



**16 September 2011**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Basingstoke Heritage Society honours Sir Harold Gillies**

Basingstoke Heritage Society is honouring the pioneering plastic surgeon, Sir Harold Gillies CBE, FRCS, with the unveiling of a plaque on the Clock Tower, Limes Park, Basingstoke, which has recently been developed into 16 apartments by Thomas Homes, and is not far from the original site of Rooksdown House Hospital.

The unveiling will take place at 10.30am on Saturday 1 October and will be conducted by the Worshipful Mayor of Basingstoke and Deane, Councillor David Leeks, in front of dignitaries including one of Harold Gillies' grandchildren.

Known as the father of plastic surgery, Gillies was born in New Zealand and his career began during the First World War at the birthplace of modern plastic surgery, The Queen's Hospital in Sidcup. By 1918, over 11,000 facial operations had been performed at the hospital and he was knighted in 1930 for his war work.

During the Second World War, Rooksdown House Hospital, which had 200 beds, was an important site for plastic surgery and the work of pioneering plastic surgeons such as Sir Harold Gillies was of immense importance.

Sir Harold Gillies was a keen fisherman, an excellent golfer and an amateur painter. He and his wife, Kathleen, lived in Oakley for 15 years until 1957. Rooksdown House Hospital closed in 1959 and Sir Harold Gillies died in 1960, aged 78.

The plaque to honour Sir Harold Gillies is the 17th plaque to be erected by the Basingstoke Heritage Society to connect the town's story to national history. For further information on the society, please visit [www.bas-herit-soc.org](http://www.bas-herit-soc.org).

**Ends**

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