



GREAT WAR 100

WESTENDER

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2015

(PUBLISHED CONTINUOUSLY SINCE 1999)

VOLUME 9 NUMBER 9

CHAIRMAN

Neville Dickinson

VICE-CHAIRMAN

Bill White

SECRETARY

Lin Dowdell

MINUTES SECRETARY

Vera Dickinson

TREASURER & WEBMASTER

Peter Wallace

MUSEUM CURATOR

Nigel Wood

PUBLICITY

Ray Upson

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Delphine Kinley

RESEARCHER

Pauline Berry

*WELHS... preserving our past
for your future....*

**VISIT OUR
WEBSITE!**

Website:

www.westendlhs.co.uk

E-mail address:

westendlhs@aol.com

EDITOR

Nigel G. Wood

EDITORIAL AND PRODUCTION
ADDRESS

40 Hatch Mead
West End

Southampton, Hants
SO30 3NE

Telephone: 023 8047 1886

E-mail: woodng@aol.com

MEN WHO MARCHED AWAY (7)



71471 L/Corp. George Keith Moody

In April 1917 the British launched an attack at Arras – the battle of the Scarpe. One of the Divisions brought up for the attack was the 56th, a formation of territorial soldiers from London. **Lance Corporal George Moody**, aged 22

Continued on page 10

West End Local History Society & Westender is sponsored by



**WEST END
PARISH
COUNCIL**



MEMORIES OF THORNHILL

By Ron Pattinson



Thornhill Park House

*Photo courtesy of
Bitterne Local History
Society*

I was born in 1930, so it was after the old mansion house at Thornhill was demolished, but I can clearly remember the tennis court (hard), the ornamental pond, the ruined stables, the cellars and the overgrown orchard, we kids played there during the war and just after, wonderful memories they were.

I had two very special friends, John Bridle, who lived in Bitterne and Dennis Fox who lived in Pear Tree Green, the three of us were inseparable.

During the war a church or church hall was built on the site of the old mansion house, a certain Mr Walley of Thornhill Avenue supplied the material and the men of Thornhill supplied the labour, talk about Gerry built, most people thought it was an insult to Gerry, but, nevertheless it stood and was used by the local people.

One winters night, probably early 1945, us three lads were talking and the subject of the old mansion cropped up, my two mates knew nothing much about it but I brightly said the stables were still there as also were the cellars - they wanted to see for themselves.

We went to Thornhill Avenue and slid down the bank in pitch darkness, of course the blackout was still in operation and we had to use the lights off our bikes. We soon found the entrance to the cellars, (merely a hole in the ground) and descended into the abyss, none of us feeling very brave by this time I am sure, but none of us would admit it, we explored the cellars as best we could considering the state of the place, when suddenly I felt a tug on my arm. "Let's get the hell out of here", said John.

None of us argued, we got out as quick as we could, John first, then me and Dennis, not wishing to be last out, practically pulled my trousers down in his anxiety to be out of that hole!

John shone his lamp in my face and with a nervous laugh, "That wasn't much fun was it", he gasped, "I hope nobody else has any more dozy suggestions like that". Then an anxious tone crept into his voice, "I thought you said the old mansion was pulled down?", he asked, nervously. "It is, it was demolished before I was born, why?", I answered. "What the hell is that then!", he said. I looked in the direction of his lamplight, which was pretty dim by then and saw this huge shadow, I literally froze with fear.

Continued on page 3

Continued from page 2

The three brave lads got out of that place as fast as our shaking legs would carry us, we made it to our bikes and then the truth dawned on me, I informed my mates, as soon as I could control my shaking voice what we had actually seen.

“That building we saw was not the old mansion,” I told them, “I forgot to tell you, they built a parish hall on the site, that was what we saw, nothing to get alarmed about, you weren’t scared were you?”

I honestly thought my best friends, my very best friends were going to lynch me, the happy days of youth!



A FRENCHMAN’S WAR ON THE WESTERN FRONT

Part 1

By Pauline Berry

My great-uncle, Claude Laboisses, was born into the farming community of Verneignes, in the department of Creuse, in 1888. His parents, Jean and Elizabeth Laboisses moved from here in Central France, to Paris, to bring up their three children Claude, Alice and Marie (my future grandmother) and to find work. They lived in an apartment in Northern Paris, in a typical narrow French street.

When war broke out in August 1914, he worked in an office and being single and 26 years old, he was immediately called up. The French army was manned by conscription and Claude found himself assigned with other young men from his district, as an infantryman in the 132nd. Regiment (6th Battalion) in the Army of Chalon. He and his regiment departed from Paris, Gare de L’Est, in a troop train to the sound of much band music and cheering, to his depot at Dugny, a few miles south of Verdun, on the River Meuse.

Unaware of what hell he was heading for, Private Laboisses would have seen the chaos in the surrounding countryside, people, horses and carts, military equipment in diverse directions, to and from the Western Front where the German Army was already making distressing attacks.

His sister Alice told me that he had no proper uniform or boots at first and, like many soldiers, he wore a mixture of the old-style uniform with canvas trousers, until the new horizon-blue uniforms were hastily produced. His headgear was a ‘kepi’ at first, until the familiar steel Adrian helmets (resembling firemen’s helmets) arrived the following year. The heavy back-pack, containing all his needs, weighing 50-60 lbs (plus 88 rounds and an out of date rifle and bayonet at a later date) was a regular encumbrance to each soldier.

One wonders when he was issued with his new great-coat (with turned up corners to facilitate movement) which would have helped to keep out the cold of that first bitter winter in the trenches. Knitted scarves from home and a supplied blanket gave a little comfort in the cold and wet. Sleep was highly prized judging from soldiers’ reports of fleas and rats which infested the mud filled trenches and made life even more miserable for the combatants.

A private’s pay was then one franc per day, plus an extra franc for the ‘trench allowance’. Their food, cooked to the rear of the fighting, consisted mainly of some kind of basic soup or stew, with potatoes. Other vegetables or fruit were a rare treat, unless offered by a kind villager. Wine, ‘vin ordinaire’, was fortunately in good supply and helped to raise spirits a little during the conflict.

Claude wrote almost daily, unless fighting or travelling, to his parents and sisters on pencilled scraps of paper. I possess only two such letters:

The first, (*translated*)

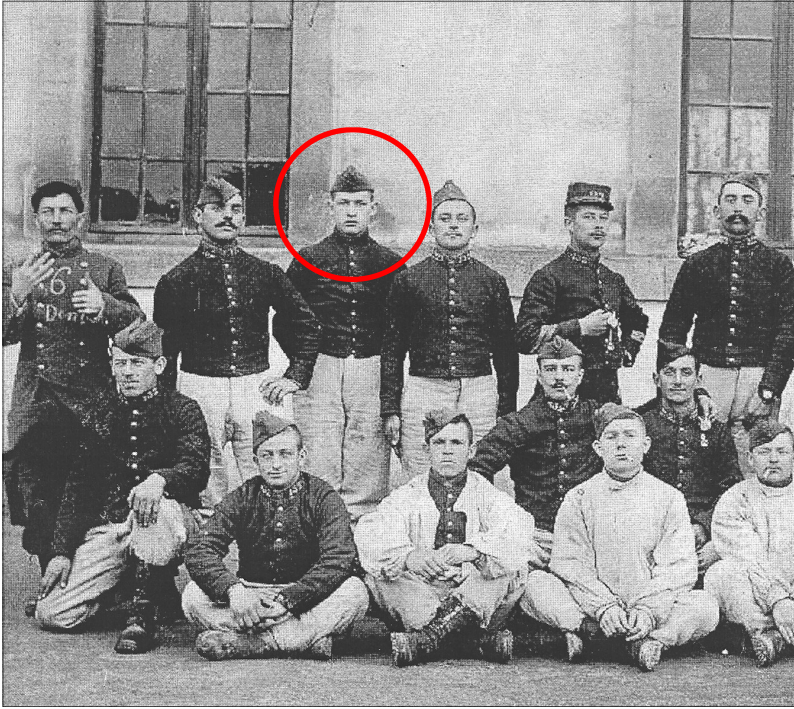
Meuse 14th September 1914

Dear little sister,

I am taking advantage of a quiet moment during the afternoon rest period in a little village, still occupied, which has a postal service, because I feel that you must be worried. Rest assured, that as long as I live, the

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3



Private Claude Laboisses
132nd. Regiment of Infantry (circled)

© Ministère de la défense - Mémoire des hommes
PARTIE À REMPLIR PAR LE CORPS.

Nom LABOISSES
Prénoms CLAUDE
Grade 2^e classe 22^e RÉG
Corps 132^e Régiment d'Infanterie
N° 02859 au Corps. — Cl. 4908
Matricule. 1554 au Recrutement de la Seine 6^e Rég
Mort pour la France le 5 Mars 1915
à Esperarges (Seine)
Genre de mort tué à l'ennemi
Né le 16 Août 1888
à Vernugnes Département de la Creuse
Arr^e municipale (p^r Paris et Lyon),
à défaut rue et N°.
Légement rendu le
par le Tribunal de
acte ou jugement transcrit le 19 Juillet 1915
à Paris (XVII^e Arr^t) Seine
N° du registre d'état civil 781
101-708-1022. [20434]

Boche shall never have my skin. I have fought many times and been through machine-gun fire without even a scratch. So you see your little brother will soon return home then I will describe what I have seen the good news is that the enemy is on the run, proving that peace is coming a big kiss, your brother Claude”.

Unfortunately, we know with hindsight that peace would be years in coming and that Claude's predictions would not come true. The fighting intensified and during that first winter of war a quarter of the French Army never returned home!

(to be continued)



THEY HAVE BEEN REMEMBERED

By Colin Mockett



HMS Bulwark



Commemoration service at sea

Continued on page 5

Continued from page 4



The service at the wreck site



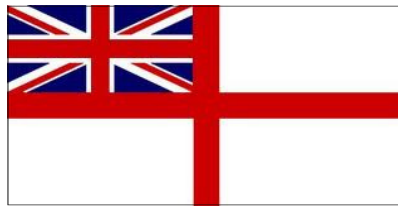
The wreck site & cross for Signalman William Othen



The wreaths over the wreck site



Woodlands Cemetery, Gillingham



Service at Woodlands Cemetery

Westend man **WILLIAM ALFRED EDWARD OTHEN** aged 19 (ordinary signalman J/11241 on HMS Bulwark) died on the 26th November 1914 when HMS Bulwark blew up while she was moored off Sheerness in Kent.

Son of Edwin Thomas and Lilly Kate Othen of Dolgelly, Lower New Road Westend.

Westend Local History Society member Carol Mocketts grandfather also died on board on that disastrous day in November 1914.

He was William Nash aged 20, stoker first class K/8684 and lived at 6 Back of the Walls, Southampton.

On the 29th November 2014 Carol and myself (Colin) were privileged to have been given an invitation to join the few members of HMS Bulwark Albion & Centaur Association, on the boat trip out to the wreck site for the 100th anniversary commemoration service.

At 09.00 on Saturday 29th November 2014 two small ships and a small tug set off from Chatham marina to the wreck site at buoy 17 Kethole Reach off Sheerness. The wreck site is now marked by east and west marker buoys.

The two smaller ships were lashed together and the tug stood off our stern for the very moving service and wreath laying on the sea. The commemoration service at sea with the waves lapping against the side of the ships and marker buoys above the resting place of most of the 750 crew made it so special and unique.

Among those present were three direct descendants of the original crew of HMS Bulwark and Lt Hodgekiss of the present HMS Bulwark who had flown back from his ship to represent them at the commemorations.

At 14.15 on the Saturday afternoon at Gillingham's Woodlands Cemetery, The Royal Marine Band marched everyone to the Royal Navy section of the cemetery for a service and wreath laying that the 250 plus people attending could also take part in.

So now at least William Othen and William Nash have been remembered where their remains will most certainly lay (at the wreck site or Woodlands Cemetery) 100 years on.

JANUARY MEETING - THE DOLPHIN HOTEL

A review by Roy Andrews



I have nothing but admiration for anybody who has researched a subject so well that their knowledge is mind boggling (except for football pundits of course) (or experts on TV soaps) and our speaker in January, Dr. Cheryl Butler certainly knows her Southampton history. Her subject was the Dolphin Hotel in the High Street, on this occasion covering mostly the Tudor period.

Although the present day façade appears to be Georgian in origin the hotel has a history going much further back into medieval times. In the Tudor period the building would have been of typical Tudor timber frame construction, some of which can still be seen at the rear of the building.

An early owner of the Inn was William Gunter, originally from Andover, who came to Southampton and married a rich widow. He became an important personage in Southampton including Mayor. Upon his death, never having had children, he left his property including The Dolphin to the town thus allowing the town fathers to rent it to whosoever they wished.

By the mid 1500's Edward Willmot, a merchant adventurer among other things, owned the hotel and on his death left it and a farm in Above Bar to his daughter Averyn. The farm was sold to a John Croke who then claimed the sale included the Dolphin Hotel. Although Averyn denied it, the case rumbled on for years through the courts while Croke took over the Hotel.

Looking at the hotel today, the building to the left which now houses the hotel restaurant was once a separate house and living in it was John Croke (by name and nature from what we were told), originally from Poole. He too had married a rich widow (I can see where I went wrong now!). He also became a powerful person in the town and became mayor even though he had many dubious dealings. He took over the Dolphin amalgamating it with his house.

Croke's son-in-law Richard Bisten took over the hotel from him and he too seemed to have problems with business dealings. He in turn left the Hotel to his son William.

Dr. Butler then changed tack and told of some of the famous people who stayed at the Hotel. The acting group of which William Shakespeare was part certainly played to the galleries at the rear of the Hotel but so far no evidence to prove Shakespeare was with them has come to light, although from his plays he is known to have some knowledge of Southampton.

Continued on page 7

Continued from page 6



View of the rear of The Dolphin Hotel



Early advertising postcard for The Dolphin Hotel

Others were Walter Raleigh, The Earl of Leicester, Edward Gibbon, William Thackeray, Admiral Lord Nelson and Jane Austen.

The only dubious question lingers from Dr. Butler's suggestion that the hotel got its name from the King of France, The Dauphine, during The Hundred Years War, Dolphin being the English translation. I am not aware that it was common practice to name our inns after our enemies.

As Bill White said in his thank you speech at the end, we can't wait to hear more from Dr. Butler.

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

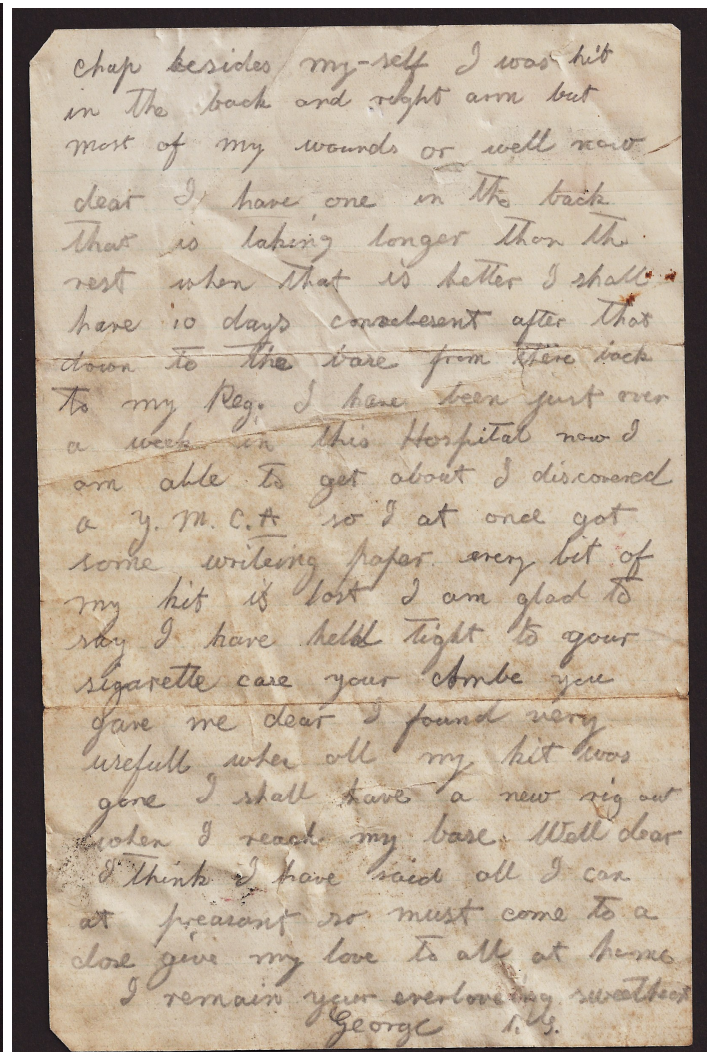
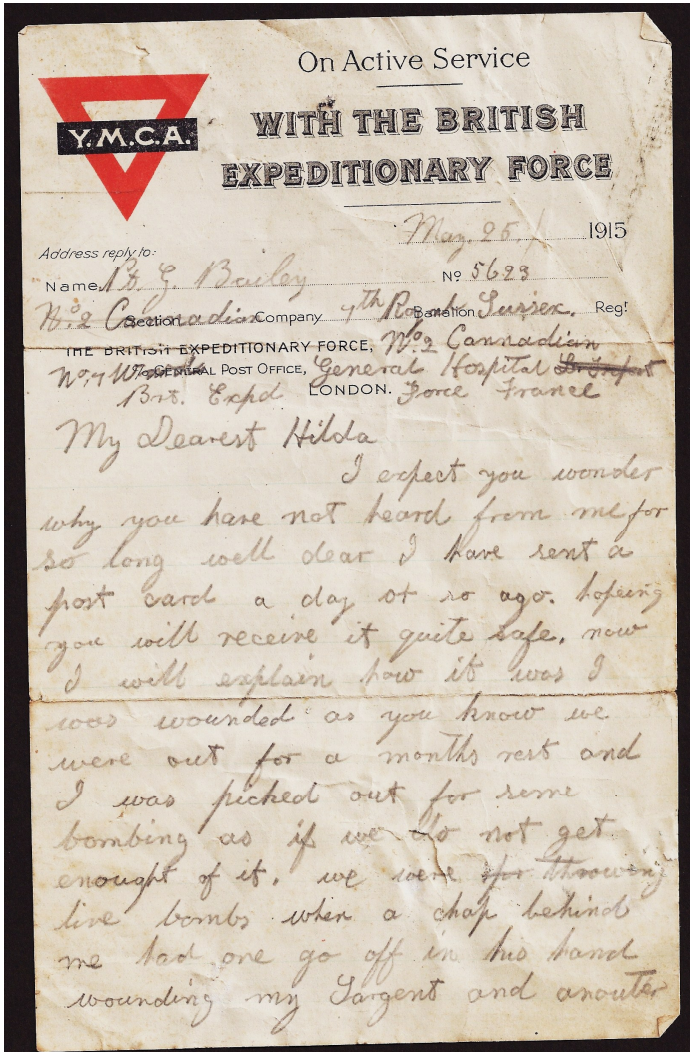


WEST END BRITISH LEGION CHILDRENS CHRISTMAS PARTY 1947 IN THE OLD PARISH HALL



LETTER FROM A SOLDIER OF THE GREAT WAR

(Letter from Bill White's collection)



Although not West End related, it provides an insight to the dangers of war even when not in the Front Line - accidents can and do happen. Pte Bailey who served in 7th (Service) Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment appears to probably have been Canadian - the Battalion was part of K1 or Kitcheners Army (first intake) which helped make good the Regular and Territorial Army losses at the beginning of the war. The letter along with spelling mistakes is transcribed below:

"May 25 1915

Name: Pte G. Bailey No.5623
No.2 Canadian Company, 7th Royal Sussex Regt.
The British Expeditionary Force
No.7 Ward
No.2 Canadian General Hospital
British Expeditionary Force
France

My Dearest Hilda

I expect you wonder why you have not heard from me for so long well dear I have sent a post card a day or so ago. hoping (sic) you will receive it quite safe. Now I will explain how it was I was wounded as you know we were out for a months rest and I was picked out for some bombing as if we do not get enough of it. We were for throwing live bombs when a chap behind me had one go off in his hand wounding my Sargent (sic) and another chap besides my-self I was hit in the back and right arm but most of my wounds or well now dear I have one in the back this is taking longer than the rest when that is better I shall have 10 days convalescent (sic) after that down to the base from there back to my Reg. I have been just over a week in this Hospital now I am able to get about I discovered a Y.M.C.A. so I at once got some writing paper every bit of my kit is lost I am glad to say I have held tight to your sigarette (sic) case your combe (sic) you gave me dear I found very usefull (sic) when all my kit was gone I shall have a new rig out when I reach my base. Well dear I think I have said all I can at preasant (sic) so must come to a close give my love to all at home
I remain your everloving (sic) sweetheart
George"



NEW LOOK FOR WEST END'S WAR MEMORIAL



Full marks to West End Parish Council for the excellent refurbishment of our War Memorial. The work carried out as part of the Parish's Centenary commemoration included cutting back the hedge on either side, the construction of a pathway all around the memorial so that you can now see the inscription on the back, railings at the back and repositioning the memorial name stone plaques either side. I think you will all agree a job well done and a great improvement. Ed.

Continued from front page

years old and whose parents lived at Jackson's Farm in Bubb Lane, West End, was serving with the Machine Gun Corps. His Company – the 169th – had a quiet March behind the lines, but at the end of the month was ordered to the Line near Arras, where they set up positions to fire on the enemy. On 31st March, Number 1 Section went up to the Line on fatigues; on returning, one shell fell near them in the village of Achicourt. Two men died, seven were wounded. One of the dead was Lance Corporal Moody. On the War Roll in the Parish Centre he is listed as being in the Queen's Westminsters. This was one of the battalions in the 56th Division, and George Moody had transferred to the Machine Gun Corps.

George Keith Moody is buried at Warlincourt Halte British Cemetery, Saulty, Pas de Calais - Grave ref: VI.F.6

DECEMBER MEETING - YULETIDE TALES

A review by Roy Andrews

As usual the December meeting cumulated in a veritable feast provided by members and the Society, with a plentiful supply of both food and drink and a chance to share the season's bonhomie.

Before the socialising came the entertainment in the form of David Weller and Vera Hughes giving us a mixture of "Yuletide Tales". I understand they offered a presentation of either forty-five or ninety minutes. The Society opted for a forty-five minute presentation but at the speed at which the two hurtled through the many items, they appeared to be trying to squeeze a quart into a pint pot. With no apparent pause for breath between the differing subjects, it was sometimes difficult to establish when the change over between each occurred.

A 'play' in three acts was also enacted, the theme of which was something to do with a family's run up to a Christmas visit (by the third act I was passed caring) and with the multitude of items between each act, to distract one, I had difficulty in remembering where the previous act had finished. Some of the many short items were mildly interesting or humorous but did we really want to know in such great detail how to make hare soup (hands up all those who tried it over Christmas)? In mitigation they did read one of my favourite poems, although they gave it a different title to the one I know and which begins "What do you see, nurses, what do you see?" by Phyllis McCormack.

All in all by the end of the show I found I was applauding that it had ended, not for its entertaining content and I found myself thinking fondly of previous years' quiz or skittles evenings.

OBITUARY

CLIFF CARTER

1929-2014

It is with great sadness that we have to announce that WELHS member Cliff Carter passed away on 6th December 2014. Born on 12th September 1929 he had led a varied and full life, but latterly had suffered ill health. A Service of Thanksgiving was held at the Holy Saviour Church in Bitterne on Wednesday 17th December 2014 preceded by a short service at Wessex Vale Crematorium. He will be sadly missed by many of us and our sincere condolences go out to Hilda his widow, their son and daughters and their grand-children.

MORE MEMORIES OF THORNHILL

By Ron Pattinson

My three friends and I were always willing to try anything which would cause a bang and one way was the use of carbide. In the early part of the war batteries were difficult to obtain, adults could get them, but kids could not be trusted, perish the thought!

We little angels, we were all around ten years old, wanted to cause unlimited mayhem, but didn't know how, but soon we got to know a bigger boy and he was wise and knowledgeable and we were good disciples. He said the magic word 'CARBIDE', how could we get hold of this magical stuff - from a hardware shop? there was one at the top of Thornhill - would the shopkeeper let us innocent children have some? the big lad said no, the man would refuse us if we had no good reason. But we all had good reasons, you see we all had Dads who had carbide lamps on their bikes, none of us actually did, my friend Malcolm and I didn't have Dads, the other two lads fathers were in the forces, however, imagination would suffice.

All us boys did newspaper rounds at that time, no age restriction then, so each of us in turn went in and purchased as much carbide as we could afford, we obtained a number of screw top bottles from various sources, we then went about our nefarious business.

We went down to the overgrown ornamental pond which originally was part of the mansion gardens, with our ill-gotten gains. We each put a few little lumps of carbide into bottles, then added a small amount of water, screwed the tops on tight and scampered to a safe distance, the water and carbide fermented, pressurised the bottles that one after the other they shattered with a satisfying explosion, what an evil lot we were, but it was great fun!

Bigger and better things were needed, so a few weeks later we bought up as much carbide as we could, we were now using two hardware shops, one in Thornhill and one in Bitterne, I am afraid that both shopkeepers had rumbled us and refused to sell us any more after this lot, for some reason we were not to be trusted, I cannot imagine why!

However, we thought we had enough for one more huge experiment, we had found an old 40 gallon oil drum, empty of course, we trundled this down to the pond, put all the carbide in it and put about a gallon of water in, it was fizzing like mad and we swiftly screwed the plug and retreated quickly after pushing the barrel into the pond.

We waited, and waited, and waited until our patience was exhausted, we walked away giving one last glance at our unexploded bomb, it was a dud and we all were bitterly disappointed, partly because it hadn't worked and mostly because our hard earned pennies were wasted.

Muttering dark thoughts we trudged slowly up the field when suddenly there was an ear splitting crash, we looked back to see a huge fountain of dirty water sinking back into the pond.

We rushed back laughing and giggling to survey the results, mud and weeds everywhere, it was all a bit sobering and we never tried anything like it again, we left the area, a very frightened bunch of brats, in future we would leave the bangs to enemy bombers and our anti-aircraft batteries.

WEST END HONEY FOR SALE

Once again as last year our thanks to WELHS members Peter and Kathryn Hatton who live in West End and keep bees and have honey for sale. The honey is actually produced here in West End and sells for £3.50 per jar for 227g (8oz in real weight). They have very generously offered again to donate 50p from the sale of each jar to WELHS funds - so by buying the honey you will have something nice to consume and also benefit the society. Peter and Kathryn can be contacted on 02380 474789 and are happy to deliver to your door here in West End whilst on their travels. They will also bring a quantity to the meetings for sale, so bring your money!

Ed

EXTRACT FROM 'WESTEND NEWS' 1982

Taken from the West End Community Association newsletter for November - December 1982.....

"Street lighting was first mentioned in 1898 and was discussed over many years until in 1929 a special meeting was called to adopt the Lighting and Watching Act. The proposal was defeated by a large majority. A request for another meeting to consider it in 1930 was refused. However, another special meeting was called in 1931 when the cost was given as follows:- 26 Gas Lamps - £274.6s.0d., Electric Lamps - £168.7s.0d. £168 was a penny rate over three years and the running cost would be equal 3/4d. rate. The proposal was again defeated. So in 1931 West End remained in the dark.

The High Street was first tar sprayed and made up with granite in 1913. Efforts to obtain a paved footpath went on for many years but the Parish were asked to pay half the cost and it was considered too expensive. Road improvements were as difficult to get done as now and it took several years to make dangerous bends at New Inn and at Barnes Land (sic) safer. Barnsland is referred to as Barnes Land until 1924.

The first school warning signs were erected in 1911. In 1918 the Council objected to women and girls employed by the County for road sweeping and tar spraying".

W.Phillips

THE NEXT MEETINGS ARE.....

February 4

LYNDHURST - a brief history

Peter Roberts

March 4

THE NOOKS & CRANNIES OF ROMSEY

Phoebe Merrick

April 1

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Plus "Bee-keeping" by Mr and Mrs Hatton

ON THIS DAY.....

On this day (February 4th.) in.....

1893 The first stretch of Liverpool's Overhead Railway - from Alexandra Dock to the Hercules Dock - was opened by Lord Salisbury.

1902 Charles Lindbergh, American aviator, noted for his historic solo flight across the Atlantic in 1927, born at Detroit in Michigan.

1918 Ida Lupino, English film actress, born in London.

1920 Norman Wisdom, English comedy actor, born as Norman Wisden.

1945 The Yalta Conference in the Crimea between Allied leaders Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin, began.

1948 Ceylon became a self-governing dominion within the Commonwealth, having been a British Crown Colony since 1802.

1953 Sweet rationing ended in Britain.

1962 The 'Sunday Times' became the first British newspaper to issue a colour supplement.