



GREAT WAR 100

WESTENDER

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FROM OUR ARCHIVE



ALFORD'S HILL, HIGH STREET, WEST END

Our picture this edition shows an idyllic view of West End around the turn of the 20th century. The High Street, which is compacted dirt (pre-tarmac), here noticeably slopes down towards the entrance to the Hatch Grange entrance and was a stretch known as Alford's Hill. We see the milestone for the Botley Turnpike on the left (now situated in the Museum grounds) and the old Blacksmiths on the right (now the site of Anvil Close). The cottages still survive as does the Blacksmith's Arms pub in the middle of the picture, although now it is a private house, and at a much earlier date due to a road accident the checkerboard brickwork front was rebuilt and the hanging sign taken down.

West End Local History Society & Westender is sponsored by



**WEST END
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THE TRAGIC TALE OF GERTRUDE CHARLOTTE O'MEARA

By Paula Downer

Browsing through a copy of the West End Burial Ground register, the following entry caught my eye.....

O'MEARA Gertrude Charlotte, wife of Capt. Eugene J. O'Meara, I.M.S, 3rd daughter of Ollive Hollingworth. Buried in the Indian Ocean. 25th April 1901.

Gertrude Charlotte O'Meara was born in Horsham, West Sussex in 1874 as Gertrude Charlotte Hollingworth, her parents were Ollive and Mary Hollingworth.

The Hollingworth family came to live in West End, in 1891 they were living at 'The Lodge' then by 1901 they were living at 'Midlands'. They must have been quite a wealthy family, as the 1891 census shows Ollive, age 52, as Head of the family 'Living on own Means'.

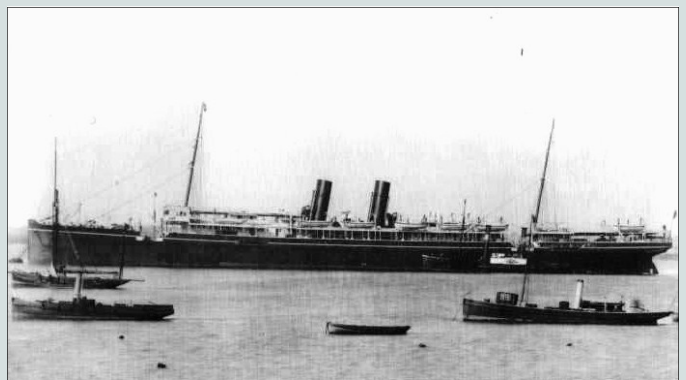
Gertrude Charlotte Hollingworth married Eugene John O'Meara on 23rd August 1899 at St. James Church in West End. Gertrude's brother Ollive Edward was churchwarden there.

By this time, Eugene John O'Meara had joined the Indian Medical Service (IMS) having achieved a gold medal in military medicine at Netley (Netley was then an Army Medical School with facilities for research into tropical diseases). Eugene and Gertrude must have set sail for India shortly after they were married looking forward to an exciting new life.

But unfortunately for Gertrude, this was not to be. Their daughter Kathleen Hollingworth O'Meara was born in October 1900 but died a month later. The following April, Gertrude is onboard the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Ship 'SS Egypt' where she tragically lost her life. It could be surmised that Gertrude, grief stricken, had become ill herself and was going home to be with her family at 'Midlands' to recover. Due to the nature of his profession, Eugene would have had to work under insalubrious conditions dealing with malaria, cholera and famine; his wife Gertrude would have been constantly exposed to such life threatening diseases.

Life in British India was not the wonderful, exotic life that is sometimes portrayed. The Europeans were often ill and often died, their babies died of diseases such as typhoid or cholera. In the outlying areas, there was no clean water supply on tap and no sanitation; it was not a healthy place to be.

The Deaths at Sea Register shows Gertrude Charlotte O'Meara Buried At Sea 25th April 1901.



Above - two views of the SS "Egypt"

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If anyone knows what actually did happen to the unfortunate Gertrude O'Meara, we would like to hear from you.



The Hollingworth family Memorial Cross in the Old Burial Ground at West End

In memory of Gertrude Charlotte, the inscription reads :-
"IN LOVING MEMORY OF DEARLY BELOVED WIFE OF
CAPT. EUGENE J. O'MEARA I.M.S."

In August 1902, Eugene John O'Meara returned to India with his new wife, Eva Valentina Bullock. They were married in Heavitree, Devon, where his parents lived.

Eugene John O'Meara went on to become a well respected surgeon, during his time in India he saw much improvement in the hospitals and medical education. He has written a book about his life in India, speaking well of India and its people. He obviously saw a great deal of suffering among the natives of India, it is apparent that famine caused him the greatest angst. He comes across as a modest man, there is no mention of his personal achievements.

In 1909 Eugene John O'Meara was awarded the Kaisar-i-Hind medal for distinguished Public Service in India. In 1919 he was awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE).

Eugene John O'Meara died in Bournemouth on the 25th June 1962.

It is very likely that Eugene John O'Meara knew Colonel Kenneth Macleod who lived at 'Duncaple' in West End. He was a professor of clinical military medicine at Netley (see article in 'WESTENDER' Vol. 7 No.9)

MUSEUM VISIT

On the morning of 30th June 2015 we welcomed a group visit from Romsey & Eastleigh MENCAP. After a short introductory talk by Nigel, the group spent a good hour looking at and discussing the museum displays, and also browsing the archive folders.

Following refreshments provided by Lin consisting of tea, coffee and homemade cakes, they left for a walk around Hatch Grange.

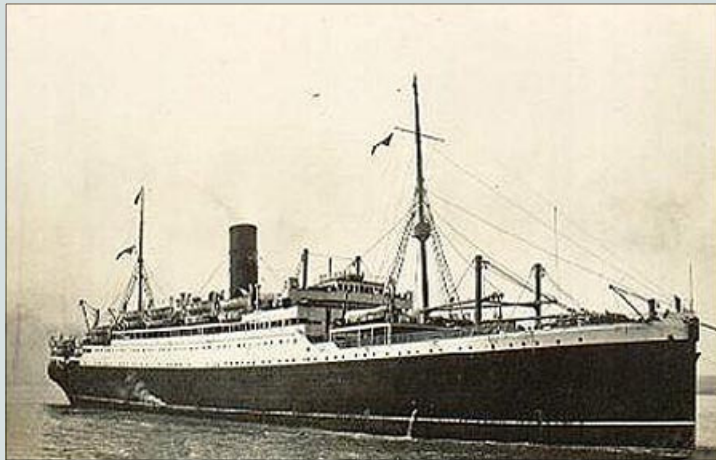
Any groups/clubs in the area who would like to arrange a similar visit out of museum hours should contact the Secretary or Curator on 02380 471886 or e-mail westendlhs@aol.com

A CAPTAIN'S VIEWS ON GALLIPOLI

By Pauline Berry

You may know that Captain Sir Arthur Henry Rostron wrote his autobiography 'Home from the Sea' in 1931, following his retirement at his home 'Holmcroft' at the top of Chalk Hill, West End. This book has been reprinted under the new title 'Titanic Hero' by Amberley Press. This fascinating account of his maritime memories covers so much more than his rescue of the 706 Titanic survivors in his ship 'Carpathia' and is worth reading.

Captain Rostron was very critical of the Gallipoli Campaign in which he was involved, one hundred years ago. It was a dramatic and failed attempt by the British and its allied forces to knock Turkey, an ally of Germany, out of the Great War in 1915. The disastrous plan was for the allied armies to take control of the Straits of Dardanelles and gain a route to Russia.



RMS "ALAUNIA"

At the outbreak of war, the ship 'Alaunia' was under his command and it was soon commissioned as a troopship, which the author refers to as '*trooping*', to and fro the Mediterranean. He states that '*some special providence guided me through the war*' because enemy submarines were highly active as he criss-crossed the sea. Thousands of men were transported to the area near Cape Helles but his ship was never hit. The 'Alaunia' passed by the 'Royal Edward' an hour before it was sent to the bottom with the loss of over 1,600 lives.

Able to view some of the action from his bridge a mile or two from the shores, Rostron was brutally honest about the entire campaign, '*What a fiasco it was In some details it was mismanaged How little care was taken to guarantee the victory of the unbelievable bravery of our men*' he stated. He believed part of the reason for the ensuing disaster was the lack of maps and that enemy '*spies sprang up everywhere*'. He felt that no secret was made about where the landings of our men and the ANZAC troops were to be and that careless talk caused the Turks to be ready for them the moment that they set foot ashore. He witnessed the dreadful carnage from his ship's bridge and the enemy seemed to know their every move in advance. Captain Rostron believed he had encountered three spies himself, who had come onboard and tried unsuccessfully, to prise information out of him. '*I don't know what their fate was - short I hope*'.

He noted and criticised the fact that heavy backpacks had laden down the men wading ashore, causing many to drown in the sea. Strong comments were also made about the strategy of holding back some of our troops, whilst the rest were left to fight it out on the beaches. Thousands of our men were killed and our hospital ships soon became full. Thus, troopships including the 'Alaunia', called '*Black Carriers*', were soon requisitioned as temporary hospital ships. Rostron's ship carried only one surgeon and as a result, the Purser and Stewards were pressed into service as 'Medical Staff'.

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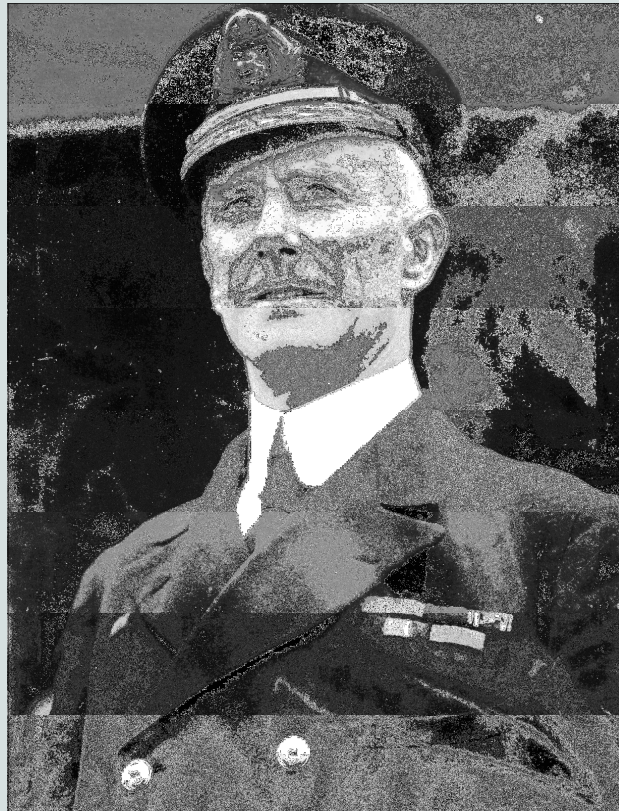
In this way, the 'Alaunia' transported hundreds of wounded and sick back to England, Southampton and safety. The Captain knew he was fortunate, for many hospital ships, such as the 'Britannic' were sunk en route. On one journey home he was appalled to see another ship, full of medical supplies, lying empty and unnoticed a few miles away. '*Wastage everywhere*', he wrote.

On another occasion, on arriving at Malta, Captain Rostron was ordered to haul down the Red Cross flag and paint out the red crosses on the sides of the ship. This caused much distress to the wounded on board the 'Alaunia', and so, a few miles out to sea, their captain, in his wisdom, ordered their immediate replacement.

In September 1915, Rostron left 'Alaunia' to take command of the 'Mauretania' (the first of three commands) '*which was a "pukka" ship, properly equipped as a fully fledged hospital ship*'. It left Liverpool with a full medical staff of 40 medical officers, 72 nursing sisters and over 120 orderlies all properly trained. It carried operating theatres, X-ray rooms, state of the art equipment and wards. Even so, Captain Rostron had to convince neighbouring countries that the 'Mauretania' was not taking part in battles.

The ship continued to evacuate the sick and wounded to Liverpool until February 1916, by which time Gallipoli was a thing of the past. Lord Kitchener had decided to pull out the troops and Captain Rostron brought home '*the last lot on this happy ship*'. The British Imperial Forces, ANZAC and French lost nearly a quarter of a million men in all and Turkey even more, although it was the victor.

Other commands for Captain Rostron during this war transporting the troops of various nationalities, were on the 'Ivernia', 'Andania', 'Saxonia' and 'Carmania'. He returned to passenger vessels in 1919, but not before he had been appointed Captain on the active list of the RNR (Royal Naval Reserve) and created a CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) to add to his many other awards and medals in his career.

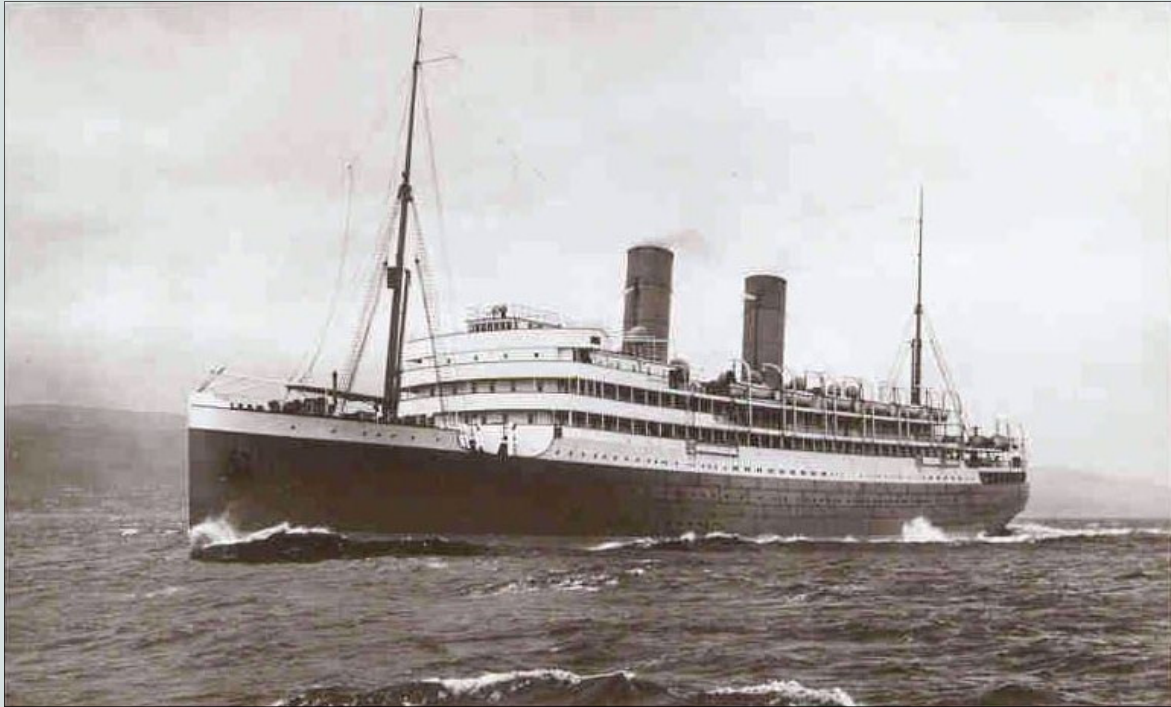


CAPTAIN SIR ARTHUR HENRY ROSTRON

GALLIPOLI 1915 AND THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL EDWARD

By Nigel Wood & Steven Broomfield

In August 1915, the 2nd Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment was serving on Gallipoli. Having landed on 25th April, from the “River Clyde”, the Hampshires had suffered terrible losses. Indeed, West End’s first casualty of the campaign was **Hubert Pavey**, of Moor Hill, who had died in the landing, along with his Commanding Officer (Colonel H Carrington-Smith) and so many of his men that one officer wrote that ‘it was impossible to walk the shore without treading on the bodies of dead men.’



HMT “Royal Edward” formerly “Cairo”

Hubert was 21 years old. The fighting on Gallipoli was fierce. The enemy were brave and committed, and the conditions difficult. On 6th August the Hampshires with the rest of their Division – the 29th - were involved in heavy fighting; over 450 men were lost, one of them was **Albert Withers** (aged 26) of South Road, West End (now known as Chalk Hill). To reinforce them, 31 officers and 1335 men were embarked on board ship in Alexandria.

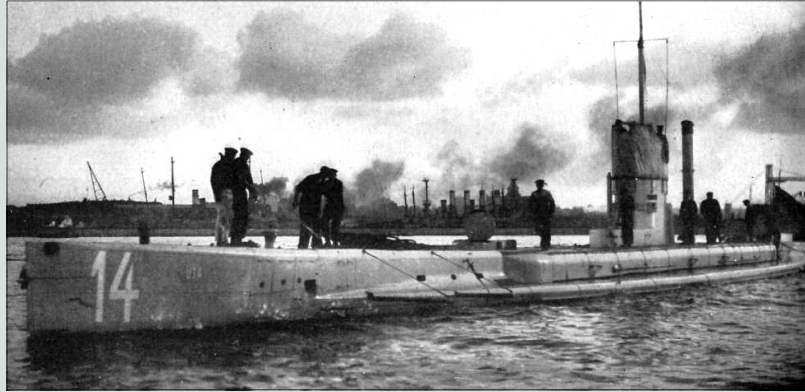
The ship was **HMT ‘Royal Edward’**. She was an 11,000 ton trans-Atlantic steamer, built in 1908 as the ‘Cairo’, and owned by the Canadian Northern Steamship Company. Mastered by Captain P M Wotton, she had been taken into service as a troopship. On Thursday 12th August 1915, she left Alexandria, bound for the island of Lemnos, the main base of the British forces. She made course off the Adriatic coast of Turkey; previously a safe route, although close to the enemy’s shore. Unfortunately, the German Navy had recently set up a U-Boat base in the area. U14 was on patrol. She had been brought overland in sections, and assembled in Orak Bay.

At 9.15 on the morning of Friday 13th August, one torpedo from U14 hit ‘**Royal Edward**’ on the port side, just forward of the mainmast. She quickly listed to starboard, settled by the stern, and sank in under five minutes. The boats on the starboard side had been got away, but there were many casualties – 205 men from the Hampshire Regiment perished.

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In all, around 600 survivors, 29 from the 200-plus Hampshires on board, were taken back to Alexandria. One was a West End man – Reginald Barfoot who went on to survive the war. Only one other troopship – the ‘Southland’ with a handful of casualties – was torpedoed during the whole campaign.



U-14 the German submarine which sank the Royal Edward

West End suffered heavily in this tragedy. Eight men from the village perished: Sidney Brown, George and Frederick Curtis, both of Moorgreen Road, (George was 22, Frederick, 26) Frederick Jurd, Bertie and Walter Light, (aged 21 and 23 respectively) of 5 New Road, Frederick Thompson, who lived in the cottage opposite what is now the West End Local History Museum, and Alfred Webb were all lost. Two sets of brothers had died; looking at the Regimental Numbers of the men, they must all have joined up together.

Tragically, the deaths of George and Frederick were not the only losses to befall the family. On the 10th August, their brother, Leslie, had also died, serving with the 10th Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment in the attack at Suvla Bay. In this action, the Battalion lost every officer but one, and over 80% of its strength. Frederick and Elizabeth Curtis, who lived at Mayfield, in Moorgreen Road, paid a heavy price. Leslie was 17 years old when he died. In the same action, Lewis Jacobs, (27), who lived in the High Street, and Arthur Mitchener also died. George Harding, (also aged 27), of Moorhill died of wounds on the 13th, and was buried at sea.

The attack of the 10th Hampshires, part of the 10th (Irish) Division, was a disaster. They had landed only the day before, and had no real idea of their objectives. A letter is in the files of the Public Record Office, from their Commanding Officer. Writing to the Official Historian, Colonel W.D. Bewsher, DSO says: “I would like to bear testimony to the unflinching perseverance and pluck of all ranks of the 10th Hampshires who, without any clearly defined objective in the most difficult, trying and confusing country, never lost their pluck or willingness.”

One West End casualty has not been mentioned. Lieutenant Francis Molyneux Badham fell on 4th June 1915, at the Second Battle of Krithia. His unit, The Collingwood Battalion of the Royal Naval Division (the Division with which Rupert Brooke served), was destroyed in a fruitless attack on the Turkish trenches. 25 officers and over 500 men became casualties, and the Battalion was never reformed. Lieutenant Badham’s body was never found, and like all the other West End dead in Gallipoli – fifteen in all – he is commemorated on the Helles Memorial at Gallipoli.

A third of the war dead of West End died in this campaign. Gallipoli was evacuated in January 1916.

(This article has been based on an extract from “Men Who Marched Away - the story of the West End men who went to war 1914-1918” published by West End Parish Council to mark the Centenary of the Great War)

WINCHESTER - Bishops, Buildings & Bones

A Review by Roy Andrews

For our June meeting, Andrew Negus gave us a talk on the above theme filled with a myriad of facts and figures fired at us at machine gun rate but with plenty of humour as well, showing what a consummate speaker he is. This humble writer had trouble keeping up with the detail Andrew threw into his presentation and it kept our members on the alert (I only noticed one manage to nod off.).

Water and its constant supply from the River Itchen is the reason Winchester was occupied, by the Celts at Orams Arbour and a mile south at St. Catherine's Hill and, in 70 AD, by the Romans who called it Venta Belgarum when it quickly became one of the biggest towns in the country with a population of 6,000. They built a wall around their town, moving the course of part of the River Itchen to do so and providing four or five gates into the town. The only part of their wall which still survives is in Abbey Gardens and the High Street is their only road route.



By 410 AD, the Romans had gone and by 600 AD, the Saxons were calling the town Winton-caester. St. Birinius was busy converting the Saxons to Christianity and in 650 AD the Old Minster became the mother church and by 700 AD the burial place for kings. In 870 AD, St. Swithun rebuilt the Roman bridge over the River Itchen and is purported to have performed miracles involving eggs. He asked that when he died he be buried outside of the Minster.

Throughout the country, between 800-1065 AD, the Vikings were creating trouble but in 890 AD King Alfred of Wessex defeated them in southern England creating a stable period for administration; he created Boroughs, and the encouragement of learning and when he died, his widow built next to the Old the New Minster, resulting in the moving of St. Swithun's bones and the start of the 'forty days of rain' myth. This was now a 'boom' city with a Mint next to the Buttercross, a large woollen industry, twelve mills between Alresford and Winchester and when in 970 AD Aethelwold was ordained Bishop of Winchester, he became the wealthiest man in England.

Queen Emma, widow of Ethelred, played power politics against her son Edward involving Canute which resulted in William of Normandy (Emma's nephew) laying claim to the throne of England and invading these shores. The Normans built a castle adjacent to the West Gate and the New Minster was demolished, the stones being used to build Hyde Abbey. The Old Minster was demolished in 1070 AD and the present Cathedral started.

From this point, the history of Winchester really gathered momentum and Andrew was firing on all guns with tales of Bishop Walkelin, William Rufus, Wolvesly Palace, The Pilgrims Hall (containing the earliest hammer beam roof), Bishop Henry De Blois, The Leper Hospital, the Hospital of St. Cross and much, much more.

By 1200 Winchester was a wealthy and powerful city with a population of 8000, and having spoken for well over an hour, Andrew was now referring to part two, the ongoing history of Winchester, of his talk which made me fear, enjoyable as it had been, that we would still be seated listening at midnight, but he eventually made clear that part two was a separate talk to be hopefully savoured at a future date.

QUEEN VICTORIA'S LAST JOURNEY

A Review by Roy Andrews

Perhaps it was the very hot weather but only about half the usual number of Society members turned out to listen to what was an interesting presentation by Peter Keat although I wished his annunciation even with a micro phone had been a bit clearer at times, or perhaps I'm just getting old and deaf.

Back in 1997, approaching the centenary of the death of Queen Victoria, Peter found that very little had been written about the funeral and so he decided to correct this. Doing his research, he applied to the palace for a copy of the Order of Service at the funeral and was promptly told that under the hundred year rule it could not be divulged even after 98 years. However a friend who worked at St. Georges Chapel, Windsor was able to provide a copy which revealed nothing earth shattering or embarrassing to the Royal Household.

With an abundance of slides, Peter started with a description of the Royal Train which Prince Albert had loved but Victoria did not. The carriages were not permitted to be joined together by corridor, gas lighting was not allowed, Victoria considered it too dangerous, but permitted oil lighting! Top speed was to be no more than 30mph and no other trains were allowed on the track half an hour before and half an hour after the Royal Train passed. The crew of thirteen were mostly artisans, in case something went wrong.

In November 1900, Victoria left Balmoral in Scotland heading for Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, by train. By 20th December 1900, the Queen was fading fast. Her Doctor had never been allowed to examine the person of the Queen or even touch her e.g. to check her pulse, so diagnosis and treatment were difficult. It was not until after her death that he was able to establish the ailments from which she was suffering. Peter was surprised to learn during his research that in her last hours the queen had been given oxygen, a very new treatment then. The Queen died at 6.30pm on 22nd January 1901. Before her death the Queen had been persuaded by the writings of the poet Tennyson that white not black was the colour of death and so white and purple became the official colours at the funeral.

Press reporters awaiting news at the gate of Osborne House were able to persuade the reporter from The Times newspaper to ride his bicycle to Newport on a spurious quest. Therefore he was absent when the death was announced and so The Times was the only national paper not to carry the news in its first edition.

Apparently taken by surprise by the queen's death, there was no official coffin ready for the queen so her body was placed in a simple box and transported to the mainland by Royal Yacht. A seaman was required to stand at attention at the bow of the yacht for the entire journey and was found to have almost frozen to death on arrival on the mainland from the icy February weather.

The queen's body was then transported to London by train during which a mystery occurred as, although nobody was permitted to touch the royal body, by the time the train reached London, photos show that the box had become a coffin. Peter thought the box must have been placed inside the coffin although to me the coffin looked smaller than the box. From London, the coffin was transported to Windsor by train.

The train arrived at Windsor rather late and the horses which were to pull the gun carriage had become very fractious in the icy weather and it was considered unsafe to use them. A group of Royal Navy sailors, part of the guard of honour, were provided with rope and with some pulling and some behind acting as a brake, the gun carriage and coffin were transported to St. Georges Chapel, Windsor. Thus began a tradition of the Royal Navy always pulling the gun carriage at state funerals.

The queen was interred in the mausoleum at Windsor beside Albert. Peter said the mausoleum is well worth a visit but take a torch as the lighting is not good.

WEST END CARNIVAL 2015



West End Carnival for 2015 was held on Saturday 20th June. The theme this year was “Fantasy and Fairy Tales”. The weather held good and as you can see from the above pictures a good time was had by all. West End Local History Society as usual had a very successful Coconut Shy, well done to our members who organised this and thank you to all the Carnival Committee and helpers who made the day a success.

FROM WEST END NEWS COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER 1983

The following item was spotted in an old 1983 edition of West End Community Association's newsletter:

“ALLOTMENTS.....

...A special meeting was held in January 1908 to explain and discuss the Small-holdings and Allotments Act of 1907. The result being, to open a list of those wishing to apply for Small-holdings and Allotments, although the first request for allotments was made in 1898, the lease of land was not successfully negotiated with Queens College until 1909 but land offered at Townhill and Barnsland was not found suitable. The area of allotments is not mentioned until 1916 when it is given as 8½ acres and that the rents had been paid. A brief entry in 1917 reads: “*Rearrangement of finances now increased to 1 shilling*”. No future allotments to exceed ½ acre.

In 1918 a further 3 acres were obtained at Hickley fields, for which applicants had been found. This was let to 25 tenants at 4d. per square yard. The number of tenants was then 39. This is different to a minute in 1920 which reads; “*Allotments found for all applicants except 16, number of tenants 34, Acreage 12.*”

In 1922 a further 11½ acres at Barnsland were leased from Mr Fletcher and there were 81 tenants. In 1927, the owner of allotment land at Barnsland was selling it and refused to renew the lease.

In 1931 there were 51 tenants. An offer to lease land at Barnsland for allotments for £15 per annum for 10 years, made by Mr Collins, was refused.

W. Phillips”

OBITUARY

STANLEY W.J. “STAN” WAIGHT

11th October 1928 - 30th May 2015

It is with deepest sadness we have to report that long-time WELHS member and for many years our meeting reviewer for Westender has passed away.

He had not been in good health for some time and passed away in hospital on Saturday 30th May 2015.

His funeral was held at Wessex Vale Crematorium, West End at 1.45pm on 12th June 2015.

Born at Cowes on the Isle of Wight he was married to Margaret for 62 years, they had two daughters, Wendy and Pam and four grandchildren. Stan had an interest in travel, languages, family history, music, walking and local history. He served in the RAF during National Service.

He saw employment with Trinity House and HM Customs & Excise.

One of life's true “gentle men” liked by all, he will be sadly missed by a great many of us including members and friends, and our sincere condolences go out to his wife Margaret and their two daughters and their families.

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 £1 in future 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

THE NEXT MEETINGS ARE.....

September 2

VICTORIAN SOUTHAMPTON: the Age of Steam and Expansion 1820-1894

Jake Simpkin

October 7

Airfields of the New Forest

John Levesley

November 4

Memories of the Great War

Geoff Watts

ON THIS DAY.....

On this day (August 5th.) in.....

1729 Thomas Newcomen, English inventor of the first atmospheric steam engine in 1705, died in London.

1799 Richard Howe, British admiral and distinguished naval commander, died.

1858 The first transatlantic cable was completed by Cyrus Field, laid by USS Niagara and HMS Agamemnon. Was opened by Queen Victoria and President Buchanan exchanging greetings.

1895 Friedrich Engels, German Socialist, political writer and co-founder with Karl Marx of modern Communism, died in London.

1906 John Huston, American film director, born at Nevada in Missouri.

1911 Robert Taylor, American film actor, born at Filley in Nebraska as Spangler Arlington Brugh.

1914 The first electric traffic lights were erected, in Cleveland, Ohio.

1930 Neil Armstrong, American astronaut and first man on the moon, born at Wapakoneta in Ohio.

1962 Marilyn Monroe, American film actress and sex symbol, tragically died in Los Angeles aged 36.