

WESTENDER

Newsletter of the West End Local History Society
Winter 2022



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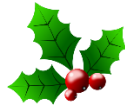
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**MERRY CHRISTMAS
&
A HAPPY NEW YEAR
TO ALL OUR READERS
AT HOME AND ABROAD!**



Junction of High Street & Upper New Road in the Snow 1909

Christmas clip art in this issue courtesy of <https://publicdomainvectors.org/>

WELHS ... Preserving our past for your future ...

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Closing Date for contributions to Spring Issue: 15th February 2023

‘Beloved In Christ, Be It This Christmas Eve Our Care And Delight To Prepare
Ourselves To Hear Again The Message Of The Angels’
By Paula Downer

Further to my article on the White family (‘Westender’ January-February 2021), herein I focus on Eric Milner-White, the eldest son of Sir Henry Milner-White who is buried in the Old Burial Ground in West End (his mother Kathleen Lucy is buried on the Isle of Wight). Eric Milner-White took Holy Orders, having attended King’s College, Cambridge where he studied history, obtaining a double first class honours degree. After a year at Cuddesdon Theological College he ordained as a Deacon in 1908, the following year he became Priest at Southwark Cathedral. In 1912 Eric Milner-White was appointed Chaplain of King’s College and Lecturer in History at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

For the duration of the Great War (1914-18), Eric Milner-White was commissioned by the Army Chaplains’ Department to provide spiritual well-being and pastoral care for the soldiers and officers on the Western Front and in Italy. He was mentioned in dispatches and thereby decorated with the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) for gallantry. The Great War had left its mark, Eric Milner-White had seen for himself the horror and brutality of this war, upon his return, he sought to adapt church services, to meet the needs of a disillusioned nation traumatised by war and loss of faith. He was very good at wording prayers to suit mood and occasion, he sought to motivate his congregation by making church services more uplifting and joyful. When Eric Milner-White was appointed Fellow and Dean of King’s College, Cambridge, he immediately set about making changes, therewith instigating the now famous ‘Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols’ at King’s College which has since been held each year on Christmas Eve.

The ‘Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols’ was originally devised by Edward White Benson, Bishop of Truro, Cornwall in 1880, partly to lure highly spirited locals away from the tavern on Christmas Eve! The Bishop extracted nine passages from the Holy Bible’s Old and New Testaments then added nine carols and hymns to celebrate the biblical Christmas Story. The service became very popular and was adopted by many other churches. The Dean Eric Milner-White revised this service for King’s College with the introduction of a poignant ‘Bidding Prayer’. Since 1928 the service held in the candlelit Chapel of King’s College has been broadcast live at 3 pm on BBC Radio around the world. Nowadays, admittance to the actual service is by ticket only, the College donating a number of tickets to the general public which are distributed to those successful in a ballot.

Before the service begins, the congregation will be requested to avoid making distracting noises for those listening to the service on the radio; to turn off their mobile phones, place bags and walking sticks securely on the floor besides them, and remember to turn the pages of their Order of Service booklet quietly!

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© Geoff Robinson Photography

The service opens with the carol 'Once in Royal David's City' followed by the 'Bidding Prayer:

(Bidding Prayer 1st verse)

'BELOVED IN CHRIST, BE IT THIS CHRISTMAS EVE OUR CARE AND DELIGHT TO PREPARE OURSELVES TO HEAR AGAIN THE MESSAGE OF THE ANGELS; IN HEART AND MIND TO GO EVEN UNTO BETHLEHEM AND SEE THIS THING WHICH IS COME TO PASS, AND THE BABE LYING IN A MANGER'

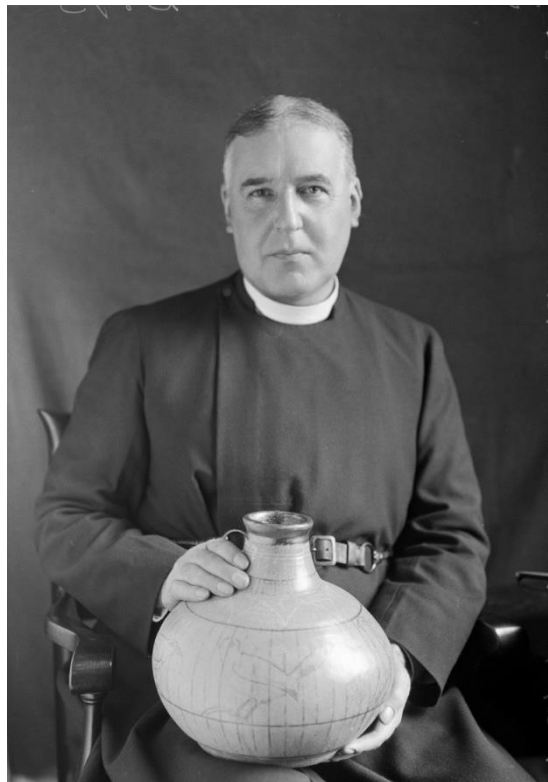
After which the congregation is invited to join in with the Lord's Prayer. Each of the nine lessons is read out by a member of King's College in hierarchical order and a representative of the City of

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Cambridge, ending with the last lesson being read by the Provost of King's College. Each lesson is followed by a carol or hymn and every year there is normally a specially commissioned new carol. The service is concluded with a joyful rendition of:

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING ♪♪♪
GLORY TO THE NEW BORN KING!' ♪♪
(sung by all)

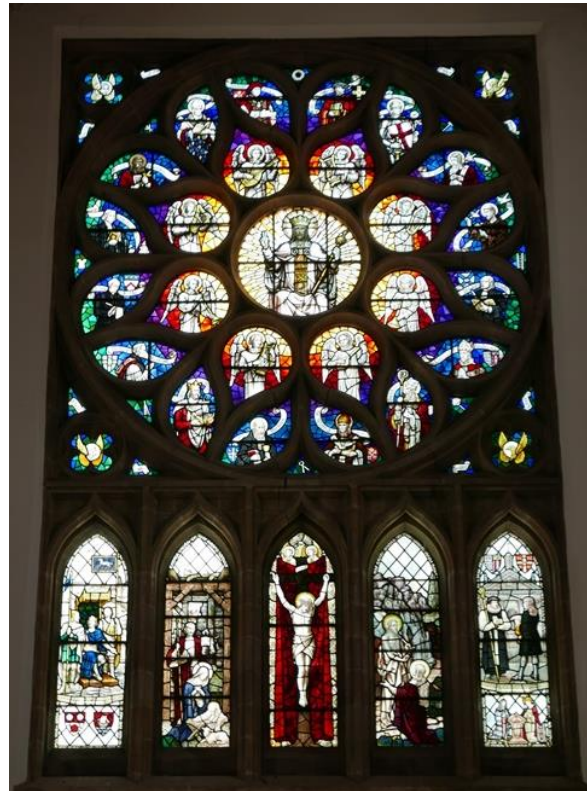
The procession followed by the congregation leave the Chapel to the sound of Organ Voluntaries.



Eric Milner-White © National Portrait Gallery, London

Eric Milner-White remained Dean at King's College until 1941 when he became Dean of York during which time he pursued his interest in history, art, British studio ceramics (of which he held a large collection). Ecclesiastical stained glass windows being a particular passion, he actively participated in the preservation and restoration of the windows in the King's Chapel and York Minster. Many of the stained glass windows of York Minster had been removed during the war, and stored for safekeeping in local country houses. Eric Milner-White was instrumental in their return, restoration and re-installation. In Southampton, he was involved with the design of many of the stained glass windows in the parish Church of the Ascension, Bitterne Park, twelve of which were donated by his step-mother Lady Milner-White (ref. Southern Daily Echo dated February 1957). The East Rose Window, dedicated in 1926, was donated by Lady Milner-White in beloved memory of her husband Sir Henry Milner-White.

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Ascension Rose Window © Paula Downer

Eric Milner-White was recognised for his honourable service; in 1948 he was made Honorary Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Glaziers, in 1952, awarded Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) and Lambeth Doctor of Divinity (DD) and in 1962 was conferred University of Leeds Honorary Doctor of Letters (DLitt). He published prayer books; 'My God, My Glory' is a compilation of his prayers which the reader is encouraged to use and adapt for their own needs.

Eric Milner-White passed away on 15th June 1963, aged 79, at the Deanery in York; his cremated ashes were interred in York Minster. A commemorative stone dedicated to Eric Milner-White CBE DSO DD MA lies nearby. Much of his art and ceramics collection was donated to the City of York Art Gallery, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge and Southampton Art Gallery. His vision for a Centre of Excellence dedicated to the care and preservation of historic stained glass nationwide, the York Glaziers Trust, was established in 1967.



A cabinet in Southampton Art Gallery displays a collection of ceramics donated in memory of Sir Henry Milner-White.

Image © Paula Downer

Spitfires in West End by Roy Andrews

In the June 2009 issue of Westender, I had published a short article which had resulted from something my mother, who died in 1975, had told me when I was a boy. She told me how during WWII she had made fuel tanks for the Supermarine Spitfire in West End where the Blockcrete Yard was at the bottom of the High Street, between Fray's shop and Dunford's Garage; later it was the Wimpey Builders' regional office. That was all I ever remember her saying so I thought I would ask around via Westender as to whether any of the older village residents remembered this manufacturing. I never received any feedback.

Years later I heard of an organization, Spitfire Makers Research, which had been set up in Southampton to try and establish where, after the Supermarine factory was destroyed by bombing, satellite manufacturing sites had been set up in and around the town to continue building Spitfires. Having contacted the organization, I explained that I thought mum had said she had worked at the Blockcrete yard, and remembering as a lad that it was just a yard, I thought perhaps she had meant Dunford's Garage which seemed more suitable for engineering. The organization did their research but could find nothing which would indicate that Dunford's had ever been used. Then they spotted, on an old map, that during WWII, on the Blockcrete site had stood a firm called The Box Company. This firm also had premises in Shirley, Southampton where it was already established they had made drop fuel tanks for Spitfires. Drop fuel tanks were pods carrying extra fuel attached to the wings and dropped when empty.

So the organization is happy, as the result of what mum told me, to add West End to their list of construction sites for the Spitfire and at their request I supplied them with a photo of mum from the 1940s as they like to have a picture of someone who worked at each site for their displays.

Our next article comes as a timely reminder, especially for those new to West End, following the refurbishment of Captain Rostron's grave reported in the Autumn 2022 issue of Westender.

Captain Rostron by Alec Samuels

One of the most distinguished residents of West End must be Captain Sir Arthur Henry Rostron. Born on 14th May 1869 in Bolton in Lancashire, in 1888 he started as a naval cadet, and over the Years steadily worked his way up in his career, mostly with Cunard, including service in WWI in Gallipoli.

On 15th April 1912 his ship RMS Carpathia picked up a distress signal from RMS Titanic. Captain Rostron immediately ordered full steam to the Titanic, some 60 miles away. Care had to be taken because of the ice floes. Speed of 17.5 knots was achieved. The ship was made ready, blankets, food and drink. Arriving at the site at 4 a.m., about an hour and a half after the sinking, something over 700 survivors in lifeboats were picked up and taken to New York. Captain Rostron was treated as a hero in the U.S.A., receiving the Congressional Gold Medal, a Silver cup and gold medal, and other honours.

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Over the years he captained nearly a dozen liners, including the Mauretania and the Berengaria, reaching the rank of Commodore. He was made C.B.E. in 1919 and K.C.B., Sir Arthur, in 1926. He retired in 1931. In retirement he lived in Holmecroft, Chalk Hill, in West End, died on 4th November 1940 and is buried in the Churchyard of West End Parish Church. His wife is buried with him.

Sir Arthur published *Home from the Sea*, an autobiography, 1918, and Macmillan 1931. He was a devoted and skilled Master mariner, accustomed to command, a maritime hero, and hugely respected.

© Alec Samuels

West End Fire Brigade (Part Three)

by Pauline Berry

Owing to the lack of interest in becoming voluntary firemen, the West End Fire Brigade was temporarily disbanded around 1925. Urgent requests for new volunteers were issued in the village and fortunately, eight more fire fighters came forward and Charles Sillence (senior) became their captain. They still had no official uniform, but arm-bands for all were purchased, their primitive push-pull cart was modified with springs and six Hurricane lamps were acquired to light their way at night. By 1929 and 1930, an extra 250 feet of hose (making 1,000 feet in all) and chemical extinguishers were obtained. A larger, temporary fire station was planned at the northern end of the old Parish Hall, to the relief of all concerned.

A considerable amount of time was saved by Mr Pitter, who made his lorry available for carrying this increased amount of fire-fighting equipment recently acquired. In 1933, each volunteer was paid one shilling (5p today) per man for each hour of practice sessions and a special telephone was installed at Mr Knowlton's (the baker's) house. In 1934 the South Stoneham Union Workhouse informed West End Parish Council (W.E.P.C.) that their own fire fighting equipment, previously loaned to the Brigade, would no longer be available, nor would Mr Pitter's lorry. New firemen's caps were purchased to replace the old helmets and this lifted their spirits for a while.

A large fire in Allington Lane was the last straw for the firemen's patience and the W.E.P.C. was persuaded to buy a much-needed lorry for the Fire Brigade in 1935/36. A damaged fire hydrant and damaged pride owing to the rapid response from the Southampton Fire Brigade, who arrived first at fires, added to their problems! This upset the West End firemen to such an extent that they stated "We will not continue in the fire brigade unless a lorry can be obtained." This did the trick and a 30cwt Ford lorry was duly purchased in 1936 for £65 (£3,250 in today's money). That same year, a detached (but temporary) fire station was built by voluntary labour led by James Bignell at the north end of the old Parish Hall yard on the corner of Chapel Road. It was designed and supervised by W.E.P.C. chairman Harry Haines and the council paid for the materials.

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On Sunday 24th July 1938, a disastrous fire occurred at the large house Hatch Grange, which had only been purchased, with the land, by the W.E.P.C. just 25 days earlier! Although the house was empty and in a dilapidated state, the cause of it was never known. The news that day caused many West End residents to hurry and witness the sorry sight of Hatch Grange House burning to the ground. The water pressure in the High Street was so poor that the firemen must have been very frustrated by their efforts. The twelve firemen on duty claimed for their labour, 10 hours at 3 shillings (15 pence) per hour, 10 shillings (50 pence) for cleaning the hose later and 10 pounds (£400 now) to cover the wear and tear to all their equipment. In their minutes, W.E.P.C. testified to “the splendid way the firemen worked” and “Danger” signs were erected on the derelict site in order to keep onlookers away (an impossible task!).

By coincidence, the Fire Brigade Act was passed on 29th July 1938 and this brought many changes. It placed responsibility for the provision of fire brigades, engines and equipment onto rural councils (Winchester in this case) in 1939, away from the parish councils and insurance companies. The local rural authority should also provide and maintain fire hydrants and improve water supply, the costs being met from the local rates (council tax, today).

In 1939 Mr Knowlton reported that the West End Fire Brigade had been measured for new uniforms and the long-awaited new fire engine had arrived in June that year. A conveyance (deed) at the end of the year stated that an area of land had been purchased for a permanent detached fire station to serve West End. The cost was £120 (£4,800 today) to build it on the corner of the High Street and Orchards Way and was covered by the Winchester Rural District Council (W.R.D.C.). They bought the land for this purpose from the Hampshire Rural Cottage Improvement Society which had been founded in 1936. One of its members being Herbert Collins, the local architect who designed the above-mentioned fire station and the Orchard Way estate adjoining it.



Rodney Whale presenting a bouquet to Mrs Pearson with West End's first fire engine outside the Old Parish Hall in 1938.

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This well-known site, which we know today as the Old Fire Station, was officially opened on 1st January 1940 by the vicar, the Rev. R.H. Babington, lifting the first sod. This building, and the successive fire engines, were served well by the worthy local fire fighters until 1996. Then it was sadly closed and the fire engine moved to Hightown Fire Station as part of a reorganisation programme. West End Parish Council promptly purchased the empty but well-built fire station for £47,000 and from that date it has been well used for community use and, of course, as a museum. The latter has thrived, preserving much of West End's past, which fortunately still exists in West End High Street today.

REVIEWS OF MONTHLY TALKS

Windsor Castle A Review by Roy Andrews

For our September meeting we had as our speaker Jake Simpkin on the subject of Windsor Castle, a venerable building, long part of this country's history; little did any of us know that within a few days of Jake's presentation, upon the death of Queen Elizabeth II, the castle and many of the aspects that Jake spoke of would be centre stage in this country and much of the world.

The Castle was started by William the Conqueror. On a chalk cliff, he had a 15 metre-deep dry moat dug around a mound created by the spoil removed from the moat and upon this was built the Round Tower overlooking the Thames and close to his new capital of London. Eight hundred years ago were added the walls which surround the Lower, Middle and Upper Wards and between 1475 – 1527, St George's Chapel was built by Edward IV.

Windsor Castle is the longest royal castle in use in the world but of those who called it home, five royals have had the most impact on its present appearance: William I, Edward III, Charles II, George IV and Elizabeth II. George IV, when he was Prince Regent 200 years ago, had all of the walls including the Round Tower raised and castellated to give a uniform appearance to the whole castle. He also filled it with large amounts of treasures purchased from the late French Royal Family. And Elizabeth II was required to rebuild those parts of the castle which were destroyed by the fire in her 'Annus Horribilis' year, 1992, which cost millions but the finished result were worth it. Luckily, the Prince Regent had saved samples of everything installed in the Crimson Room enabling the room to be recreated exactly as it was before the fire.

It is not just royalty that can call the castle home. Opposite St George's Chapel are 12 houses for military Knights. They were originally built to house poor knights who had been captured in battle and been made to pay huge ransoms to gain their freedom, forcing them into poverty.

In St. George's Chapel, Jake explained, are buried 10 monarchs: Henry VI, Henry VIII, Edward VI, Charles I, George III, George IV, William IV, Edward VII and Georges V and VI. Queen Victoria is buried at Frogmore and as we now know an eleventh monarch now lies at rest in the Chapel, our own Elizabeth II. Jake explained how coffins were lowered into the royal vault via a hydraulic lift

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hidden under a tombstone in the floor. Twelve days later, millions of us around the world watched this happen in a moment of history we will not forget.

We were told by Jake of the various towers in the castle walls such as the Curfew Tower, Garter Tower and Salisbury Tower and the George IV Gate leading out into the Castle Parklands and approached by the Long Walk 2.7 miles long and originally lined by 1600 elm trees. These, as age takes over, are being replaced by oak, chestnut and London plane trees. The Walk was lined by thousands and observed by millions on TV around the world as the late Queen's coffin was carried to its last resting place along the walk into the castle.

Our new monarch, King Charles III, is said to prefer the castle as his new home over Buckingham Palace, so its importance will continue and will attract visitors from all over the world who it is hoped will glean a little bit about the history of this country and the castle's part in it, especially if they are led by Jake himself in his role as an official guide. Or maybe not! At the end of the talk, we were told of an anecdote concerning President Reagan of the USA who, while on a visit to the castle, asked the Queen why she had had the castle built under the noisy flight path into Heathrow Airport?!

The Miracle Flower: From Flanders to The Tower

A Review by Roy Andrews

The October meeting had as our guest speaker Jeremy Prescott who spent 26 years as an army officer and many years raising money for various organizations looking after the welfare of ex-service personnel and their families. He also works to ensure the maintenance and even reinstatement of war memorials, such as the memorial at the London Stock Exchange.

Jeremy explained that the poppy has been associated with death for thousands of years as seen, for instance, in cave paintings and in Greek mythology. One point seven million British military personnel died in the two World Wars, most in the first. Among them was Captain John McCrae who in May 1915, while surrounded by the quagmire of the Flanders battle field where everything became a sea of mud, saw that poppies could grow and flourish there. After witnessing a friend being blown up, he wrote the poem In Flanders Field. A fellow officer persuaded him to have this published, which it was in the Punch Magazine in 1915.

In the USA, Moina Michael conceived the idea of using the poppy as a symbol in the remembrance of WW1 and started by selling 24 silk poppies in 1918. However the poppy has never reached the emotional importance there as only 6% wear a poppy as against 53% in this country. In Paris in 1920, Anna Guerin, a teacher, aware of the 2000 war widows in the city came up with the idea of getting them to make poppies and then sell them to Britain.

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In 1921 both the USA and Britain agreed that the poppy would become the symbol of remembrance. Major George Howson M.C., a Scot in the Hampshire Regiment, aware of the vast numbers of disabled personnel after WW1 persuaded the British Legion to give him £2000 which he used to open a factory in Old Kent Road and began to employ these people to make the poppies sold throughout the country for Remembrance Day. The factory quickly outgrew the premises and moved to Richmond where it remains today still employing disabled service personnel and still producing the millions of poppies many wear each November and also the exact number of petals to fall at the Remembrance Festival, matching the number of the fallen in battle.

In 2014 a pottery artist Paul Cummins had the idea of creating pottery poppies and with the aid of Tom Piper sold the idea of an installation under the title Blood swept lands and seas of red. The poppies were made by volunteers and the first was laid in the dry moat at the Tower of London in June 2014; a further 800,000 followed, the last being laid by a young cadet at 11am on the 11th November 2014. The poppies were later collected and sold to the public for £25 each, raising £9.5 million.

As Jeremy pointed out, there are critics, some well known, of the whole idea of the poppy, seeing it as glorifying war rather than its intention to remember those mostly young, brave people who suffered the hell of war to protect those they left behind.



In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The Larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below

We are the Dead, Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

Marmalade, Spuds and a Bag of Gold

A Review by Roy Andrews

The November meeting had as our speaker the ever-entertaining Dr Cheryl Butler, her theme being gift giving in Tudor Southampton. She started with the obvious gift giving season of Christmas explaining that in Tudor times this lasted for twelve days with Christmas Day having been chosen arbitrarily as the 25th. Boxing Day was so called as on that day apprentices opened their boxes and alms were given to the poor. Mince pies had thirteen different savoury fillings – not at all like today's sweet offerings and Yule Logs were a Viking legacy. Turkeys did not arrive until 1500 and the first carols are credited to 1521. St Nicholas, glorified by the Italians, a large number of whom lived in Southampton, became over time Father Christmas; St. Nick's symbol was three gold balls, hence oranges became a Christmas gift, not an easy option in winter; marmalade became the alternative in the form of a paste imported from Spain and Portugal.

In medieval times, New Year was the time for giving gifts and this was on March 26th until 1752 when eleven days were lost on the change between Julian and Gregorian calendars, hence the tax year still runs from 6th April. Gifts were seen as a way of currying favours from one's betters so the higher the social ladder, the better the gift had to be and Royalty were at the top. Henry VIII liked money or gold plate he could melt down; in return he gave a cannon to Southampton. Elizabeth I liked richly decorated gloves; she gave to Southampton a portrait of herself. Henry III was given an elephant. Others were given dolphins, porpoise and sturgeon. The church had to be included in gift giving and in 1572 the town corporation gave the Bishop of Winchester sugar loaves value £2.12s.4d and marmalade worth 7s.6d. In 1576 it was 4 boxes of lemons and pomegranates. In 1578 it was 100 oranges and 100 lemons. In 1587 it was barrels of figs and olives.

The Earl of Southampton in 1576-77 received from the corporation 4 boxes of marmalade, 100 lemons and 12 pomegranates. Southampton being a wine importing port also gave that as gifts; Frances Drake while staying in the town was given sac and claret. When Charles V of Spain arrived in the port with 4000 staff, it cost the corporation £5.6s.8d in wine.

Giving gifts was a two way flow as the gentry gave to their staff but this time the lower down the pecking order, the lesser the gift. The poor were given gifts of faggots, bread or alms. An unusual gift, so it would seem to us today, was given by the corporation to the Lord of Hertford in 1593 which was 2 sugar loaves and 10 pounds of potatoes and this is the earliest known mention of potatoes in this country.

After the Civil War, Cromwell cancelled Christmas and in 1650 the vicar of Southampton's St Michael's church was accused of still celebrating it. After the Reformation it returned on a lesser scale until the Victorians (thank you Charles Dickens) gave us the Christmas we know today. In 1876, the 25-26th of December were made official Bank Holidays and thanks to the Coca Cola Co. advertising, Father Christmas went from having a green costume to red.

Dr Butler was warmly thanked for her well researched and fully illustrated presentation possibly giving many of us food for thought about the forthcoming season of gift giving.

WEST END NEWS

Heritage Trail Signs Installed in the Village

There are now 6 signs around the village celebrating the lives of notable residents.



Harriet Haselfoot, philanthropist



Kate Oram, nurse to Florence Nightingale



Harry Haines, Chairman of the Parish Council



The Fletchers of Hatch Grange

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Herbert Collins, architect



Fred Woolley, Alderman & Mayor of Southampton

All photographs courtesy Lin Dowdell.

SAD NEWS

Alec Samuels 1930 – 2022

Alec Samuels was a member of West End Local History Society and often gave the vote of thanks for our speakers. He became the Leader of Southampton City Council in 2007/8 through to 2010, when he stepped down from that role at the age of 80 years old. He was subsequently made an Honorary Alderman in 2011. Alec was a Lecturer at the University of Southampton, an active Committee member of the City of Southampton Society and Southampton Common and Parks Society. He retired from Politics at the age of 80. Alec was described as a true gentleman, whose dedication to the City of Southampton never wavered, highly regarded and very well respected by all. Alec was born on 13th March 1930 and passed away 7th November 2022 aged 92.

WEST END LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY 2023 PROGRAMME OF SPEAKERS

January 4	“Southampton’s Connections with the American Civil War” – <i>Geoff Watts</i>
February 1	“The East India Company at Home” – <i>Dr. Cheryl Butler</i>
March 1	“Napoleonic Prisoner of War Work” – <i>Tony Cross</i>
April 5	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING plus “Building Spitfires Without a Factory” – <i>Alan Matlock</i>
May 3	“Winchester Prison Past and Present” – <i>Mark Watts</i>
June 7	“Bert Hinkler” - <i>Martin Radford</i>
July 5	“The Arrival of The Romans ... the changing face of Wessex” – <i>Kay Ainsworth</i>
August 2	SOCIAL EVENING AT THE MUSEUM – ALL WELCOME including raffle and free refreshments
September 6	“Winchester’s 3.5 Cathedrals, their Bishops, their Histories, their Treasures” – <i>Andrew Negus</i>
October 4	“The Trinity, The Angel and The Elizabeth” – <i>Dr. Cheryl Butler</i>
November 1	“Iconic Memorials to The Fallen” – <i>Jeremy Prescott</i>
December 6	SOCIAL EVENING – CHRISTMAS BUFFET & RAFFLE plus “Fratricide ... the true story of Good King Wenceslas” – <i>Gordon Lewis</i>