

footpaths and golf course taking photographs for the Inquiry for my presentation to Inspector Parry which I hoped would be more effective than mere words. I value the collection of photographs I took in that peerless spring weather, especially those of the wild orchids.

We're Tops:

Isn't it great to live in a county where the County Council is rated 'excellent'? To get that status, all our services have to be rated tops and I've been working hard to make sure that our services meet residents' needs for better roads, schools and hospitals and to enhance our leisure for young and old alike. I managed to get our road by the Green patched, thought the contractors had to come back to mend the job! Standards have risen above the national average in education but chalk face visits and advice continues to seek improvement. This year, Hampshire governor Services won its fourth Charter Award. Schools in Leigh Park pioneered a system of inter school help to share successful ideas and many improvements are being made both to school grounds and buildings as well as new builds being carried out where necessary.

The mobile library is getting new vehicles as the BBC is using one of the fleet for its outreach service. Libraries are being refurbished with imaginative children's areas evolving into Discovery Centres with computers and computer training as well as many new books being available. Alton and Gosport have newly built libraries featuring self service!

The Arts:

We have one of the largest services in the country with many of our arts services in constant use such as the Hampshire Records Office in Winchester. This office helped by supplying valuable historic maps to help with the South Downs National Inquiry last year as well as running a 'trace your ancestors' course. Museums have become living history sources running community programmes of activity. Our young people continue to win awards in the Music Service's orchestras proving that all ages in this area are tops!

Country Parks:

These enable families and friends to have fun together in the great outdoors. Queen Elizabeth Country Park has barbecue sites, walks and planned activities. Staunton now books children's parties as well as running summer musical evenings for young and old. Many sporting centres – Calshot in the New forest for outdoor sports on the edge of the Solent, and indoors, the Pitt Street Gymnastics Centre in Portsmouth, train winners as well as providing fun activities for children. Many young people are training for the Olympics with many potential winners living in Hampshire.

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EVERYTHING YOU'VE EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT ROWLANDS CASTLE

The Castle once stood to the East of the present-day centre of the village. Its towers and battlements are known to have been in good repair in the twelfth century, when Henry II spent several days there in hunting and amusement. The Castle is thought to have lasted until the mid-fourteenth century, and in the nineteenth century a report states "the remains of Rowlands Castle consists of two masses of wall which are about 10 feet thick with a fosse of considerable depth".

The Parish of Rowlands Castle was formed in 1932 consisting of Blendworth Parish, Idsworth Parish (which had been attached to Chalton at one time) and parts of five other Parishes. One of these, Havant (Redhill), provided Rowlands Castle with a church, the Church of St. John, built about 1840 (registers date from 1841).

The 'Castle Inn' was in the possession of the Outen family for 200 years, and was said to have been the headquarters of a notorious gang of smugglers.

Idsworth House was erected in 1852, in the Elizabethan style, and was the property of Lorna, Countess Howe.

The ancient chapel of St. Hubert stands in the middle of a field, thought to be the site of a mediaeval village, on what was part of Idsworth Park. Parts of the chapel date from the twelfth century.