

## *South Gosforth Residents Association Annual Report 2004 by Jerry Ruddick*



### **Chairman's Annual Report 2004**

It seems that it was only a short time ago that I was writing the annual report for the Association as Vice Chairman. This report for 2004 marks the end of my first year as Chairman of South Gosforth Residents Association.

It has been an enjoyable year during which the Association has been actively involved in taking on a wide range of issues within South Gosforth, some successful and others not.

From the Annual General Meeting held in April 2003 the association received concerns from a local resident who nearly sustained injuries whilst walking near the Tenerife buildings because of unclear rights of way for pedestrians. The Association acted upon this as a matter of priority. Subsequently, the Chairman received a letter from Newcastle City Council stating that the offending notice and unclear road markings would be removed.

After lengthy correspondence with the Charities Commission the Association was delighted to be informed that the South Gosforth Residents Association had been registered as a Charity.

The Association was very grateful to accept an offer from a local resident for a seat to be installed on the green. It was decided that a bin situated next to it would be of benefit. The Chairman accompanied by the Secretary attended a Ward Committee meeting to request money from the Council for local projects. Following this successful application a bin was purchased and is now in position and well used. .

Judging from the numbers of people who have enjoyed using the seat both by day and during the evening, it has clearly enhanced the green as a focal point.

Two of the issues that I was constantly asked was "what is happening with the steps?" and "why haven't we got dog bins"? I attended another Ward Committee meeting to put forward a case for a grant for the renovation of these steps. The Ward Committee accepted this as being a viable request and a sum of money has been allocated for this. I have lost count of the times that I have campaigned to get dog bins for the green. The Association was informed that dog bins have to be collected by specialist contractors; regrettably we were unable to take this matter any further.

No Entry signs were placed at the top of Commercial Street to prohibit traffic driving down to Hunters Road. The Association asked the council to have a look at the position of the signs with a view to lowering them. There were complaints that the signs are difficult to see when approaching the lane from Station Road. The Association was informed that they were of the correct legal height and nothing more could be done.

The Association acted upon a request from a local resident who has small children concerning the speed of traffic in the area, we liaised with the Council and had a meeting in the Bulman Club in Gosforth Central Park to discuss this. We met opposition to all proposals. As a compromise, the Highway Department arranged for white lines to be painted in the centre of the roads.

## **Fete on the Green**

On August 16th the Association organised a fete for the green, we explored the possibility of a bouncy castle not realising that it would be so complicated. Public liability insurance, security vetting, ratio of manning per children, the list went on. As a compromise Newcastle City Council offered the Association face painters who attended the event for free.

## **Plans for the Field**

It is reasonable to say that every resident in the South Gosforth area has different ideas of what development should or should not take place on the Green. These ideas range from doing nothing at all and leaving the Green as it is to developing shrub beds, wild flower areas, and more seating and installing goal posts!

Because there are so many possibilities and many different opinions, our discussions led us to decide that we should produce a scale drawing of the Green, with all the different combinations of ideas plotted on it. This drawing would then be delivered to every house in the SGRA area and every resident would be asked to return the drawing along with their comments and favoured options for development. If the majority of residents do not wish to see any further work done to the Green, then that is the route we will take. However if residents form a consensus and would like to see some or all of the ideas taken forward, then we will go ahead with as many as we can.

The next step, should works be decided upon, is for the Association to apply for funding. There are a number of sources that we could bid in to and it is hoped that we would stand a good chance of securing money especially as we would hope to have gained a strong response and support from local residents for any work proposed.

We were disturbed to hear that because of the racecourse fencing installed on the green a portion of kerb was left protruding at the top of Ridgewood Gardens. An elderly resident tripped over the kerb and sustained severe injuries. We vigorously campaigned for the kerb to be removed as quickly as possible, to prevent this happening again, this was taken on board and the Council removed the kerb.

## **Obituary**

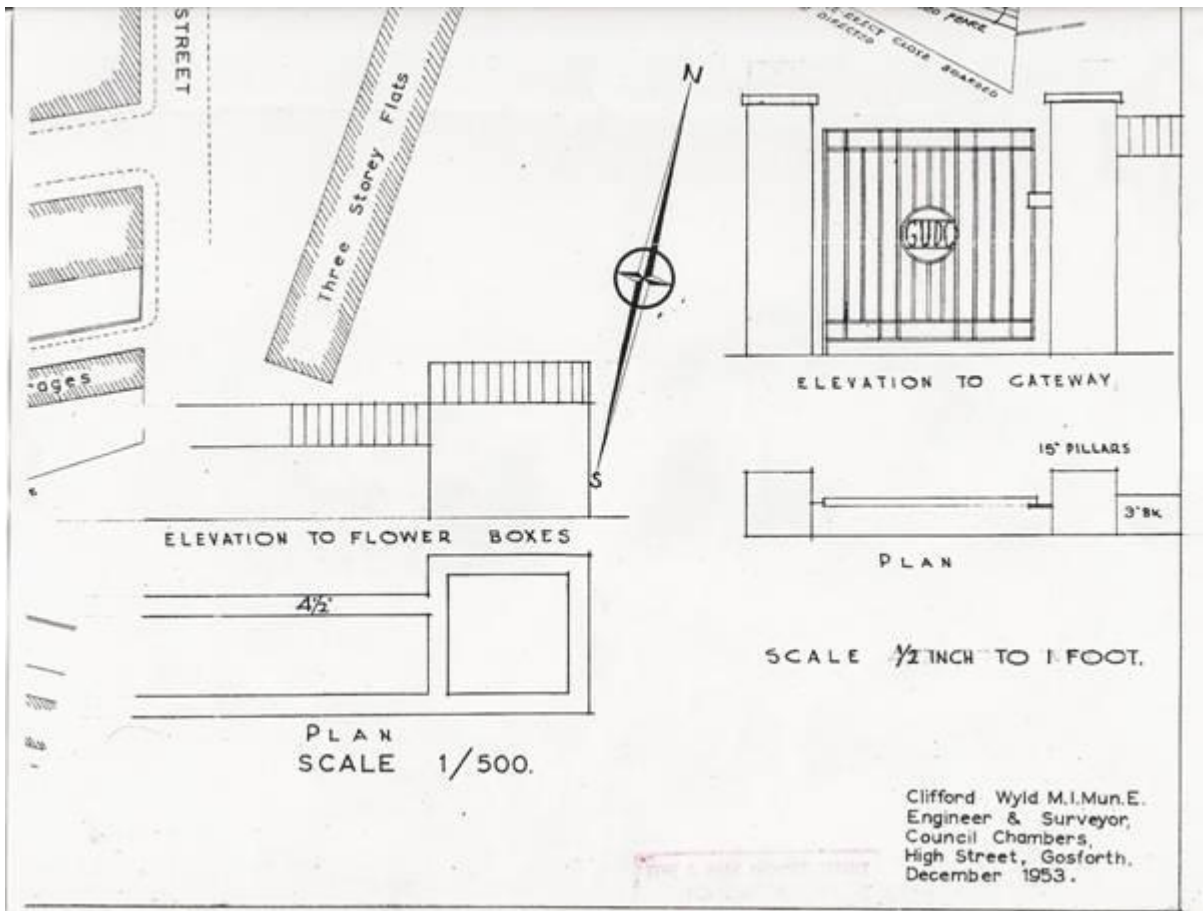
It was with sadness that we heard of the passing of Alan Rayner who was the original Chairman of the Association. He was a very willing worker for the Association and showed an active interest in helping to improve the area. We would like to extend our sympathy to his family. A memorial for Alan will be announced later.

## **Steps**

Since the Association was formed I have spent hours trying to find some information on the steps which go down from the green to Commercial Street. All combinations were used on the internet but to no avail. After exhausting all avenues my trail led me to the Tyne and Wear Archives at Blandford Street. I found a lot of information about the South Gosforth Colliery in the Coal Board Records.

The information concerning the steps was found in the records of the Gosforth Urban District Council. It appears that the William Street block of flats was built first about 1952 and when the Ridgewood Gardens block of flats was to be built the Council applied for planning permission to

build the steps and put in place a gate as illustrated, the steps and gate pillars are still there but there is no record of the gate actually being in position.



The picture of the gate (record VD/60/82/58/2) is kindly reproduced by permission of the Tyne & Wear Archives.

## Conclusion

I would like to thank the members of the Committee for their help and advice over the past year. Also I would like to thank Jo Swindells – Environmental Ward Steward and Lisa Martin – Grange Coordinator for attending meetings and steering us in the right direction in dealing with Local Government and other organisations.

Also a very big thank you goes to Councillor Peter Arnold who spent a great deal of his time persuading Lloyds Bank to release the funds which belonged to the old South Gosforth Residents Association.

Jerry Ruddick

Chairman