



# WESTENDER

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

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## FROM OUR ARCHIVE



THE OLD FORGE OPPOSITE ENTRANCE TO HATCH GRANGE

Now the site of Anvil Close, this was the Old Forge before it was demolished to make way for housing, looking a little bit worse for wear and a little run down it served the village of West End for many years. The white cottage to the right of the forge was originally the blacksmiths cottage and still stands today, albeit somewhat extended. The cartwheel tying plate in the museum garden came from this blacksmiths. In the 19th and early 20th centuries when horse drawn vehicles were the norm West End boasted another blacksmiths opposite present day Haskins Garden Centre by the corner of Romill Close as well as Mr Bush's establishment next door to The Southampton Arms in Moorgreen Road.

West End Local History Society & Westender is sponsored by



**WEST END  
PARISH  
COUNCIL**



## A SCHOOLBOY'S VIEW OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

By Pauline Berry

Our member, Alan Budd, has continued drawing from his great source of stories from his past, with his experiences of life during World War Two. He and his family moved in 1939 from Railway Cottages in Allington Lane, to West End Road. By then Alan was the correct age to attend Hedge End Secondary School where he was taken by coach each day.

At the beginning of the war, there were no air-raid shelters for the pupils at this school. He recalls however though the sirens may have sounded whilst they were at their desks, they had to wait until their strict head-teacher, Mr Shelley, went outside into the playground. There, he proceeded to bang a tin tray with a stick, which was the signal for all pupils to take shelter under their desks. An order no-one dared disobey!

One day, Alan was in the playground, taking part in a P.T. lesson when an intense noise came from the north. He stared in amazement at *"a mass of enemy planes came over and it all seemed to be in slow-motion"*. As they headed for the Supermarine Works in Woolston. Once upon their target, the planes dropped one bomb after another, and the result was devastating, as we know. This must have been in September 1940.

On another occasion, Alan was truly frightened when the air-raid siren sounded when he was in West End Road, opposite Cutbush Lane, and he suddenly saw a German plane coming low over the trees from the east. He ran home to safety (168 West End Road) as fast as his little feet would carry him. He later found spent bullets in nearby Hatley Road, a souvenir which his friends would envy.

Alan pointed out that there were no private air-raid shelters provided on the Hatley/Wynter Roads side of West End Road, which then came under the Winchester R.D.C. (Rural District Council). But on the other side of the same road it was the responsibility of the Southampton Authority and Anderson shelters were provided for all homes and schoolchildren became part of the evacuation scheme.

There was, however, a public shelter nearby on land (now flats) opposite the Bitterne Brewery, alongside Mousehole Lane. They were well used by many neighbours during an alert, with everyone singing songs to keep calm and women knitting furiously to distract themselves. The song "Mares eat oats and does eat oats, and little lambs eat Ivy" was one old song that Alan remembered singing. When the all-clear went, some of the men would vanish into the pub opposite to quench their thirst and raise their spirits.

He also recalled the sadness of deaths occurring during an air-raid when a family hid behind a garden wall near Witts Hill and received a direct hit. Similar deaths occurred when a pair of semi-detached houses were bombed in West End Road.

After one particularly bad air-raid several homes were deprived of gas, electricity and water for some days and the Budd family joined others collecting water from the broken mains and filled up their bath with this precious commodity. Mr Fred Budd, Alan's father, made a brick oven, rather like a barbecue, so they could cook in the garden for a few days.

The war didn't faze young Alan and his brother who delivered the "Echo" newspapers in the West End area, reading the "Dandy" and "Beano" comics under the street lights, until they were officially extinguished and darkness reigned. *"Although it was sometimes frightening, the war was generally exciting to us boys"*, Alan recalls.

## NEW FOREST AIRFIELDS AND PEOPLE

A Review by Roy Andrews

The speaker for the October meeting was John Levesley, very knowledgeable on his subject, who was able to fill over an hour with hundreds of facts and figures. Perhaps too many at times as each slide he showed was full of facts and while trying to read these he was verbally throwing more at us. This included details such as tests on captured German aircraft, experimental types of rotating and ground radar, the many types of fighter and bomber aircraft flown from the fields and the squadrons and nations flying them. There was only one quick slide of a map with the locations of the airfields when perhaps a 'Google' satellite map shot for each location, as mentioned, would have been more useful.

There have been 13 airfields in the Forest, the first being set up in 1910 at Ibsley by Messers McCardle and Drexel, apparently thought by experts as two of the twenty most influential aviators in the history of flying in this country. They started a flying school where £80 paid for lessons to qualify as a pilot. During WW2 it became a fighter station used by, amongst others, a Free Czech squadron. The wartime film 'The First of the Few' was partly filmed there. The field closed down in 1946 and only the Control Tower remains, the field having succumbed to gravel extraction.

Christchurch originally had two airfields next to each other, one off Mudiford Lane and the other at Somerton Gate; in 1934 they were combined into one. Apparently the Americans did not invent aerial sign writing - a Maj. Savage at Christchurch did. Aircraft building by the Airspeed Co. continued here until well after WW2 but closed in 1967; now nothing remains of its history except some road names.

Hurn was used as a centre for troop-carrying Horsa gliders and was used for all VIP flights out of the country during the war. In 1947, it was mooted as the country's International airport but in the end Heathrow got the job.

Beaulieu was used by Czech squadrons and Coastal Command but closed in 1944. After the war, experimental helicopters were tested here until 1950.

Holmsley South again was used by Coastal Command and glider tugs.



THE NEW FOREST AIRFIELDS MEMORIAL

Stoney Cross was the biggest airfield in the Forest but closed in 1946. President Obama of the USA had a grandfather stationed here during the war. In 1960 the airfield was looked at as a possible new International Airport.

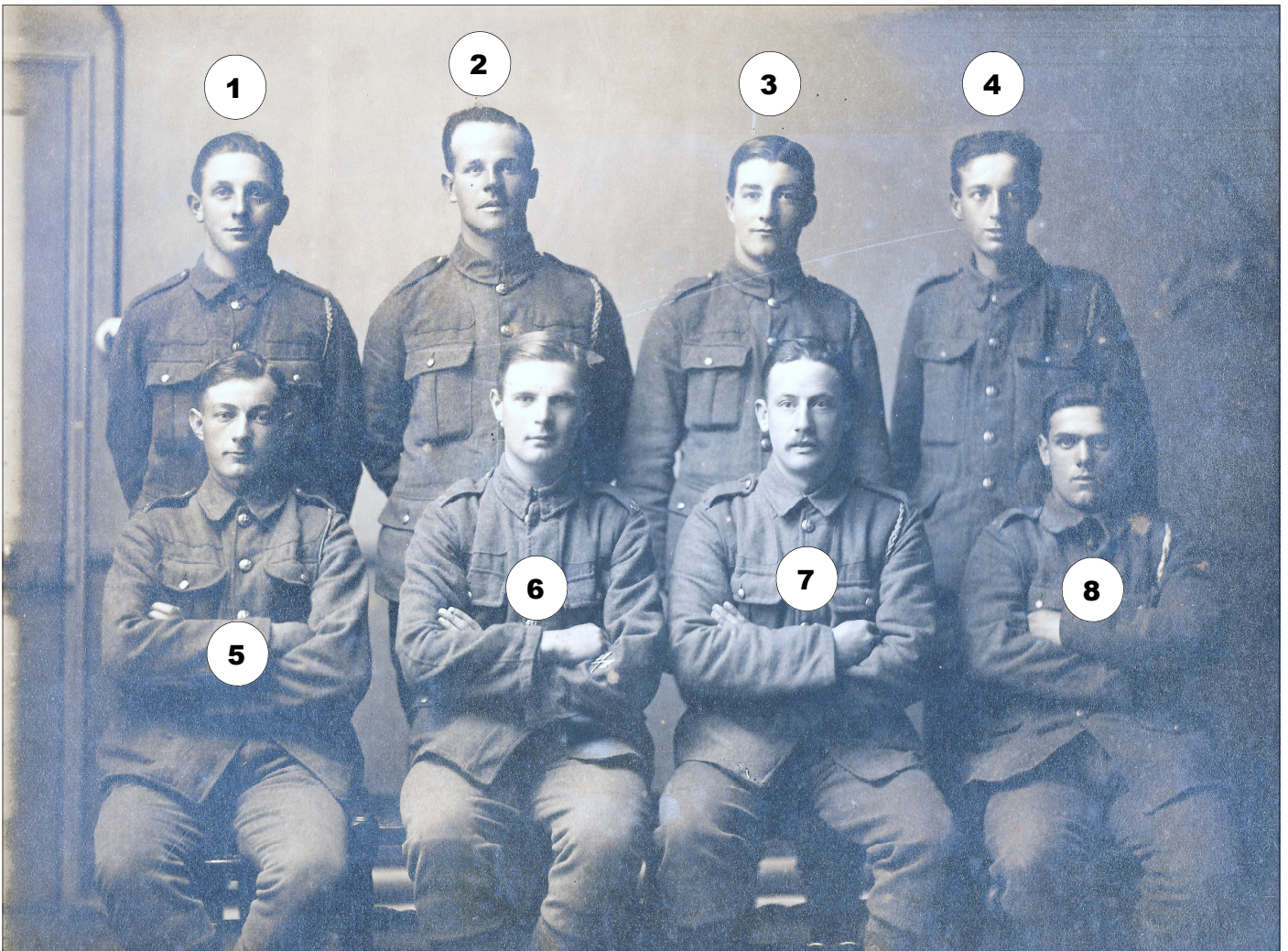
Calshot, used by sea planes and flying boats, remained an RAF Station until 1953 and was heavily used during the Berlin airlift.

Sway airfield only lasted 10 months having been opened as a temporary location used to park aircraft away from Christchurch during the war.

Winkton had two landing strips a mile long and was used by the Americans. Other fields were at Lymington, Bisterne and Needs Oar Point.



## DO YOU KNOW WHO THESE MEN WERE?



The above is a photograph from the WELHS archive, it also featured in the book “Men Who Marched Away”. We have managed to identify some of the men in it, they are : (1) Private Jacob Moody, (2) Private Frederick Harding and (8) Private Leslie Curtis.

We think that (3) is Frank Kinchenton, a friend of Private Jacob Moody (according to the late “Jack” Moody) and possibly (4) is Rifleman Frank Ryves. The group obviously all knew one another and probably had the photograph taken when on leave. They could well be all West End boys and belong to the Hampshire Regiment.

We need to identify (5), (6) and (7) - can anyone help?

If you can help identify any of the men in the picture, please contact the Editor (name and contact details on front cover)

## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Well, its that time of year again. May we take this opportunity to wish all our readers the Seasons Greetings and the hope that 2016 will bring you all you wish yourselves. It is also an opportunity to thank all contributors to Westender for all their hard work during the year in bringing us such interesting articles and reviews and we look forward to yet another successful year. The museum, although only open on Saturdays from 10am-4pm, arrangements can always be made to open “out of hours” for group visits by prior arrangement, just contact us. **HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR EVERYONE!**  
Ed.



## WEST END REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

8th November 2015



A drizzly Sunday morning did not dampen the spirits for local residents and groups attending the Remembrance Service at St James' Church. The service was led by Rev. Thomas Wharton to a packed church with readings from members of the West End Youth Club. Following the service, the congregation were led down West End Road to the War Memorial where wreaths were laid. This year saw as ever an increase in the number of people attending and the number of wreaths laid by local organisations and groups, this year an increase to 19 from last years 16 wreaths.

Refreshments were again served to all who attended at the Hildene Centre after the wreath laying at the war memorial service. The whole proceedings were a credit to West End and all who took part, and our thanks and appreciation go to St. James' Church and the Parish Council and all their staff and members who made the event happen, Well done!

## WEST END HONEY FOR SALE

Once again 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 to donate £1 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

## MEMORIES OF THE GREAT WAR

A Review by Roy Andrews

Once again Geoff Watts gave an excellent talk at the November meeting of some lesser known stories from the Great War. He started with a tale reminiscent of the Battle of Agincourt when the rapid fire of the British bowmen defeated a larger German army; however this time it was the rapid fire, 15 to 20 rounds a minute, of a smaller English army managing to hold a much larger German army from crossing a canal in Belgium.

Next came the sad story of Rudyard Kipling who managed to get his only son John who suffered from poor eyesight into the Irish Guards. John was killed in action on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1915 but there was no body so for years Kipling refused to believe John was dead. After Kipling's death, research established where John is probably buried, the irony being that Kipling had the grave stone erected at what was then the grave of an unknown soldier but did not know he was standing at the grave of his son.

Kipling wrote wartime poems including 'My Boy Jack'; another poet, a Welshman named Evans, died at Passchendaele never knowing that he had won that year's Eisteddfod in Wales.



CANNOCK CHASE GERMAN CEMETERY

War memorials are a feature of most villages in this country, usually a stone cross, but in Europe they can be much more elaborate. Cannock Chase in Staffordshire is where 5000 Germans are buried and there is a memorial to the 16 crew of the first zeppelin shot down over this country. The pilot who achieved this was rewarded with a VC, one of only three won in the air; one of the others was won during action over Southampton. Geoff spoke of several lost memorials, often metal, as was the Douglas Haig HQ plaque from Southampton's Dolphin Hotel and the Expeditionary Force HQ room from the Polygon Hotel.

'Friends of War Memorials' was set up to trace lost plaques and we heard how one found in a scrap yard in Bournemouth in 1996 was eventually traced as having come from St. Luke's Church in Bevois Valley, Southampton; although refurbished it now languishes in a museum store.

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Postcards were popular then, and today, sometimes for the story in the message or the picture on the front; the most beautiful were made of silk often featuring a butterfly.

It is not well known today but after the Great War, towns and villages in this country adopted ravaged villages in Europe and raised money to help rebuild them. Southampton supported two villages in northern France.

In 1919 the Southampton Mayor and his wife planted two horse chestnut trees at Stag Gates to commemorate the end of the war. In 1967, to allow for road widening, one was cut down, the other was moved to Asylum Green and flourishes to this day.

After the war, the exiled Kaiser was asked about referring to the British expeditionary army when it arrived in Europe as contemptible; he denied ever having said it. But the name had already become part of the army history and those who qualified were awarded a medal; this included a very popular Southampton Police horse named Warrior who had served under fire at the front before being presented to the police. He is buried at Southampton Sports Centre and is sometimes confused with a horse of the same name who served in the war and about whom books were written.



BADGE OF THE OLD CONTEMPTIBLES ASSOCIATION

## VOLUNTEERING

As you all know our whole world seems to rely on volunteers, in every aspect of life you will find volunteers working for the good of all. Well, our local history group is no different, we also rely on volunteers - writing articles, carrying out research, manning the museum and administering the society. What we need are more volunteers to help with the running of the society. Volunteering for museum duty - we need more people to spread the load, Research and writing articles for Westender - we always need more and varied articles, often the result of personal research (which can be carried out at the museum), that way we keep Westender interesting for **YOU** the readers. So, a **New Years Resolution**, why not volunteer, we also need “new blood” on the committee, so **VOLUNTEER** now! Ed.

## **“ONWARD EVER!”**

**By Paula Downer**

**“Onward Ever!”** were the words often heard by Sir Henry Bessemer’s son Henry. Sir Henry Bessemer was a prolific inventor, inventing ways of overcoming the shortcomings of industrial processes in Victorian Britain. He is best known for the invention of the Bessemer Converter, a vessel which enabled a fast and economic method of converting a large quantity of pig iron to steel.

He also enjoyed making improvements to his home. When Sir Henry Bessemer retired, in the words of his son Henry Bessemer, it ‘occupied and amused him for a number of years’. Even though Sir Henry Bessemer was a very keen inventor, he was essentially a family man. He was married to Ann Allen, they had two sons Henry and Alfred George and a daughter Elizabeth. Henry Bessemer, the eldest son was born 19<sup>th</sup> July 1838 in Hemel Hempstead, London. Along with his siblings, he was schooled privately at home, at Charlton House in London.

The 1861 census at Charlton House shows Henry Bessemer’s occupation as an Analytical chemist. On August 20<sup>th</sup> 1861 in St. Saviour, Jersey, Henry married Henrietta Luff from Ware, Hertfordshire, the daughter of William Luff, a tailor. Henry and Henrietta had two daughters, Emily Augusta Florence born 1861, Alexandra born 1863 followed by two sons, Henry William born 1865 and Herbert Alfred born 1872.



Henry Bessemer



Henrietta Luff

In the mid 1860’s Henry Bessemer was in partnership with his brother Alfred, their father Sir Henry Bessemer had set up for his sons an Iron and Steel works on the River Thames at Greenwich. It was a small operation consisting of two 2.5 ton converters and a steam hammer on a 3 acre site. But it appears that the works never opened as by this time there was a downturn in shipbuilding in this area. By September 1871 the Bessemer Brothers partnership had been dissolved by mutual consent. The heyday of shipbuilding on the River Thames had come to an end, the shipbuilders had moved north.

Nearby was the Transatlantic Telegraph Cable manufactory of which Sir Richard Glass was the Managing Director. The company made large cables which were laid across the Atlantic by Isambard Kingdom Brunel’s gigantic ship SS ‘Great Eastern’. In his retirement Sir Richard Glass moved from Surrey to live at ‘Moorlands’ in Bitterne, Southampton. He died there in 1873 aged 53 of chronic bright’s disease.

In September/October 1889, Henry Bessemer and his family came to live in Townhill Park House in West End, near Southampton.

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The 1891 census shows Henry and Henrietta with their sons Henry and Herbert. Their staff included a parlourmaid, housemaid, cook and kitchenmaid. The coachman and gardener were living with their respective families on the Townhill Park estate. Henry Bessemer was by then living on his own means.



Townhill Park House

They lived here for about ten years before moving to a larger house and grounds with a farm at 'Moorlands' at the top of the hill in Mousehole Lane in Bitterne, Southampton.



'Moorlands' House – *photograph courtesy of Bitterne Local History Society*

The 1901 census shows Henry and Henrietta Bessemer at 'Moorlands', by then the children had moved away. The butler and cook, a husband and wife originated from Germany, Henrietta's lady's maid was French. They also employed a housemaid and under housemaid. For the Bessemers a coachman was no longer required, it was the age of trains, buses and motor cars.

Henry Bessemer built a motor car. C.M. Sillence in 'Tales of Old West End' described it as a box type with four wheels similar to pram wheels. The engine was driven by a series of leather belts, steering was by means of a tiller. It may have even been one of the first cars appearing in West End ! The local boys would run alongside Henry's car, the story goes that one day it was misfiring, making so much noise that a horse took fright, bolted and turned over its wagon ! The tiller steering would have made the car very difficult to handle, the tiller idea was soon abandoned.

Around that time, a new weekly publication appeared on the scene. The 'English Mechanic and World of Science' ran a series entitled 'A Small Motor Car and How to build it'. Detailed drawings and instructions

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were shown over 31 weeks. The address of an engineering company was given if anyone did not want to make their own castings. The publication shows a diagram of a car which fits the description given by C.M. Sillence. Henry Bessemer would have had contacts in the engineering industry through his father and his son. Apparently, several 'English Mechanic' cars were built, some still survive today.



Henry Bessemer enjoying the early days of motoring

The two daughters had got married, Emily Augusta Florence married Frederick Charles Brown Clark on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1879 at Dibden Parish Church near Southampton. Alexandra married Henry Curties on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1883 in Smithfield, London.

Their eldest son Henry William went into Engineering becoming Managing Director of a manufactory. In his spare time he collected stamps. He was an expert in French stamps winning the Royal Philatelic Society London's Tilleard Medal in 1939. During the years 1897–1904, Henry William and his family lived at 'Roselands' in Portsmouth Road, then an affluent area in Southampton where the gentry lived, not far from Woolston Railway Station which must have been handy for Henry William seeing his grandfather in London. His wife Rosa (née Garton) came from Woolston. They were married on 19<sup>th</sup> July 1893 at the Jesus Chapel, Church of St. Mary Extra in Southampton (today known as Peartree Church). After 1904, they moved to a 14 bedroomed house in Chailey, East Sussex. The 'Roselands' area no longer exists having been swept away by war damage and road improvements.

Their younger son Herbert Alfred became a Lieutenant in the Submarine Mining Services of the Royal Engineers. At that time, the Royal Engineers were responsible for mine defence on the coast. Initially, Herbert may have been based locally at the barracks in Gosport or Stokes Bay, his training would have included electrical engineering. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century large country houses were being installed with electricity. The house at 'Moorlands' had its own generator to provide a electrical supply – was this initiated by Herbert Bessemer ? In the 1911 census for Newton Abbot in Devon, Herbert Bessemer describes himself as an electrical engineer.

Sir Henry Bessemer wrote his Autobiography but it was never completed. His eldest son Henry wrote a prologue, he mentions that during his father's later years he extended his love of domestic improvements and alterations to the houses of his children. This suggests that Sir Henry may have made improvements to either Townhill Park or 'Moorlands'. What a great pity Henry Bessemer did not elaborate further what his father actually did and we shall probably never know !

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Henry Bessemer died 14<sup>th</sup> January 1907 in Cannes, South of France.



The Bessemer family at 'Roselands',  
Sir Henry is on the left, his son Henry is sitting on the right. Henry William is standing

**Credits:**

Bessemer family photos are courtesy of Paul Bessemer, Great-Nephew of Henry Bessemer, Great-Great-Grandson of Sir Henry Bessemer.

Moorlands House photo is courtesy of Bitterne Local History Society.

Townhill Park House photo is from the archives of West End Local History Society.

## ON THIS DAY.....

### On this day ( 2nd December ) in.....

**1547** Hernando Cortez, Spanish conqueror of Mexico in 1521, died near Seville.

**1697** The re-built St. Paul's Cathedral was formally opened.

**1804** Napoleon Bonaparte was crowned Emperor in France, by Pope Pius VII.

**1805** The Battle of Austerlitz took place near Brunn in Moravia, in which Napoleon defeated the Austro-Russian force under the command of Kutuzov - is sometimes called the "Battle of the Three Emperors".

**1849** Queen Adelaide, wife of William IV, died.

**1859** John Brown, American anti-slavery campaigner, was hanged for treason, at Charlestown in West Virginia.

**1901** King Camp Gillette patented the first safety razor.

**1942** The world's first nuclear chain reaction took place at Stagg Field at the University of Chicago, under physicists Enrico Fermi and Arthur Compton.

## OUR PROGRAMME FOR 2016



**January 6**

**WINCHESTER - Bishops, Buildings & Bones  
Part 2**

*Andrew Negus*

**February 3**

**LIFE & DEATH OF A TUDOR SAILOR**

*Trevor Sapey (Mary Rose Trust)*

**March 2**

**SOUTHAMPTON'S SUGAR &**

**SLAVE TRADE**

*Dr. Andy Russel*

**April 6**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Plus**

**HISTORIC SHIPS OF SOUTHAMPTON**

*Dr. Cheryl Butler*

**May 4**

**SOLENT TIDE MILLS**

*David Plunkett*

**June 1**

**ALPHABETICAL TOUR OF WINCHESTER**

*Jill Daniels*

**July 6**

**LAWRENCE BEFORE & AFTER ARABIA**

*Colin van Geffen*

**August 3**

**SOCIAL EVENING AT THE MUSEUM**

**(including raffle and free refreshments)**

**ALL WELCOME**

**September 7**

**WINCHESTER - Bishops, Buildings & Bones**

**Part 3**

*Andrew Negus*

**October 5**

**LIVES INTERRUPTED**

**10 Officers in the Great War**

*Dr. Frances Hurd*

**November 2**

**MEDIEVAL SOUTHAMPTON**

**the Italian Connection**

*Geoff Watts*

**December 7**

**SOCIAL EVENING**

**CHRISTMAS BUFFET, QUIZ  
& RAFFLE**

