

WESTENDER

Newsletter of the West End Local History Society
Spring 2024



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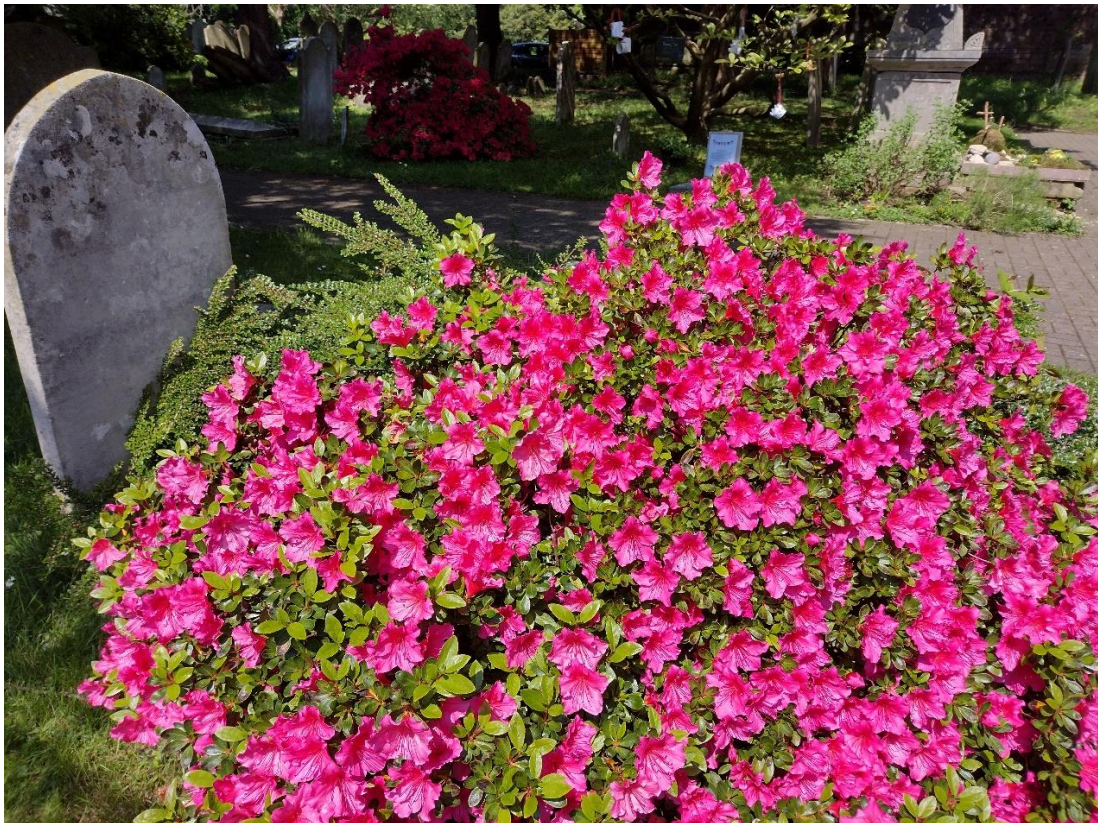
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Azaleas growing in the churchyard at St. James, West End

Photo courtesy Paula Downer

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The King's ship "Anne"

By Peter Sillence

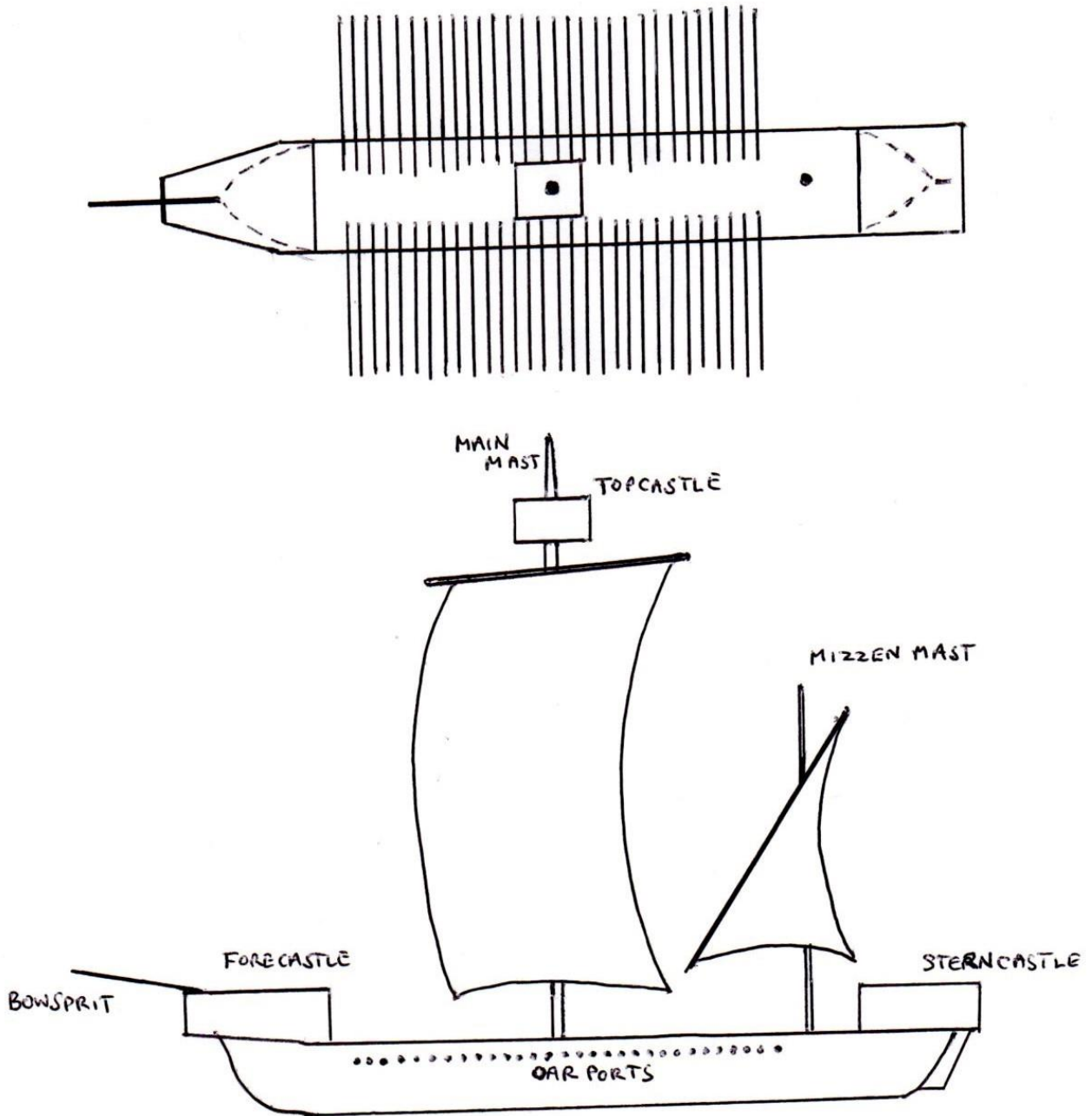
Several ships for Henry V's navy were constructed in Southampton in the early 15th C, including the "Anne", which was built using local timber, a significant quantity of which was taken from woodland in Allington. Use of local timber for shipbuilding was common and a number of wooden vessels were built in Southampton and on the Hamble River in the mediaeval and later periods. Indeed, early newspapers also record the sale of timber for naval use from woods on estates in Allington, Townhill, Hickley and Moorgreen farms between the 1780s and 1830s.

The West End area is fairly well wooded even today and there would have been much more woodland in the mediaeval period. In the Domesday book, Allington is recorded as having woodland for 40 swine. This would have been pasture-wood near the village, but there would have been more in the surrounding wastes. In 1194 William Alis allowed the Canon of St Denys pannage for 30 pigs in his woods at Allington. Between the 12th and 14th C West End was within the bounds of the Royal Forest of Bere, the western boundary being the River Itchen. Like the New Forest, it would have been a preserve for the Royal Hunt, the trees being protected, as were the deer and other game. The geology and soil are very similar to the New Forest and the landscape of West End in mediaeval times would have been very much the same with areas of heathland and woodland. The Forest of Bere contracted in size after the 14th C so that its western edge became the River Meon. At that time, patches of the heath and woodland were cleared and the small manors of Hickley, Chalcroft, Dowds and Shamblehurst were able to expand. Much woodland was kept though, and was a valuable resource. Old Ash coppice boles found in Hog wood and High wood in Allington, measure up to 6metres in girth, and could date from as early as 1350.

Henry V was King of England from 1413 to 1422. Although his reign was fairly short, it was eventful militarily and included the great English victory at the battle of Agincourt. Henry had embarked on a war with France in 1415 but even before this he had started to build up his naval forces knowing he would need ships for, and to protect, his invasion force. Henry only inherited 2 ships from his father, but by 1417 he had built or modified 32 royal vessels. Moving troops across the Channel was supplemented by ships hired from around the English coast, the Netherlands, the Baltic and Venice. For the invasion of France, he had a fleet of 650 vessels, guarded by his navy. Most of his ships were built on the south coast and the most important naval base and building centre for Henry was Southampton. It was also the main embarkation port for the invasion. Portsmouth only assumed its importance as a naval base later in the 1490s.

Several of Henry's ships were built in Southampton and for one in particular, significant documents remain in the National Archives to enable us to learn of its construction and subsequent use. The "Anne" or Ane built in 1416 was a balinger, the mediaeval equivalent of a frigate. Fairly light and fast, they had probably evolved from the Viking longship. They were used for a variety of tasks and were the most versatile ships in the fleet. They had both oars and sails and seem to have been long and narrow with a shallow low built hull. They were used for sea patrols, expeditions, invasions, sea trade and rapid transit of war supplies and men. The "Anne" was one of the largest built, having a capacity of 120 tonnes with 2 masts. Most balingers were only half that size and it is thought "Anne" was something of an innovation as none had been built with more than 1 mast before 1416.

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Possible layout sketch of the balinger Anne

The building project was overseen by William Soper, a Southampton merchant who at different times was also Steward of Southampton, then twice Mayor and for many years a Member of Parliament for Southampton. He was involved in work with the King's ships from 1414 and eventually became Keeper of the King's ships. The master shipwright and designer of the "Anne" was John Hoggekyn, a Southampton shipbuilder who later went on to build the Grace Dieu, the biggest and possibly greatest English warship seen until the reign of Charles I. It was larger than Henry VIII's Mary Rose. The Grace Dieu still lies in the mud of the Hamble River having been burnt to the waterline after being struck by lightning in 1439. Another ship of Henry's, the Holigost, has recently been found near the Grace Dieu and Archaeologists are hoping to excavate the rare ships in the next few years.

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Before work on the “Anne” began, a purpose-built mud dock was dug on the Southampton waterfront, possibly on the banks of the Itchen. The dock was closed off from the water by a wooden dam. The work on the ship began on June 18th 1416 and took about 18 weeks to complete, the total cost being £179 19s 13/4d. In terms of its economic impact, that cost would probably be equivalent to about £70 million today. There were 23 shipwrights employed, plus carpenters, blacksmiths, nailers and caulkers. The main timber for the keel was laid down first; it was 68 feet (20.7m) long. Timber from Allington was probably used for the frame, being bought in only 6 days after construction was started. Other timber used came from Poole, Winchester, and Langley near Fawley. The “Anne” was, as most ships in those days, a clinker-built vessel, meaning the hull planking was horizontal and overlapping. It was caulked with moss and oakum and waterproofed with pitch tar and tallow. Fuel was purchased locally to melt the pitch and tar and for the forges making the ironwork. John Hekeley was the carter who transported much of the goods bought in locally including some of the timber and the fuel. The Hekeley family held Hekeley Croft or Manor, later Hickley farm, in West End, certainly in the 12th and 13th C. It is possible that some of the fuel, brushwood bavons, came from the coppices at Hickley. The “Anne”’s two masts were bought from Southampton merchants but were probably sourced from the Baltic area. Ropes for the rigging came from London and most of the canvas for the sails from Brittany although they seem to have been made in Southampton. The ship had a wooden fighting ‘castle’ at the bow and stern and a ‘topcastle’ on the mainmast.

By the end of October, it was substantially completed and was floated out of the dock and towed to moorings where the final fitting out was completed and 68 oars purchased. Each oar was 24 feet (7.3m) long, and there were possibly 30 per side and 8 spare, although we don’t know for sure. The completed ship was handed over to the King’s Keeper on 13th November 1416, the shipwright by then having started work on the Grace Dieu, work that was to take another 2 years.



The Mayor of Southampton’s seal, showing a ship of the period

“Anne” had a crew of 140 for voyages of a warlike nature, but reduced sometimes to 45 or 50 when being used for transport duties. When at war, her crew were supplemented by men-at-arms and archers. Her captain or ship-master was known to have been a man called Ralph Huskard, an

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experienced sailor who had commanded several ships. “Anne” was a successful warship. In its first 2 years it took part in at least 15 voyages. It helped in the capture of 2 large Spanish ships and was probably involved in the great sea battle off the Chef de Caux (near Le Havre) in 1417 against the French and their Spanish and Genoese allies. “Anne” was used to rush supplies of gunpowder to the army in Caen, and in 1420 and 1421 was the ship used to transport Henry V and his retinue on various cross-channel voyages.

Henry died in 1422 and most of his fleet was sold off in the 3 years that followed. In June 1424, William Soper arranged the sale of the “Anne” to a John Slogge, probably a merchant, from Saltash in Cornwall. The ship was sold for £30 – about a sixth of its building cost; we don’t know what he used it for, possibly a transport or perhaps privateering? Maybe the remains of the “Anne”, with its Allington timbers, still lie in the mud of a West Country estuary waiting to be discovered.

Keep Calm & Carry On (Part One)

By Pauline Berry

After seven months of the “Phoney War” when little happened, Hitler unleashed his Blitzkrieg on Belgium, Holland and France in May 1940. Having achieved that objective, the next great fear was that Great Britain would face his next onslaught, possibly beginning with German paratroopers dropping from our sky. Thus, anxious men in many British towns and villages began to group to discuss how to defend their homes. Many old revolvers and shotguns came out of hiding, even some from the Great War. Senior military staff were soon well aware that a properly organised voluntary defence force was needed in this country.

Anthony Eden, the newly appointed Secretary of State for War secured Cabinet approval for the creation of the Local Defence Volunteers (L.D.V.) to meet this need. On May 14th 1940 he broadcast to the nation on radio, an appeal for British men between the ages of 17 and 65 to volunteer as L.D.V.s. Although unpaid, the following day nearly a quarter of a million men enlisted at their local police stations. Men had to be physically fit and their training would be in their spare time, whether they worked or not. In July 1940 the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, changed the cumbersome title of Local Defence Volunteers to the new and more suitable name, The Home Guard (H.G.).

In the early days the new L.D.V platoons began training with marching drill (they really did use broomsticks instead of real weapons) patrolling the countryside in search of the secret spying organisation “the Fifth Column”. The new recruits learned hand-to-hand combat and street fighting. Their training, based upon military standards, gradually improved even though they were sometimes called the “Look, Duck and Vanish Brigade”, which is what had irritated Churchill.

The issue of boots arrived to replace their own damaged shoes and in 1940 Winston Churchill appealed to the United States for a major issue of much-needed rifles for the Home Guard. He received a batch of Canadian Ross Rifles and Springfield Rifles, all old and heavily greased. By early 1941, most units were fully uniformed with caps, battledress, greatcoats for winter and tin helmets. I recall seeing my father’s uniform in a wardrobe after the war.

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By the end of 1941, conscription was introduced for the Home Guard, with 48 hours' training to be undertaken. Evening watch was usually 9.30 p.m. to 1.30 a.m., another watch from 1.30 a.m. to 5.30 a.m., thus creating a dusk to dawn patrol. Most Home Guard patrols now had bayonets for their rifles, Thompson sub-machine guns (Tommy guns) and Browning automatic rifles.

Ted Topp, father of Barry Topp, was a member of one of West End's platoons and attended meetings at the old Church Hall next to St. James's Church. Afterward, rifles were always returned to store for safety. On one occasion, Ted forgot to return his rifle but no-one missed it and it was returned soon after. Barry remembers that his father's platoon used to man and guard the railway bridge in Burnett's Lane and later march back to the hall in military style. Some men were allowed a petrol ration, not available to all, for running their cars. Some meetings were held, understandably, at the old Sportsman pub at the bottom of Telegraph Road.

Another platoon of the Home Guard was formed at Townhill Park House with Lord Swaythling in charge. At the height of the Blitz, he encouraged members to sleep in the basement of the house. The large house was painted grey, to cover the usual white, to prevent German bombers using it as a landmark. R. Spencer and R. Aslett joined this platoon at Townhill and stated that some training exercises were no better than those in T.V.'s "Dad's Army", especially when they ran out of ammunition! Enemy bombers had a habit of flying over West End at about 6p.m. at weekends, then dropping incendiaries, which, fortunately, usually landed in the fields. Townhill House eventually became a pleasant convalescent home for wounded soldiers and airmen. Red Cross nurses attended them and some would be sent to the Royal South Hants Hospital for treatment. Later still, Italian prisoners of war were seen working on Townhill Farm and Hatch Farm, where some lodged in Hatch Farmhouse. They would often be heard singing Italian arias to keep up their spirits!

By 1942, nearly two million men were serving in the Home Guard ranks of Britain. In 1943, women were allowed to join as auxiliaries with restricted duties and 32,000 women had joined by 1944.

As in West End, many men had already joined the Air Raid Precautions (A.R.P.) organisation in 1940, and, although discouraged at first, many villages became flexible regarding joining the A.R.P. as well as the Home Guard. They had no uniform as yet, but A.R.P. armbands were worn with pride, especially in West End. The August 1940 issue of the St. James Parish Magazine recorded many names of the A.R.P. precautions in the village and the volunteers:

- There were four A.R.P. posts in West End, A, B, C, & D, and the Senior Warden was H. Robinson in Thornhill, (which was then part of West End).
- The Post Warden of A Post, which covered the Kanes Hill and Moorhill areas, was S.C. Joyce, with 14 volunteer wardens.
- The Post Warden of B Post was R.F. Fray with 14 volunteers covering Swaythling Road, most of the farms, New Road right up to St. James's Church and the whole of Townhill Park.
- The Post Warden for C Post was W. Fairs with 5 volunteers, covering the roads off West End Road (in the Bitterne section now).
- The Post Wardens for D Post were W.J. Light and Mrs. E.A. Turner with 8 others, covering Botley Road up to Moorhill Road area.

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Allied to the A.R.P. were the First Aid Services, headed by the Head Medical Officer in West End, Dr. Bamber, and Mrs. N.F. Charlier of “Glenbourne” in Beacon Road. There were six first aid posts in the village, including the doctor’s surgery and “Oaklands” in Allington Lane. The points were said to be fully equipped for the treatment of casualties.

The A.R.P. services came under Winchester Rural District Council and if any one parish was overloaded by a big air raid, the other parishes would quickly come to their aid. Gas masks were issued by the wardens and the public were advised to keep their masks handy and in good condition. The A.R.P. were responsible for enforcing the Black Out order in windows and doors, which might assist enemy bombers to see lights and their destinations. Extinguishing incendiary bombs dropped by the enemy was another duty, as well as rescue work in the pre-fabricated shelters, both public and private. A.R.P. wardens were issued with a steel helmet, a gas mask, a First Aid kit, a stirrup pump (for use with buckets to put out small fires), overalls and a “ceiling pike” (a long, hooked implement for dislodging dangerous debris from bombed houses.) So, their main task was to protect and advise people during air raids and reporting incidents.

The Women’s Voluntary Service (W.V.S.) was also involved with these activities. David Lloyd’s mother was an active member of the W.V.S., receiving a silver medal after the War. The general advice given to the public was: “Do not use a telephone during a raid, blocking urgent messages” and, during a raid: “Keep cool and remember that most of the noise is ‘good noise’.” – that is, our anti-aircraft guns driving away the raiders.

The Othen Family of Botley, West End and a few other places too!

By Gordon Lewis

A recent visit to West End to speak about the true story of “Good King Wenceslas” reminded me of my own connections with both the village and surrounding area. Although I was brought up to believe that my late father’s family were Wiltshire Moonrakers through and through, genealogical research soon revealed that there are quite a few Hampshire Hogs in my family tree too!

My paternal grandmother’s mother, Jane Hall (née Othen), died in 1938 and, before her death, insisted on being buried in the Southampton area. Her husband had died thirteen years earlier at Wootton Bassett, Wiltshire where his body had also been interred. Why was his widow determined to be placed in a separate grave some sixty miles away?

Coincidentally, both of Jane’s daughters had moved away from Wiltshire, with my own paternal grandparents living at Winsor, near Cadnam on the end of the New Forest. Jane’s other daughter had married a merchant seaman and was living at Portswood. Not wishing to remain in Wiltshire, Jane moved herself in with my great-aunt Annie. After her death, Jane was buried at South Stoneham cemetery on 28 June 1938, therefore fulfilling what was an inexplicable desire to her children.

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When Jane Othen had married George William Hall at Etchilhampton, Wiltshire on 29 March 1880, her address was given as St. James, Clapham, London. Although no occupation was shown on the marriage certificate, she had presumably worked in domestic service. Her father's name was given as Edmund Othen, while the witnesses were Joseph Othen and Mary Ann Othen. Joseph, who had served in the Royal Navy, was living at Portsea at the time, while Mary Ann was working as a "sick nurse" in Islington. Yet both travelled to their younger sister's wedding, held in what is still a small and fairly remote Wiltshire village.



Jane Othen c.1880



James Othen c.1885

It wasn't until I located Jane Hall (née Othen) in the 1881 census that I discovered she had been born in Fareham, Hampshire on 2 November 1851 although, after acquiring her birth certificate, this was actually Titchfield. She was the daughter of Edmund Othen and Ann Othen (née Emery), while the witnesses to her marriage were two of Jane's four surviving siblings. Earlier censuses soon revealed that her parents, Edmund and Ann, were both descended from some of Botley's oldest families or, perhaps more accurately, families from Hedge End, which did not become a parish in its own right until the 1870s.

Jane was only eleven when her mother, Ann, died at the age of 42 on 28 June 1863, following the birth of a baby boy named Tom. Surprisingly, Ann's death was not the result of a difficult childbirth, but was confirmed as asthma and cerebral effusion. Poor Tom lived for a few short weeks after his mother, before he died of maramus (severe malnutrition) and was buried alongside Ann in front of

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the present day Botley parish church. However, why was Edmund's name not added following his own death at South Stoneham Workhouse less than six years later? After all, the parish registers certainly confirm he was buried in the same graveyard.

It turns out that, for five years between 1855 and 1860, Edmund had very much been the absent husband and father. For whatever reason, he enlisted in the Royal Artillery on 14 February 1855 when he was 36, but lied about his age by stating that he was only 24. Five years later, he was discharged due to "chronic rheumatism" having served in Corfu (Greece) and Barbados, becoming a Chelsea Pensioner on 18 September 1860. However, being in receipt of an "out pension", he did not live at the Royal Chelsea Hospital, returning to his wife and family at Hedge End.



Josephine & Annie Hall c.1909



Jane Hall & Josephine Sarah Lewis c.1928

One of Edmund's brothers, George Othen, married Eliza Strong at West End on 1 November 1841, but was widowed 18 years later. He remained a widower until 1872, when he married Sarah Summerton (née Carter), herself a widow, at Botley on 9 March. George's descendants continued to live in the local area and it is that branch of the family who are remembered by several gravestones located at St. James Church, West End.

As far as Edmund's children are concerned, the aforementioned Joseph ended his days at Portsmouth in 1890, while Mary Ann Othen disappears without trace after being recorded in the 1881 census. Sarah Othen found herself working in London as a domestic servant to Samuel Clegg,

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who was a well-known oil colour and seedsman, while James emigrated to Canada following his father's death in 1869, surviving a shipwreck off the Canadian coast along with 300 other passengers.

James, his English wife and children lived in Canada for around 15 months after their arrival in the dominion, eventually choosing to settle in the Ozarks of Missouri (USA). Therefore, it was only my great-grandmother, Jane Hall (née Othen), who returned to the places where her ancestors had lived for many generations before her, albeit travelling via London, Etchilhampton and Wootton Bassett to do so.

Gordon Lewis would be interested in hearing from anyone else who is also descended from the Othen and Emery families. Other local names that appear in his family tree include Booker, Carter, Collis, Spencer and Sweetingham. And, due to regular intermarriages between the same local families, Gordon is also his own cousin several times over! He can be contacted at gordon@gordonlewis.co.uk

A Potted History of Hampshire's East India Company Men

By Paula Downer



As we look around our gardens in the Spring, admiring the beauty and colours of exotic blooms, such as the Magnolias, Peonies, Camellias, Rhododendrons, and the bright yellow flowers of Kerria Japonica, have we wondered where these flowers originated from? Many non-native plants were brought to England in the 18th century, even the Hampshire East India Company men got involved! While they were serving in far off lands, they were in the ideal place to source these new exotic, unfamiliar plants and seeds to bring back home and hopefully add to their newly acquired countryside estates.

However, the understanding of plant care was in its infancy; many early ventures to bring back plants were unsuccessful. The carefully potted up young seedlings were thrust into long voyages of several months at sea, subject to adverse weather conditions, damage by extreme temperatures, wind, salt water and from lack of care; many plants did not survive. It was therefore very necessary to further understanding of plants and their care. The Botanic Garden at Kew in London had been founded by King George III's mother Princess Augusta in 1759. Within the grounds, she created an Exotic and Physic garden. The study of Botany as a science was still in its infancy; a simplified plant classification system had been established by a Swedish botanist, Carolus Linnaeus. In 1753, he

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published 'Species Plantarum' which listed some 6,000 species of plant, each plant assigned with a genus (generic) and species name. The Princess was eager to add new plants to this list, especially unknown species from faraway places. Alongside Princess Augusta's garden, hothouses were built to sow seeds and nurture plants brought in from the hot, humid climates. When Princess Augusta died in 1772, her son King George III inherited Kew Gardens. The eminent botanist Joseph Banks, a close friend of King George III, was keen to continue with the development of Princess Augusta's Gardens. The enthusiastic Banks was instrumental in organising worldwide expeditions for plant collectors, pressing them to make a record of every plant that they found.

However, the collection of plants and seeds from China was not made easy, the edict of 1757 meant that all the ports in China, except for Canton (now Guangzhou), were closed to most Europeans. Hence, the Chinese were wary and suspicious of the Europeans, not allowing them to venture beyond the Canton waterfront, which is where the European merchants were allowed to reside. Foreigners were not welcome inside the Chinese Mainland, unless they happened to be French Jesuit Missionaries! In 1792, the British government sent an Embassy to China, which meant a visit to the Chinese Mainland. They were to meet the Emperor to discuss ways that restrictions on trade could be relaxed. It was thought that while they were there, they could use this opportunity to collect plants and seeds for Kew Gardens. Sir George Leonard Staunton, 1st baronet, a British diplomat, was part of this mission as Deputy Ambassador to 1st Earl George Macartney. Sir George took his 12 year old son George with him as he was good at languages; the young George was able to practice his Chinese during the long sea voyage to the Far East. Sir George, a fellow of the Royal Society, was an enthusiastic amateur botanist and intended to return to England with some new plants for Kew Gardens. But the meeting with the Emperor was not successful, restrictions were not lifted and to add insult to injury, the Chinese escorts thwarted their efforts to collect plants or seeds. However, the young George had become fascinated by China. In 1799, he returned to Canton as a Writer for the East India Company, furthered his fluency in Chinese, and was soon promoted to Chief Interpreter.

The British trade in Canton was governed by the Senior East India Company employees comprising a Select Committee with its Supra-Cargoes (Supercargoes) headed by a Secret Committee. The Committee had the authority to transact Company business with the Chinese, but the only way that this could be carried out was via the Chinese 'Hong' merchants. The Supercargoes were in charge of the cargo, responsible for the selling of goods from the ships coming into Canton and purchase of goods for its return voyage to Britain. The thirteen European factories, or 'Hong', which were owned by the Chinese 'Hong' merchants, lined the Pearl River on a narrow strip of land outside the walled city of Canton, the British premises situated between the Dutch and Swedish East India Companies. Even though the Napoleonic Wars were over in 1802 with the Peace of Amiens, the British and French were still wary of each other; the British feared that their sea route from England to China could be jeopardised.

Consequently, in 1803, David Lance of Chessel House in Southampton, an East India Company Supercargo who had returned to England from the Far East in 1789 on account of his ill health, was nominated by the Secret Committee to sail to Cochin-China on a diplomatic mission to win over the Chinese. David Lance knew Sir Joseph Banks. Sir Joseph saw this mission as an ideal opportunity to collect plants and requested David Lance take one of the gardeners from Kew. A young, dedicated

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William Kerr was placed under the care and protection of David Lance; the gardener was to obey his implicit instructions. William Kerr had been given a book of botanical drawings of Chinese plants by Sir Joseph to study and learn from during the long voyage on ship. In the event, David Lance did not get the chance to meet the King of Cochin-China and thereby sailed onto Canton to sit on the Select Committee.

In Canton, the Europeans were allowed to travel three miles along the river to a group of nurseries called Fa-tee to buy indigenous plants such as magnolia, camellia, azalea, chrysanthemum, tree peony, and fruit trees such as peach, plum and orange. One can imagine the Supercargoes sitting around a large table, in their designated 'Hong', discussing ways of collecting plants and the best way to transport them back to England. The East India Company Captains were willing to bring back plants on their ships going back to England. To give the young plants a better chance of survival, a portable wooden plant cabin with a hinged slatted lid, was constructed using detailed plans, provided by Sir Joseph, to be put on-board an East India Company ship returning to Britain. However, David Lance could not stay long, as his health condition was being exacerbated by Canton's oppressively hot climate and lack of a cooling breeze. He also had a young family at home to consider (he was married to Supercargo William Fitzhugh's sister Mary, their father was Valentine Fitzhugh of Bitterne on the outskirts of the Town of Southampton. William Fitzhugh owned Bannisters Court Estate in Southampton). David Lance returned onboard an East India Company ship already bound for England, leaving gardener William Kerr to carry on with the task of collecting plants. Another Supercargo, James Drummond, kept a kindly, watchful eye on the gardener.

The East India Company could only stay in Canton for part of the year, so outside of these times, they based themselves in Macau which was then under Portuguese administration. Macau was an important trading centre between Europe and China; European buildings lined the Praya Grande. A Villa and its grounds was leased from a wealthy Portuguese Merchant, originally by William Fitzhugh; his colleague James Drummond then took over the lease when he became President. James Drummond was known to be a keen plantsman. Catholic Missionaries would send him seeds from China. The garden contained a nursery where seeds and plants could be cared for while waiting for a ship returning to England. (The garden, Jardim Luis De Camoes, is now owned by the Government of Macao and survives as a pleasant park open to the public, an oasis of calm in the midst of a crowded city).

The plant cabins were very successful and with an increase over the years in the understanding of plant care, many of the plants did survive the long sea journey home, hence the many varieties that we see today. According to an early version of Hortus Kewensis, a catalogue of plants cultivated in the Royal Botanic Garden at Kew, first published in 1789 by William Aiton, David Lance introduced the Chinese Corchorus Japonicus and Magnolia Tomentosa. After William Kerr died in 1814, it was decided to rename Corchorus Japonicus to Kerria Japonica in recognition of William Kerr's achievements in the world of plant collecting; he had sourced a great many plants (over 200) during his time in the Far East.

James Drummond of Strathhallen was the nephew of London Banker Robert Drummond of Cadland in Hampshire. James began his career as a Writer, became a Supercargo then a member of the Select Committee; in 1801 James Drummond was nominated its President. His Uncle Robert

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Drummond had prospered from the British campaign against the American War of Independence. In 1772 he acquired the Cadland estate near the New Forest in Hampshire. The eminent landscape architect Capability Brown was commissioned to design the park. Today, Cadland House no longer exists, but the gardens are being extensively restored using plants that were available by the 1780s, such as *Rhododendron Ponticum* and *Koeleruteria Paniculata*. The estate is still owned by the Drummond family.

At the end of 1819, Sir George Leonard Staunton's son, now Sir George Thomas Staunton 2nd baronet, bought Leigh Estate, near Havant in Hampshire. He was much inspired by his time in China, creating a large lake adorned with a Chinese style bridge, boathouse and summerhouse. A flag of the Qing dynasty flew from a small battery on Fort Island. The much-admired beautiful gardens contained plants named under 'Genus Stauntonia' after his late father, such as a heavily scented climbing rose with white flowers, attractively covering the arches and pergolas. A vigorous evergreen vine with its heady scent, 'Stauntonia Latafolia', can be seen rambling through the trees, its flowers appearing in April-June. Being conversant in Chinese had enabled Sir George Thomas Staunton to progress through the East India Company ranks in China, becoming Chief of the Supercargoes in 1816, President of the Select Committee and then Diplomatic Commissioner at Peking. Upon his return from the Far East, Sir George Thomas Staunton pursued a political career for some years before retiring from politics to live his life as a country gentleman and enjoy his beautiful gardens, it was considered one of the finest estates in Hampshire. The house has since been demolished and the gardens became Staunton Country Park in 1987. Still remaining are the Chinese bridge, which has been much altered over the years, and the Fort.



A huge vine 'Stauntonia Latafolia' scrambles through the trees

In 1828, John Henry Lance (David Lance's nephew), another East India Company Civil Servant, was appointed His Majesty's Commissary Judge in Suriname on the Northeastern coast of South America. John Henry was also a keen amateur botanist, being particularly fascinated by the orchids of which a diverse range could be found in the hot, humid, tropical climate of Suriname. John Henry's duties entailed visiting plantations; as he travelled around, he would be on the lookout for orchid species previously unseen in England. John Henry was also an artist which gave him an ideal opportunity to combine both his interests. He studied and made detailed botanical illustrations of orchids that he found, watercolour being the ideal medium for this task. John Henry Lance was a

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close friend of John Lindley whom was an eminent English botanist and orchidologist; he was responsible for the classification and naming of the orchids. Some orchids were named in John Henry Lance's honour, such as *Oncidium Lanceanum* Lindl and *Brassia Lanceana* Lindl. On his return journey from Suriname, in 1834, John Henry Lance brought back a large collection of orchids which he donated to the Royal Horticultural Society (R.H.S.); for this he was awarded a Silver Medal. Some of his watercolours were donated to the RHS Lindley Library. John Lindley subsequently wrote several publications on botany and orchids.

The servants of the East India Company had been involved before this, when Supercargo Thomas Fitzhugh of Marylebone, Valentine's brother, returned to London with a Tea plant in 1768!

Shared Memories - 3

Fred in Jamaica by Fred Harder

I was on HMS Puma Anchored off Jamaica in 1969, having just carried out a round the world cruise, calling at places like Freetown in West Africa Cape Town East coast of Africa, Hong Kong Singapore, Australia, Fiji, Pearl Harbour, San Francisco, Mexico, Panama, Nicaragua and Jamaica. Back to my tale: after having had a great run ashore in my whites, catching the little liberty boat back to the ship which was anchored some way off shore in a big bay, the waves and troughs of the Atlantic were very high. When we got to the ship, we had to jump for your life to reach the gangway, which was not very easy what with only the gangway lights shining in your eyes, anyway came off shore expecting to turn in as it was quite late, but the Quarter Master said "Hey Pots, I've been told that the skipper wants to see you," so I went up to his cabin, knocked at his door he answered in his pyjamas. He said "Hello Pots, sorry about this, but there is a merchant ship out there whose Radio operator has gone sick and needs you to communicate with his U.K. base. I am sending you and the Doc over there to look after their Radio Operator." I said "yes, sir" and returned to the quarterdeck.

The boat was called away, not very pleased as they would have been asleep. It was quite difficult even to get into the ship's boat due to the high swell and winds. The trip was rough and bloody awful, even worse getting onto the Merchant ship. In a trough, you could nearly see the keel and in the waves you were nearly on their deck. We both jumped for our lives on the topping of a wave, landing quite safe if a little wet. I was taken to the Radio Office while the Doc was taken to the sick bay. I had never seen the Merchant Navy radio equipment, but managed to switch on and tune it into Portishead calling frequency, (a bit easier than Pussers equipment). I established communications with Portishead and passed the required messages to the company's H.Q. to let them know of the plight of their operation.

It turned out that the Radio Operator was a woman and had had a miscarriage. The Doc sorted her out, the skipper said "thank you for all your effort" and gave the Doc a bottle of Scotch, and said to me "I know you are not allowed to have spirit aboard so here is a carton of cigarettes." The Trip back was even worse than getting there. We were both wet and very tired by the time we turned in. With the coming of dawn, the next day got a "Well done Pots" from the skipper.

Amendment

The article “The Rise & Demise of James Barlow Hoy” by Sue Ballard (Westender Vol.10, No.9) states that three years after the death of her second husband, Captain Richard Meredith, James’s widow Marian D’Oyly Meredith (formerly Hoy, née Bird) married the poet and novelist John Richard Digby Beste (1806-1885) of Botleigh Grange, Hampshire at Marylebone in the last quarter of 1850. This appears to suggest that Richard Meredith had died around 1847. However, subsequent research has shown that he died on 13th July 1850 – just a few weeks prior to her third marriage. Thank you to Steve Adams of Bitterne Local History Society for drawing attention to this error.

Midanbury House

For anyone wishing to know more about Midanbury House after reading Paula Downer's article, “Nathaniel Middleton's South Stoneham Born Offspring (Revised)” in the Winter 2023 issue of Westender, I have been informed that Bitterne Local History Society has recently published a booklet “Midanbury House” by Garth Groombridge. It is available, priced at only £3.50, in the Bitterne L.H.S. shop in Peartree Avenue or online via the Society website: www.Bitterne.net

FORTHCOMING LOCAL EVENTS

Sat 16th March 6.30 p.m. Quiz & Curry Night. St. James’s Church. Book in advance, pay on the night.



Come and join us for our HOPE charities ‘Quiz and Curry’ night.

Saturday 16th March 6.30pm

Tickets £9 adult, £3 child
or £24 for 2 adults and up to
3 children.

Chicken or vegetable curry available.

There will be a sign up sheet at the back
of church or email

stjameswe.office@gmail.com

Pay on the night

WEST END LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY FORTHCOMING EVENTS

All events take place at West End Parish Centre, Chapel Road SO30 3FE and begin at 7.30 p.m.
Members free. Visitors welcome (£2 per person per meeting). Membership £12 per year.

Programme of Talks 2024

January 3	NO MEETING
February 7	"The Romance of the Letterbox" – <i>Tony Cross</i>
March 6	"Regal Southampton" – <i>Andy Skinner</i>
April 3	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING plus Quiz & Cakes
May 1	"Spitfires & WW2 in West End – an updated talk" – <i>Alan Matlock</i>
June 5	"Calshot ... the R.N.A.S. Years" – <i>Colin Van Geffen</i>
July 3	"Woolston Floating Bridge" – <i>Stephen Hoadley</i>
August 7	"The Body through the Porthole" – <i>Steve Herra</i>
September 4	"Violette Szabo, G.C." – <i>Jeremy Prescott</i>
October 2	"Armchair Tour of the River Hamble" – <i>Geoff Watts</i>
November 6	"The View from the Bargate" – <i>Dr. Cheryl Butler</i>
December 4	SOCIAL EVENING – RAFFLE & DRINKS (bring your own plate of food!) plus "Around the World – the Weird, the Wild & the Wonderful" – <i>Andrew Negus</i>

Articles for Westender

You don't have to be a historian to write for Westender. We would love to hear your memories of growing up in the village.

email: suballard@yahoo.co.uk or leave hard copies at the museum addressed to Sue Ballard, please.
Closing Date for contributions to Summer Issue: 13th May 2024.
