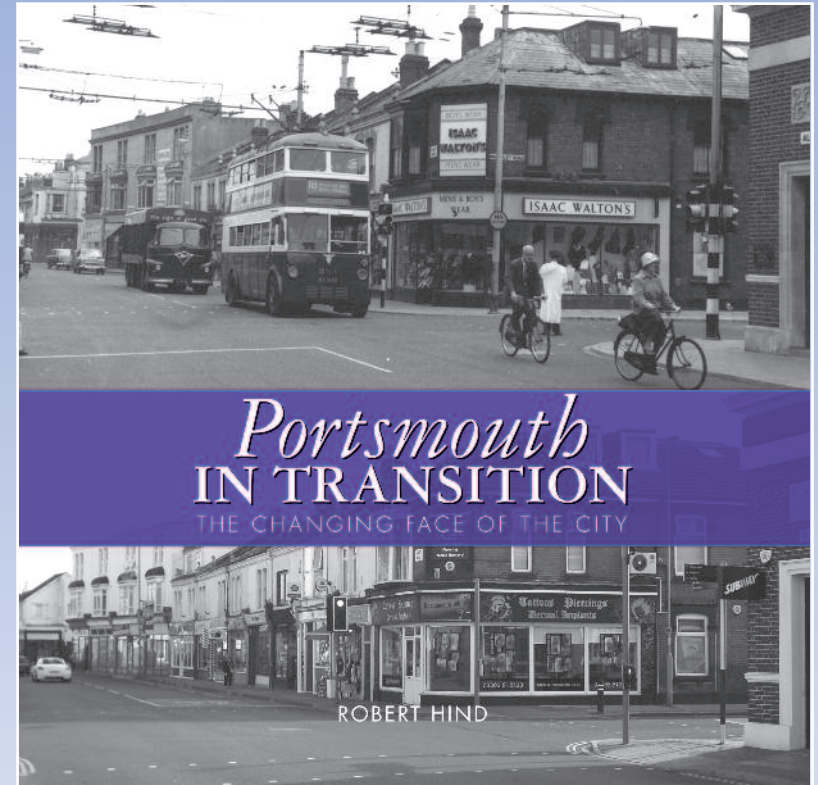


**Robert Hind** began his writing career when working as a railway guard in 1989: always good at "composition" at school, he volunteered to put together a staff magazine and has been writing ever since. Now living in Havant, he is a regular nostalgia correspondent for the Portsmouth News, with a column every Saturday, and has to date written four books, including *War-torn Portsmouth – Then, After and Now* (Halsgrove 2016).

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Imprints: Halsgrove, Ryelands, Halstar, PIXZ Books & Halswood Journals. Halsgrove® is a registered trademark. Copyright© 2017

# HALSGROVE TITLE INFORMATION



**Format:** *Paperback, 112pp, 205x205mm, profusely illustrated in black and white*

**Price:** *£9.99*

**ISBN:** *978 0 85704 309 2*

**Imprint:** *Halsgrove*

**Published:** *November 2017*



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Wellington, Somerset TA21 9PZ Tel: 01823 653777 Fax: 01823 216796  
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Left: A look along Commercial Road circa 1950. Full of life and atmosphere.

Above: The same view along Commercial Road. Lacking atmosphere and so dull.



Above: The bridge over the Camber, Old Portsmouth in the early years of the last century. The tall white building to the left remains, called the Bridge Tavern.


Below: The same view today. The Bridge Tavern is a popular location with locals and tourists alike.



Example of a double-page spread.

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**W**hat was one of Portsmouth's most popular cinemas started to see business go downhill when the television came into being. We go out on a cold winter's evening when it was all there in front of you stamped in a lovely warm line. The film, not was called, opened on Saturday 29 September, 1948 with a specially invited audience.




Here is the Gaumont - originally the Plaza - cinema in 1948. It was the first to show all the world's best movies and a top-notch city cinema. It was the first to show the world's best movies.

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The cinema foyer was decorated in a Tudor style along with the floors and thick pile carpets. A total of 2207 people in the stalls and box in the circle gave the cinema much atmosphere. When the 'bobbies' first came to Portsmouth it was the Plaza that led the way with five Stages and seating. A lot of the film packed there in for several weeks. The three-sided box shelter was built to give newspapers protection from the weather whichever way it came in from.



Here we see the former Plaza and Gaumont cinema and Stage that today exist as a Mosque.

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