# Portsmouth 1860

In the thirty years before the launch of *HMS Warrior* Portsmouth had been through a huge period of growth.  The Reform Act of 1832 saw the boundaries of Portsmouth extend beyond Hilsea. This boundary is still marked by an obelisk opposite the Green Posts pub on London Road.

The town also greatly increased its population.  In the 1840s the number of people living in Portsmouth grew from 53,000 to 72,000.  Coming into the 1860s there were over 95,000!
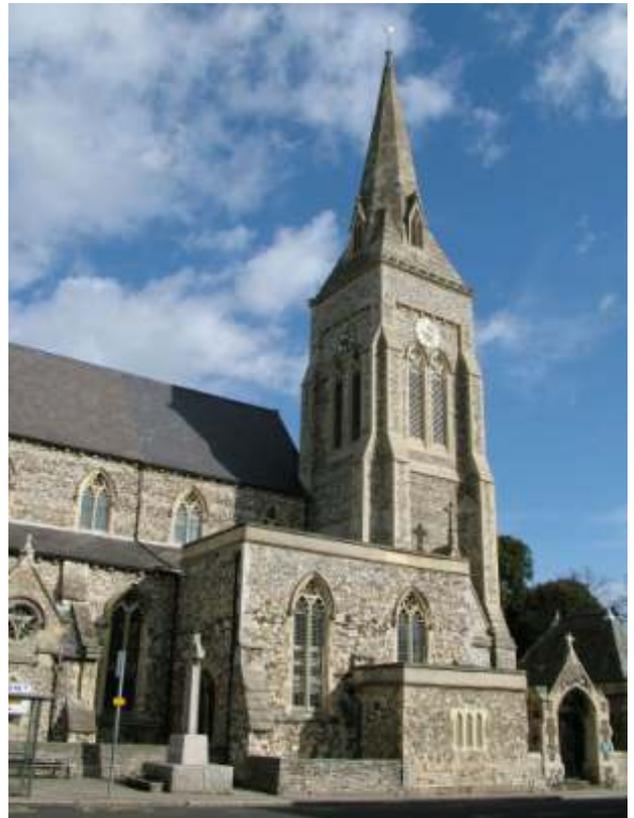
The expansion of the Royal Navy was the driving force behind this growth.  A bigger navy meant a bigger dockyard was needed.  A bigger dockyard meant a bigger garrison was needed to protect it. In the 1840s another seventeen acres was added to the Dockyard as it continued to grow on the western side of Portsea Island.

The 1840s saw the town acquire its first police force.   A new Guildhall was built on the High St near the corner of Pembroke St. The first horse drawn omnibus was started in 1840, running from Palmerston Rd (then known as The Village) to North End by way of Southsea Common, the Quay, the Hard, Queen St, the Lion Gate and along Commercial Rd. The railway arrived in 1847, providing a fast link with London and Brighton.



St Jude's Church, Southsea

The fastest growing parts of the town in this period were Southsea and Landport.  Landport, the area around Commercial Rd, in the district today covered by Lake Rd and Arundel St, was the home of working class people, often accommodated in hurriedly constructed houses.

Southsea became a middle class suburb and holiday resort. Its architecture was dominated by the work of Thomas Ellis Owen and he was responsible for elegant buildings such as Portland Terrace and St Jude's Church. He was also elected Mayor of Portsmouth in 1847 and again, near the end of his life, in 1862.  By the time of his death, Southsea was the place to be seen, a fashionable resort where visitors, and locals, could promenade and watch the garrison drilling on Southsea Common.  Visitors could also take a stroll along Clarence Pier, opened in 1863.

The Portsmouth Grammar School

# Portsmouth 1860

Despite its fashionable areas, Portsmouth was home to some of the worst slums in the country. These awful places were located at the end of Broad St in Old Portsmouth and in the area now occupied by Gunwharf Quays.  In the 1840s this part of town contained disgusting places such as Prospect Row.

Prospect Row was reached through a narrow tunnel known as Squeeze-Gut Alley. Records tell us that 116 people lived here, some in cellars, with only one toilet and one standpipe (supplying water for perhaps ten minutes a day) between them.

In the now fashionable Oyster St, alongside what is now the Cathedral, but was then the parish church of St.Thomas, drains ran straight into the Camber, while pedestrians ran the risk of being mowed down by pigs running wild in St.Thomas's St.

Beyond the slums of Old Portsmouth and the overcrowded houses of Landport, much of Portsea Island was still open country.  There were farms throughout the central and northern parts of the town.  Goldsmith Avenue takes its name from the family which farmed the area.   The barn in Milton Park is a relic from this time.  North End was still something of a village and from the later 1860s some of Portsmouth's wealthier families began to move there, building rather grand houses along the London Rd and the avenues running across the town to Copnor Rd.



The Theatre Royal

By the 1860s some attempt had been made by the town authorities to tackle some of the worst social problems in Portsmouth.  Under local Acts of Parliament measures were taken to improve the town by providing a better water supply, the removal of people deemed to be 'nuisances' and the provision of drains and pavements.

The cultural life of the town got a boost in 1856 with the opening of the Theatre Royal in Commercial Rd, next door to the White Swan Inn.

At the time of *HMS Warrior's* launch Portsmouth, although still scarred by pockets of extreme poverty, was a thriving, expanding town starting to make significant improvements to the lives of its residents.
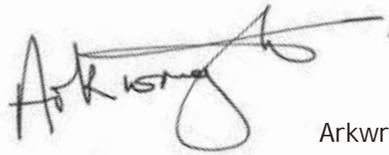
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# Out & About in Portsmouth 1860

Here's the deal.  I got this case and it's driving me nuts so I need some help. That's where you come in kiddo.

I've got a file with snaps of eight Portsmouth landmarks and I've gotta find out if they were around in 1860.  Not only that, I've gotta mark their locations on a map.  So, take a look at the pictures and say whether you think it was there in 1860 and then put a cross on the map where you think they are.  If you've actually seen the thing with your own eyes put a tick in the circle next to the picture as well.

Most of the answers you need are on this website somewhere.  You might have to search the internet for some of the others.  The question is - can you find them?
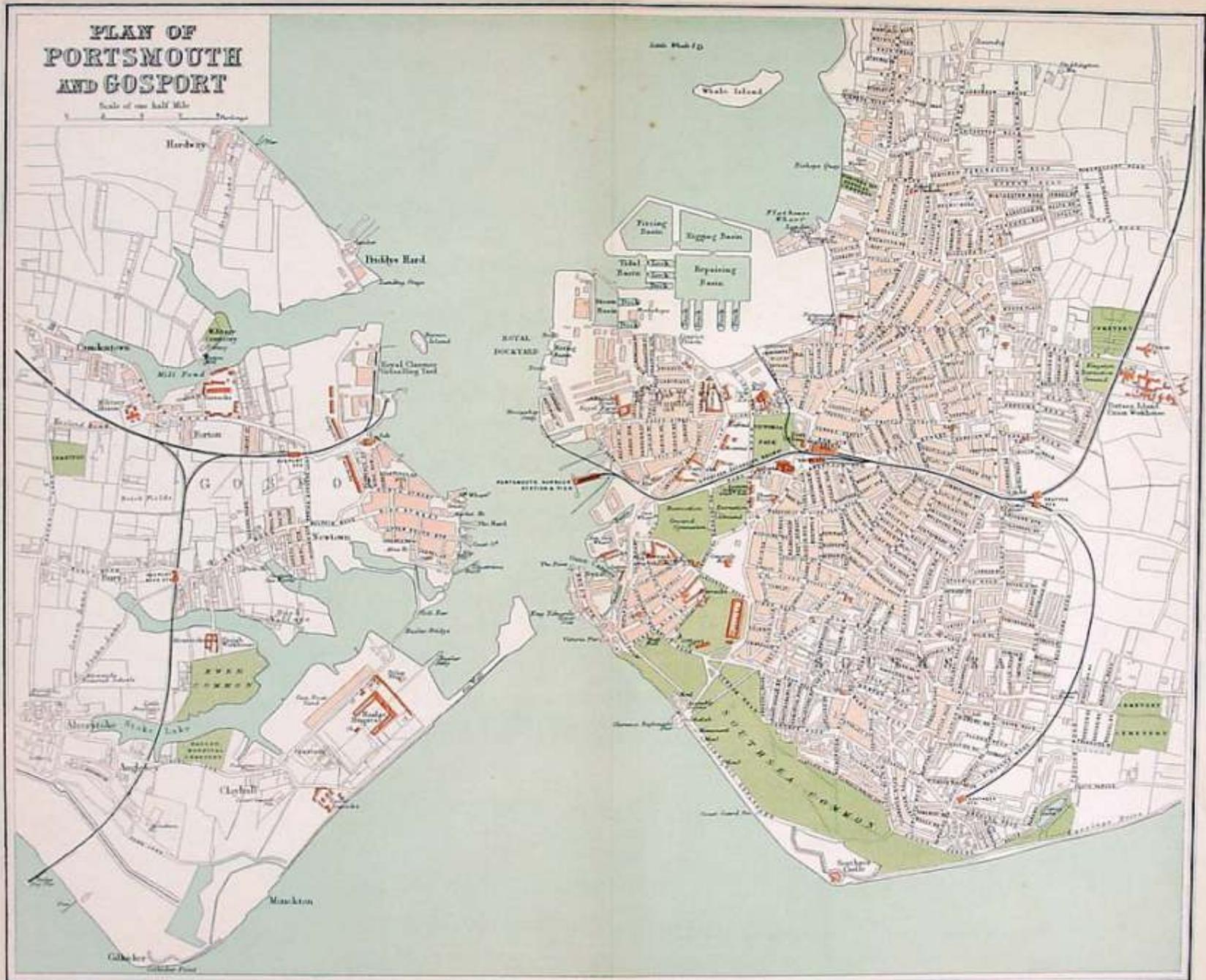
Good luck.

Arkwright Watt, Ace History Detective

The Portsmouth Grammar School

# Out & About in Portsmouth 1860

1.



I've seen it!

St Jude's Church, Southsea

Was it there in 1860?

Yes     No

2.



I've seen it!

The Theatre Royal

Was it there in 1860?

Yes     No

3.



I've seen it!

Spitbank Fort

Was it there in 1860?

Yes     No

4.



I've seen it!

Portsmouth Dockyard

Was it there in 1860?

Yes     No

5.



I've seen it!

The Spinnaker Tower

Was it there in 1860?

Yes     No

6.



I've seen it!

Clarence Pier

Was it there in 1860?

Yes     No

7.



I've seen it!

Portsmouth Naval Memorial

Was it there in 1860?

Yes     No

8.



I've seen it!

Canoe Lake, Southsea

Was it there in 1860?

Yes     No

The Portsmouth Grammar School

VT Shipbuilding

# Out & About in
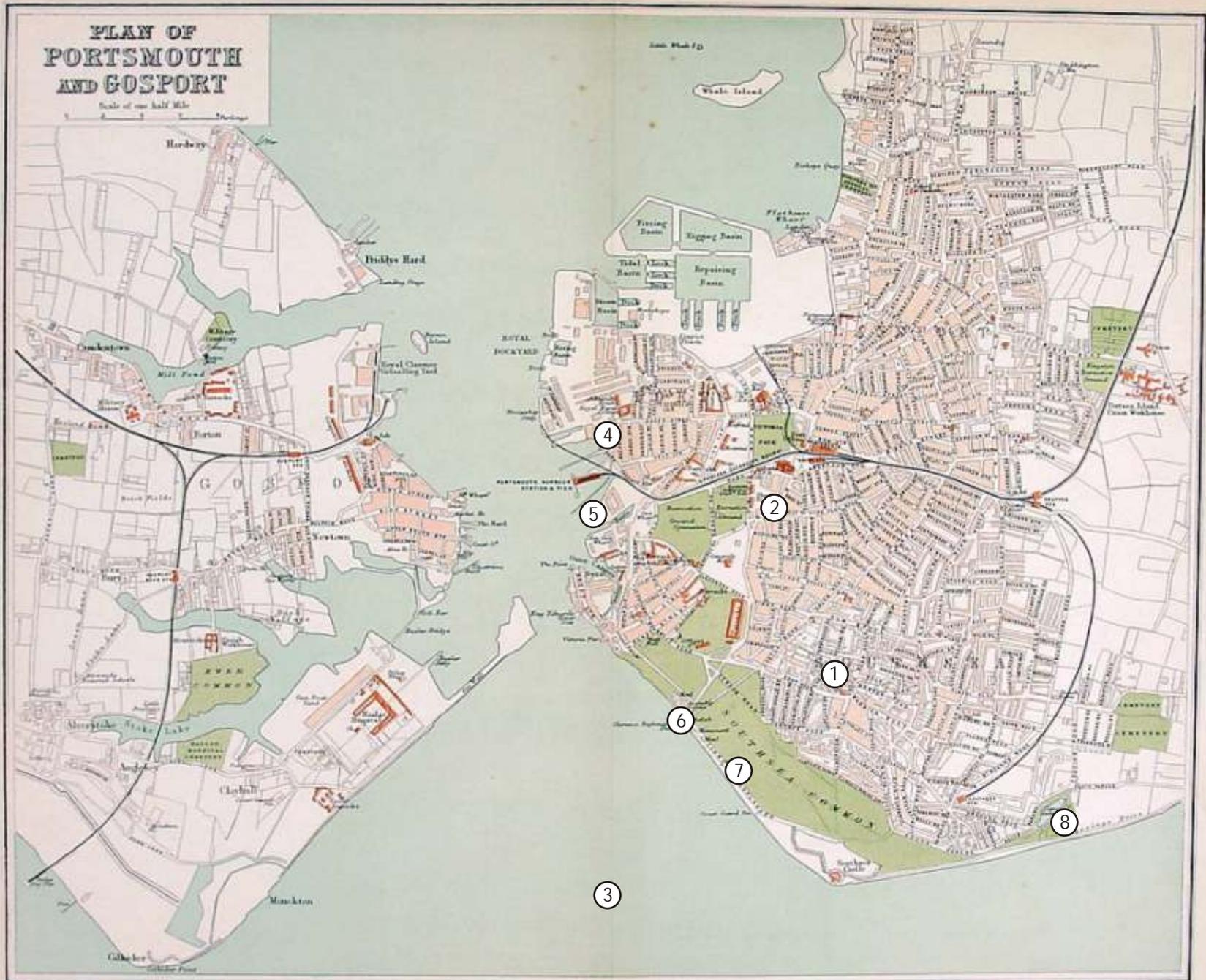# Portsmouth 1860

The Answers
No cheating!  Try and find out for yourself before you look at these.

1.    St Jude's Church, Southsea
      Yes - designed by the architect Thomas Ellis Owen and consecrated in 1851

2.    The Theatre Royal
      Yes (kind of) - originally the Landport Hall, the building was converted for
      use as a theatre in 1856.  The present building dates from 1884 when the
      Landport Hall was completely remodelled by the architect C.J. Phipps.

3.    Spitbank Fort
      No - work began on Spitbank in 1861.  After lots of stopping and starting the
      fort was finally completed in June 1878.

4.    Portsmouth Dockyard
      Yes - King Richard I ordered the construction of a dockyard in Portsmouth,
      and granted the town its first charter, in 1194.

5.    Spinnaker Tower
      No - opened in 2005 the Spinnaker Tower is very much a modern addition to
      the Portsmouth skyline.

6.    Clarence Pier
      No - Clarence Pier opened in 1863.  Building began in 1861.

7.    Portsmouth Naval Memorial
      No - unveiled october 1924 this memorial commemorates officers, ranks and
      ratings of Portsmouth who died at sea during World Wars I and II.

8.    Canoe Lake, Southsea
      Yes (kind of) - records of a lake here date back to the 1600s and earlier.  However,
      it was only opened as a boating lake in 1886.  If you look carefully at the map
      supplied with this activity you can see the lake marked.

The Portsmouth Grammar School

Map
Portsmouth 1860

The Locations

The Portsmouth Grammar School

VT Shipbuilding