



WESTENDER

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TUDOR REVELS IN SOUTHAMPTON



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GROWING UP IN WEST END DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

By Ray Upson

I was at the tender age of 3 years old when the Second World War broke out. A little young to fully understand what was going on – I soon learnt! We were living in the white cottage just up from what is now Rostron Close in Chalk Hill. In those days it was attached to the Scaffolding (Great Britain) depot and an aunt and uncle lived next door and shared our pantry as a makeshift air raid shelter. This room had a door leading into the back yard.

My first vivid memory was (I think) during the Blitz on Southampton. The most frightening incident was my father and uncle holding onto the door which was shaking from the blast of bombs. SGB strengthened one of their store rooms by using pit props to shore up the ceiling, so that the locals could use it as an air raid shelter. I remember one night my father was carrying me around to the SGB shelter when I saw clearly, in the beam of a searchlight, landmines coming down by parachute. They were landing over towards Bitterne and you could hear people screaming.

Walking to school was often an adventure, watching Spitfire aircraft taking off from Eastleigh Airport and occasionally witnessing a 'dog fight' (by that I mean those that took place in the air by opposing aircraft). We also had a competition to see who could collect the most shrapnel on the way to school. Having the anti-aircraft gun site in Quob Lane, there was plenty of it about especially if there had been a recent raid.

At school we had the occasional air raid practice when we donned our gas masks and went to the school air raid shelters. I remember getting into deep trouble on one of these practices. In my gas mask case I had my lunch NOT my gas mask! My brother and I were very lucky as our family had distant relations in the United States of America and once a month we received a parcel from them that contained items that were not available in this country. It contained such items as tins of exotic fruit, peanut butter etc., best of all were 'T-shirts' for us boys and American comics and of course sweets and chewing gum.

I always remember the old steam engines and steam lorries chugging up the hill past Hildene School, there were lots of them due to the shortage of petrol. Also there were quite a number of buses powered by gas; the gas was produced by heating coal in a boiler that was towed behind the bus. The bus conductor not only had to collect the fares, but stoke the boiler as well! I remember coming out of Southampton on one of these buses and having to get off at the bottom of Lances Hill, walking up the hill and then boarding the bus again at the top, as the gas bus was not a very powerful machine.

Our playground was the woods in Chalk Hill. In those days there were no houses above the row of old terraced cottages (the old brick-makers cottages which still exist today) until you got to the top. The beech trees formed a tunnel over the road making it very eerie at night. My brother and I often played there with June Barrett and Maureen Prince. Maureen lived with my other aunt and uncle further up the hill (Chalk Hill seemed to be full of Upson relatives) after she had been evacuated from Gosport. The game we often played was, guess what – wounded soldiers and nurses! We used to get days off from school to pick tomatoes on Lord Swaythlings estate (now Chartwell Green), women from the Land Army cracking the whip. I think the wages were 6 old pence a day.

Army camps were springing up all around the area. The Wilderness being the main one in West End and of course the Balloon Barrage site on Barnsland. The convoys of tanks and army vehicles which used Church Hill seemed endless. I remember them laying a concrete road on Church Hill as the old road couldn't take the strain of heavy traffic. They also built a Bailey bridge across the river at Mansbridge. My uncle next door and my father acquired an old shed which they buried in my uncles garden to use as an air-raid shelter. I was watching my father put the finishing touches to it when a German aircraft flew over at roof height – did I move quickly down into our new shelter! Eventually, the council built us a concrete air-raid shelter in our garden. The night I shall never forget is the night the Germans attempted to destroy Eastleigh Airport with V-1 Flying Bombs. They were horrific, very noisy, with a flame coming out of the rear – when the engine stopped down they came. They weren't far short of their target, they all landed in the water meadows behind "The White Swan" pub.

Continued on page 3

Continued from page 2

Next, the Americans arrived and my brother and I were often seen outside the “New Inn” pub quoting the old phrase ‘got any gum chum’. I remember once asking this question to a dark American soldier, he opened an emergency ration pack, inside which was what appeared to be a pack of processed dates – I loved them. ‘I’ll have some of that’ I said, he replied ‘are you sure?’. ‘Yes please’ I said. I took one bite and what a shock – it was chewing tobacco! Did he laugh, anyway, I got my chewing gum. The Americans were very good to us kids, they organised tea parties and entertainment in the garden of the ‘New Inn’. The worst thing about the war for us kids was the sweet rationing of 2oz. a week, mind you, everything else was rationed as well. I suppose looking at it we lived a very healthy diet, not much meat, butter or eggs, but plenty of fresh vegetables mostly home grown as most houses had large gardens. I remember our milk being delivered by Len Fray who then ran a small Dairy farm just down the road from ‘The Crown & Thistle’ (now renamed ‘The Master Builder’) in Swaythling Road. He delivered the milk on a bicycle similar to the one he have at the Museum. There was a milk churn in the carrier at the front with a collection of measuring jugs – so you went out with a jug to get your milk. I can see my old aunt now, skimming the cream off the top of the milk. Believe me it was ‘full, full’ cream milk we had then, straight from the cow. My aunt would pour the cream into a bottle and sit there shaking it all day to make a small knob of butter! The shortage of meat was not a serious problem, rabbit was often on the menu. Set a few snares and you were bound to catch one. No shortage of rabbits in those days. I seem to remember that when you needed a new tube of toothpaste, you couldn’t buy one unless you took the empty tube back – they must have been made with lead or something like that.

And so came “D-Day”. The build-up was a sight to be seen. Convoy upon convoy of tanks, American D.U.K.W’s (Ducks) and lorries and rank upon rank of marching troops going up Church Hill. The sky seemed full of aircraft towing gilders. Then you had the follow-up of lorries loaded with ammunition parked in streets all over West End waiting to be transported to France. They were there for what seemed like weeks, if the German Luftwaffe had bombed West End during that period, there wouldn’t have been much of it left! Fortunately, the Germans had a very depleted airforce at that time. The allied soldiers slept in the cabs of their lorries. My mother supplied hot water for washing and shaving to the lorries parked outside our house, she also gave them breakfast. One morning we woke up and they were gone. One of my aunts husband was fighting in Burma. Just before Christmas of 1944 she received an invitation to go to ‘The Plaza’ cinema (which was situated on the Southampton side of Northam Bridge where Meridian TV used to be). The invitation was to see filmed messages from those fighting in Burma. My mother went with her and when my uncle came on the screen my aunt became very upset. She said to my mother ‘he’s been killed’. The following day she received a dreaded telegram. Another uncle of mine was serving in the Royal Navy and was transferred from HMS Hood just before she was sunk, however, the destroyer he was transferred to was torpedoed and sunk but luckily he survived. He was coming home on leave when he was killed by a V-2 rocket explosion that happened just outside Waterloo Station.

Onto happier things, VE-Day street parties wow! – the one in Orchards Way was one of the best. The museum has several photographs of it. It’s a pity they don’t have any taken from the front of the bonfire, there were brilliant effigies of Hitler, Mussolini and Goebbels burning at the stake!

The war was over. I have never experienced such an atmosphere of trust and comradeship since that time – the day sweet rationing was abolished I was sick!!!!

A BIG THANK YOU TO THE CARNIVAL



We would like to thank Sarah Turl and the West End Carnival Association for their kind donation to the society in the form of a cheque which we received on Remembrance Day.

The donation will help with the running of the society and the various expenses we have to cover, it will be greatly appreciated.

Next year we understand Carnival Day will be on Saturday June 15th - we hope you will all support and take part in this local event.
Ed.

MUSEUM VISIT FROM HAMBLE VALLEY U3A GROUP



Nigel Wood and Lin Dowdell with some of the U3A members

On Friday 26th October by prior arrangement a group of twelve members from the Hamble Valley U3A (University of the Third Age) arrived at our museum for a look around. Led by Trish Robbins this walking group had been exploring parts of West End and Moorgreen and had arranged to visit the museum for around 11.45am at the end of the walk. The weather was somewhat cold and damp and after looking around the museum and chatting about West End's varied past, where very grateful for the refreshments of tea, coffee and home-made cake laid on by Lin.

The visit was enjoyed by all and hopefully will help to spread the word about our little museum. Ed.

BARBE BAKER MEMORIAL ON THE MOVE



The memorial plaque to Richard St. Barbe Baker which stood on the corner of Chapel Road and High Street has been moved. It now stands in the charming little memorial garden next door to Hatch Lodge in the lower High Street, a much more fitting location amongst the trees that Richard so loved. As the pictures show a nice job has been done in the relocation.

St. JAMES' CHURCH HARVEST FAYRE



St. James' Church in West End held their seasonal Harvest Fayre this year on Saturday 6th October. The weather although wet leading up to the day turned out to be a warm sunny, blue sky, perfect day for the Fayre. The Grand Opening was at 12.00pm with stalls for a variety of goods and bric a brac situated inside the Church. A 'China Smash' run by the Scouts did a roaring trade in the churchyard, as did the refreshments in the Annexe. The society put on a large display in the Lady Chapel (see above) and member Peter Wallace put on a wonderful display in the Churchyard with his Boorley Green Light Railway portable real steam railway layout complete with very realistic terrain under a large Gala Tent. Ably assisted by fellow WELHS member Roy Andrews. An excellent day out and well recommended. Ed.

THE HISTORY OF THE ORDNANCE SURVEY

A Review by Stan Waight



There was a full house for Geoff May's talk at the October meeting and the audience listened with rapt attention to what Chairman Neville described as one of the best talks we've ever had (or words to that effect). Geoff is a natural speaker and his presentation, delivered with a limited number of slides and completely without notes, was first class. He was formerly employed by the Ordnance Survey and was totally at home with his subject.

The OS origins go back to Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745, when the lack of good maps hampered the campaign against the Scots. A military survey led by General William Roy was commissioned to produce maps of the Highlands. Roy was an eminent surveyor who subsequently became the Director of the Royal Engineers and who employed newly-emerging technologies in the science of map making. For the purposes of his work he set up a trigonometrical base line at Hampton, near what is now Heathrow.

The threat of invasion by the French showed up the need for accurate maps of south-east England so the OS was founded in 1791, a year after Roy's death, with its headquarters in the Tower of London. The very 'Ordnance' element in its name and its establishment in the Tower emphasises the military connections. Triangulation, based upon carefully chosen trigonometrical points, is a fundamental feature of map making and a recently-produced and very accurate theodolite was purchased for £373. General Roy's base line was adopted for the first maps. Geoff emphasised the importance of accuracy at many points during his talk.

The threat of invasion had disappeared by 1821, so the next step was the improvement of the quality of existing maps. The area covered was extended and between 1824 and 1846 the whole of Ireland was also mapped (taxes being based on the ownership of land!).

A disastrous fire in The Tower in 1841 forced the OS to look for other premises, and the site on what is now known as London Road in Southampton was identified (SU 421 128 in current OS terms). This large area accommodated a Royal Engineers barracks [parts of which still exist and include the floor of a stable].

There was an ever-increasing need for accurate maps for non-military purposes during the 19th century and, between 1851 and 1859, argument raged over the most suitable scale to be used. The scale of 25" to the mile was ultimately chosen as being the smallest scale to give appropriate detail. Technology continued to improve and the introduction of electric lighting in the 1880s further enhanced the science of mapmaking. But in 1914 the OS reverted to its military roots and over 32 million maps were produced during World War I.

Continued on page 6

Continued from page 5

Improved efficiency as a result of the progress in technology had forced the reduction in staff to 1000 by 1922, but increased mobility in the later 1920s, including the greater use of motor cars, was exploited by the OS. It produced iconic map covers to meet the demands of the expanding market and production in the inter-war years reached a peak. It was also necessary to carry out further revision and the metric measurement system was introduced during this period. The National Grid, based on 100-metre squares, was set up after the retriangulation of the whole country between 1936 and 1962. Over 6000 trigonometrical pillars were erected.

During the blitz on Southampton in 1940, most of the London Road premises were destroyed and the headquarters were moved to Chessington. The move was supposed to be 'temporary' but lasted, in fact, until the new, custom-built headquarters building at Maybush was opened in 1969. The final links with the military were closed when the Royal Engineers 'beat the retreat' in 1983, and operations were thereafter totally concerned with civilian usage. The Ordnance Survey as we now know it has become a government department.

Digitisation, begun in 1971, was completed in 1995. Information Technology forms a crucial part of OS's mapmaking and Geoff described several of its features. Surveying on the ground is now largely redundant, satellites serving to do the job with remarkable accuracy.

The final twist in the tale is still going on. There have been massive reductions in staffing due to the benefits of technology and the offices at Maybush are now too large for their original purpose. As a result the Ordnance Survey is in the process of moving to Adanac Park, which adjoins the M 271 near Nursling (at SU 373 155).

At different points during the talk Geoff gave details of the principal characters in his story - Gen. William Roy, Charles Colley and Charles Close. All-in-all it was a fascinating talk which everyone seemed to enjoy.



!!!! REMINDER !!!!

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE IN JANUARY 2013



Well, its coming up to that time of year again! - Annual subscriptions fall due on January 1st 2013, so at the January meeting on 2nd January Delphine will be after you for your subs.

Annual subscriptions are set at £12.00 per year per person - very good value for money. In spite of rising costs (Speakers fees, Hall hire, administration costs etc..) we have kept the same rate as before. To help us maintain the efficiency of the society please pay your subs as early as possible. Many thanks.

THE PRISON MUTINY

By John Avery

There have been in its history a few riots at Dartmoor Prison but the one which took place some 80 years ago in January 1932 is especially of note and is referred to as the Mutiny.

The rioting prisoners were rounded up and a special assize court was held in the village of Princetown. Only a couple ringleaders were identified and to many observers harsh, disproportionate sentences were passed on the offending convicts. Several MP's led a campaign of asking the Home Secretary to review the harsh sentencing. Led by James Maxton MP with support from Winston Spencer Churchill and other MP's and The Tribune magazine with the support of Compton Mackenzie OBE, the author, and some newspapers continued their campaign for several years. Finally five years on in 1937, the Home Secretary announced that prisoners still serving extra time [or yet to start their extra sentences] would receive a reduction of 25%.

The main ringleader, John Alexander aka James Robb had been sentenced to 10 years based on very questionable evidence which surely a modern day appeal court would challenge. From day one he protested his innocence and driven by that belief he had attempted to escape on four occasions. With that background we can see why he would support a grievance against the justice system. His 10 year sentence was thus increased by a further 10 years for the attempted escapes and later when his 20 years had been completed he would serve an extra 6 years for his part in the mutiny.

The Prison Service inflicted its own regime of punishment against the convicted mutineers. They were frequently moved to other prisons at short notice making visits from families difficult and often incurring large expense for non-wage earning wives; each and every night all of the mutineers were subjected to strip searches. One of the mutineers, James Ibbesson whose original sentence of 3 years had been increased to 10 years broke under the mental strain and was transferred to Broadmoor, the asylum for the criminally insane where he was to spend the rest of his days.

Their grievances were the poor quality food often stale or badly prepared, instances of prisoners in punishment cells being beaten up, warders using prison supplies for personal use and homosexuality acts forced on the convicts by a minority of the warders plus the practice of keeping convicts locked up in their cells for 18 or so hours each day. The Home Office Inquiry under Herbert Du Parcq was called to look into the riots and established that there were 16 instances of inappropriate actions by prison staff contrary to regulations. The recently appointed Governor, Captain S.N. Roberts was transferred on 22nd February to Cardiff and an acting Governor, Major Charles Pannell DSO MC previously Governor of Camp Hill Preventive Detention Centre IOW took over the control of Dartmoor prison. The government impressed with Du Parcq's investigation promoted him to become a judge. Later he was to become a Privy Councillor and Lord Justice of Appeal followed by a Baronetcy.

The mutiny followed a couple weeks of unrest and on the Saturday of the weekend when the riot started Captain Roberts had telephoned the Chief Constables of Plymouth Police and Devon County Police HQ at Exeter to give notice that assistance would be required. The Home Office also alerted the CO of the army based at Crownhill [Plymouth].

A Home Office statement gave a summary of the action: 'Police from Plymouth* in the charge of the Chief Constable of Plymouth, Mr. A. K. Wilson, and Deputy Chief Constable Lee were assembled at the prison. When they reached the prison gates the situation was looking very serious. A howling mob of convicts was gathered in the grounds shouting to the warders to "Come in and get it." The police were armed only with truncheons, but without hesitation the Chief Constable led a charge into the mutineers, the police laid about them with such energy that within a short time over a dozen convicts were lying unconscious. One convict came forward with his hands up and said that some of them wanted to surrender, and about a dozen then gave in.'

*The Western National bus driver who had rushed his passenger load of policemen from Plymouth at great speed was preparing to return his bus to Plymouth but a wooden stake was thrust into his hand and he was ordered to join in the charge at the prison gates. No doubt a story to later tell his grandchildren.

Continued on page 8

Continued from page 5

A few attempts at escape were made but rifle fire from the warders on the parapet wounded one of perpetrators and another on the roof came under fire. There were no fatalities but many of the convicts had to receive hospital treatment for their wounds. The clock tower was set on fire, there was extensive damage and the governor fled from his office into a wing where the prisoners had not supported the riot. Prison records were destroyed making it difficult to accurately establish whether there had been any successful escapes. The Plymouth Fire Brigade arrived but the intensity of the flames made their entry virtually impossible and they remained outside of the prison.

There was a concern that a mass breakout was intended and intelligence that a lorry loaded with granite would force the gates and a second lorry would run out full of escapees. Soldiers and police blocked off nearby approach roads and machine guns were mounted at strategic points. The Metropolitan Police believed that underworld gangs were behind the plan for a mass escape and checks were made for several days on any vehicles approaching Princetown. Pathé News chartered a plane and the newsreel showing aerial shots of the prison on fire can be viewed on the internet on the Pathé site. Another film cameraman approached the check point and was asked "What was his business?" "Taking pictures for the newsreel" was his reply. "Taking pictures? That is no business, off you go".

Meanwhile in London the police went searching for several days for known gang leaders in an attempt to seek out those behind the planned breakout but in the end no charges were laid

TUDOR REVELS IN SOUTHAMPTON

Continued from the front page

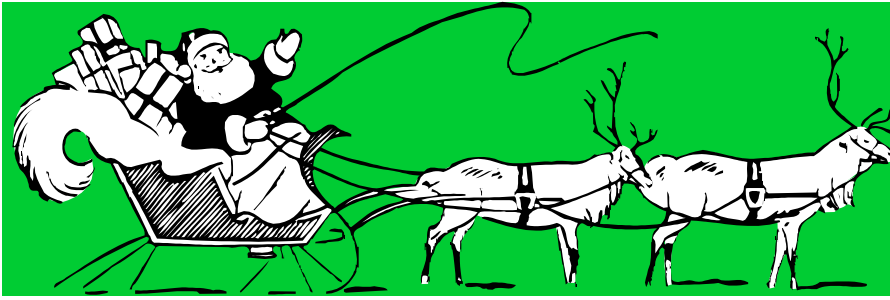


Southampton celebrated Michaelmas Day in style this year - a two day celebration on 29th and 30th September saw the old quarter of Southampton transformed back to the Tudor Period as part of the ongoing "Tudor Revels" celebration. Free entrance to Tudor House museum and gardens, a Michaelmas Fayre in St. Michaels Square, a parade, craft displays, talks and various other events made this weekend one to remember. Our pictures were taken on Sunday 30th (front cover and above) and give a some idea of the event - well done to all who participated and helped bring a little bit of history alive!

REMEMBRANCE DAY IN WEST END



Sunday 11th November was a cold, bright day with a lovely blue sky. West End turned out in force to observe the Remembrance ceremony. As each year goes by more wreaths and crosses appear from organisations and individuals. Refreshments were kindly provided afterwards at the Hilldene Community Centre. Congratulations are due to the Parish staff and councillors as well as the many organisations which made the day memorable. Ed.



A MESSAGE FROM THE

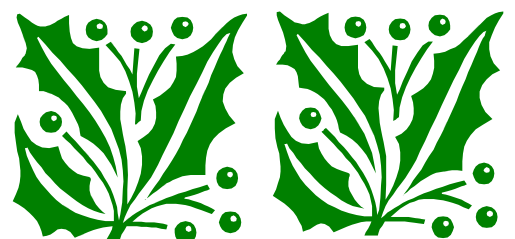
As Christmas looms on the horizon, as is customary, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year.

2012 has been a very busy year with the society being represented at a number of events with local history displays, including the series of events organised by the society to commemorate the sinking of the Titanic 100 years ago. The society is now 16 years old, the Museum which the society runs in the Old Fire Station has been going for 15 years and this newsletter "Westender" has run continuously for the last 13 years. We need to get new growth, ideas and stimulus into the society and to this end we also need new committee members who are prepared to be an active part of the running of the society. We need some new faces to stand for nomination at the AGM in April - its all very flattering to be voted back 'en bloc' as has happened before, but please, can we have some 'new blood' on the committee.

I would like to thank all the people who have contributed articles throughout the year, without you we would have no newsletter. As a result of my plea for articles at the last meeting, we have a larger, bumper edition for Christmas, but don't be fooled I still need a steady stream of articles if we are to continue producing the newsletter. I am sure that some of you must be carrying out local history research on local topics that appeal to you, what we need is for you to let us have the results to publish. Many people have said to me they would not know how or where to start to write an article, well, one of our members Roy Andrews (tel: 01489 787157) has very kindly offered to act as a 'ghost writer' for anyone in the society. All you have to do is contact him and talk to him about your memories or research and he very kindly is prepared to put it into writing as an article.

Once again by popular demand we are having the portable Skittle Alley as entertainment this Christmas meeting - but think ahead and let us have ideas for next Christmas - what entertainment would you like us to provide? You will see from the 2013 Programme printed at the back of this number that we have a varied selection of speakers and topics upcoming, some are new to us, whilst others are old friends, we hope you enjoy them.

As always we need a constant stream of volunteers to man the museum - if only each member was prepared to do a two hour shift each month (it would also be an opportunity to read up on the history of where you live) it would make Peter Wallace's job of running the museum duty roster so much easier. So for a New Years Resolution how about volunteering for museum duty and writing at least one article (long or short) for Westender and make a difference. Thank you for reading this and I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year.



THE VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY REVISION PROJECT

By Stan Waight

A little under 25 years ago, someone showed me a photocopy of an early 17th-century map of an estate in Hampshire that had been one of the foundation endowments of Corpus Christi College in Oxford. It wasn't a very good photocopy but I found it very intriguing and resolved to go up to Oxford and see the original. This I did, and, to my surprise, there turned out to be two whole atlases containing over 50 similar maps. Each was a work of art - full of detail, and in colour too. It was a case of being immediately 'hooked'. I found that the College's archive contained all sorts of other estate records including charters, deeds, manorial court records, lease books and miscellaneous correspondence. There followed ten years in which I travelled to Oxford every two or three weeks, researching the estates not only in general but also individually. In the meantime I followed a diploma course in local history at the Portsmouth Polytechnic taking the management of the college's Hampshire estates as the subject of my dissertation. One of these estates was the complete parish of Mapledurwell.



Thomas Langdon's map of Mapledurwell, drawn in 1615.

"What's this got to do with the Victoria County Histories?" you may well ask, and what is the VCH (as it is popularly known) anyway?

Well!
Continued on page 11

Continued from page 10

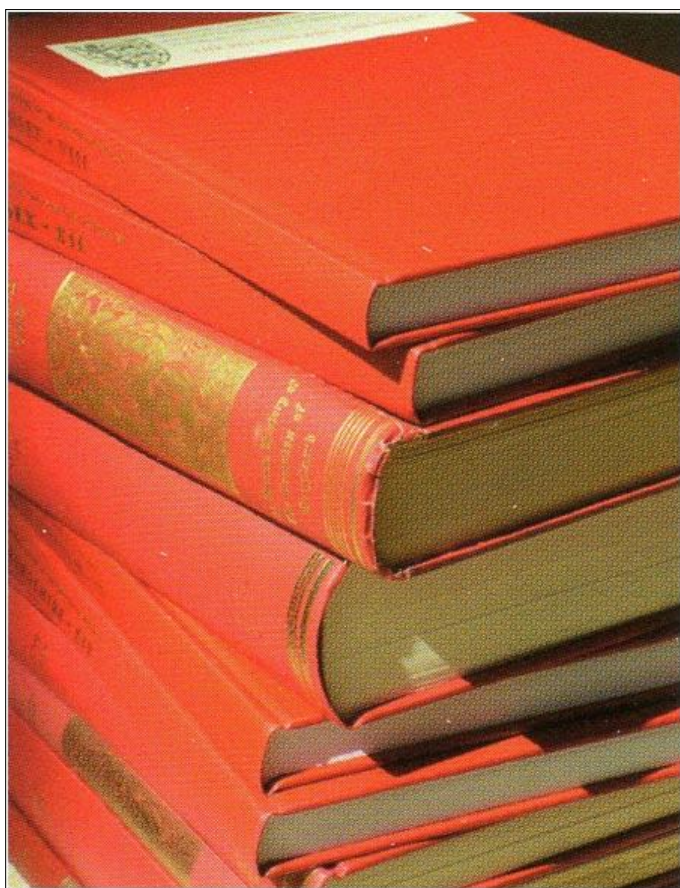
At the turn of the 19th century a project dedicated to the Queen was launched to provide histories of every parish in the country, arranged by county.

Five volumes relating to Hampshire were produced, the first in 1912, but the detail was restricted to what researchers could find in the national archives and didn't extend to social history.

West End was described as a chapelry that was part of the Allington tithing of South Stoneham which was itself part of the Mansbridge Hundred. and this gives you a clue as to the sort of 'history' that was being put forward.

The individual volumes are also known as the Big Red Books, and they are to be found in Record Offices and most of the larger libraries.

About four years ago, a committee was set up to investigate the possibility of revising the Hampshire volumes. Members were drawn from the County Council, the Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society and Winchester University and it was agreed to set up a project. A co-ordinator was appointed and volunteers were called for. The area on which a start was to be made was chosen as the parishes around Basingstoke, and volunteers get to choose the parish they will work on within that area. The idea is to broaden the scope of the individual chapters and fill in what's gone on since 1912. Only one parish has been completed so far, so you can see that the whole thing is going to go on for decades; the group will eventually get round to West End, which has become a parish in its own right since 1912!



A pile of the big Red Books

One parish in the selected Basingstoke area is Mapledurwell, and when I heard about the project I felt that I ought to offer my earlier work on the Corpus Christi estate in order to avoid duplication,. The offer was accepted and I was 'sucked' in to research the parish's more recent and social history as well. This involved looking at lots of sources at the Record Office, the Hartley Library, online and elsewhere. It also meant co-operating with other local historians and doing a lot of work on the ground, but it has been very satisfying and is to be recommended. The results are now online through the VCH Work in Progress website and it is hoped to publish Mapledurwell in book form early in the New Year.

Here are the headings intended for each parish chapter:

1. Introduction: Boundaries, Landscape, Communications, Settlement and Population.
2. Manors and other Estates.
3. Economic History: The Agricultural Landscape, Agriculture and Farming, Rural Trades and Industry.
4. Social History: The Social Structure, Life in the Community, Education, Charities and Poor Relief.

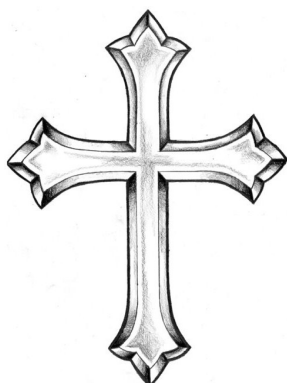
5. Religious History: Parochial Organisation, Pastoral Care and Religious Life.
6. Local Government.
7. Buildings: Religious and Domestic.

THE DAUNTLESS REV. F.R. DAWSON (1911-1923)

By Pauline Berry



Rev. Rowland Dawson



Rev. Dawson (seated centre) with Scouts at the vicarage

At the end of 1911, a new vicar arrived at St. James' Church, West End, from the Isle of Wight. He was the Rev. Frederick Rowland Dawson M.A., and his wife Marion, and they brought with them several changes that were not always popular. He introduced the church procession, an ebony and brass cross, altar candlesticks, a change in services and a crib at Christmas (thought by some as idolatry!).

On taking over, the new incumbent, an outspoken man, made pointed remarks on the dull interior of the church which he wished to beautify. He criticised the appearance of the Burial Ground, off the High Street, the lack of headstones on graves and the presence of artificial flowers. The old Parish Magazines reveal the Rev. Dawson's many efforts to raise money for its maintenance and that of the church and organ too. He expressed strong opinions on divorce, dissenters and politics in his writings.

The vicar frequently reported on the progress of the Great War in these monthly magazines, exhorting his parishioners to pray for peace (especially at midday) and recording the loss of local men who died fighting for their country. He set up a working party to raise funds including a regular egg collection to be sent to the Red Cross and Netley Hospital.

West End residents were often entreated to attend church regularly and to send their children to Sunday School. During Lent in 1915, he begged the men of the parish *"to pull themselves together and make sacrifices by giving up drinking and smoking"* and the women *"to read and pray more – not to gossip"*. *"If we are determined not to be beaten by Germany ... surely we shall refuse to be beaten by a single (bad) habit"*. Rev. Dawson claimed that *"if Russia had become teetotal, giving up vodka, then why not Britain also?"*. In another magazine he was strangely prophetic and thought there would be another war one day, probably between America and Japan!

In the bad winter of 1917, a soup kitchen was set up by his wife Marion, in the Parish Hall costing 2 pence per day. The late Bob Moody told the story of the trouble he caused by writing an honest essay at school about his experience of a meal there ... *"hard beans, chewy prunes and runny custard"*. Having read his essay, the vicar called Bob *"an ungrateful and arrogant brat"*, which led to a caning by Mr Shelley, his headmaster.

Rev Dawson however, has been sorely tried on occasions such as the time then he entered St. James' Church to find a hapless choirboy standing in the pulpit, delivering a clever imitation of his forceful method of giving a sermon!

The 9th Southampton Scout Troop, and later the Cubs, in West End, were well supported by the vicar who encouraged them to meet in the Iron Room (corrugated?) which used to be behind the old vicarage (now Elizabeth Court). The Scout Minstrel Troop used to rehearse for concerts in the old Infants School off Moorgreen Road (now the site of Old School Gardens). Bob Moody found *"blackening up with burnt cork"* and entertaining the residents of the village *"jolly good fun"* in those far off days.

His monthly magazine entry showed how strongly Rev. Dawson felt about the politics of the time, including the unfairness and disparity between the pensions given to men in Government (up to £3,000 per annum) and that of the retired headmaster, Mr G.H. Elliott (£51 per annum). He also wrote passionately about the conditions suffered by the inmates of the Workhouse in the village, criticising the management by the Guardians of South Stoneham Union, regarding the separation of couples and families, their lack of freedom etc.. Fortunately some of his complaints were acted upon. The vicar stated he would prefer the Parish Council ('men of mediocrity') to run the Workhouse instead, in order to save a lot of money.

The members of the Mens Club which met in the Reading Room on Shotters Hill, could rely on the vicar's support, although he frequently complained of its lack of cleanliness. He bemoaned the lack of members who only paid brief visits to play billiards, instead of staying longer to read or play cards. An example of his generosity was displayed when he compensated everyone who

Continued on page 13

Continued from page 12

lost money when the Christmas Club money was stolen from the Blacksmiths Arms (pub) in the High Street.

The War Memorial Committee (1919) of which the vicar was a member, had great difficulty in making a decision about a suitable memorial to those West End men who were lost in the War. "A fiasco" was his description of the committee's work, which eventually decided on the stone cross War Memorial, unveiled in the High Street in 1920.

Mrs Marion Dawson died suddenly at the end of 1922 and the Rev. Dawson was duly devastated, taking leave of the parish for a while. This outspoken preacher with deeply religious beliefs, only ever wanted the best for his parish, but decided to move away to the parish of Barton Stacey in 1923. But not before seeing two windows dedicated to his wife's memory, erected at the west end of the church. She was buried in the Old Burial Ground

"LEST WE FORGET"

A review by Stan Waight



THE CENOTAPH AT SOUTHAMPTON



SIR FABIAN WARE

G Geoff Watts was at his brilliant best when he returned to talk to us in November. It was an appropriate choice for that month, since it was a history of the Imperial War Graves Commission. The Commission, which later became 'Commonwealth' rather than 'Imperial', is concerned with the graves of men and women who died during the two World Wars.

The talk included a number of suitable quotes such as the title and 'Their Name liveth for Evermore' - both attributed to Rudyard Kipling, who lost his son in WWI and was never able to find his grave. Another was 'I am looking at a sunlit picture of Hell', and Geoff even recited a few poignant poems at length.

The prime mover in the setting up of the Commission was Sir Fabian Ware. He was rejected by the Army in 1914 because he was too old, but pulled strings and took command of a mobile ambulance unit provided by the Red Cross society. At that early point in WWI, casualties were buried by their comrades where they fell, and it was a matter of chance whether their location would be remembered. Ware set about changing this and established an organisation to do so. In 1915 both he and his organisation were transferred from the Red Cross to the Army. By October 1915, the new Graves Registration Commission had over 31,000 graves registered, and 50,000 by May 1916.

Few bodies were returned to the United Kingdom, and, as we all know, numerous impressive cemeteries were established on the Continent. Wooden crosses were gradually replaced by standard headstones which could bear more information about the fallen and which were set up in regimented order like soldiers on parade.

In a large part of the talk, Geoff's excellent slides of headstones were used to illustrate stories of individuals, both noble and ignoble. He then went on with more slides of whole cemeteries and their walls of remembrance; these were dedicated to men of all nations and include airmen and seamen as well as army personnel. Then came individual memorials, in which the height of the cross was proportionate to the number of graves that they represented. Many memorials were dedicated to men whose place of burial was unknown. The national Cenotaph in The Mall was based upon Lutyen's cenotaph in Southampton.

As always, Geoff spoke fluently, displaying his great depth of knowledge. He finished by giving a short history of the poppies that are worn by so many of us at this time of the year. Originating in France, the idea was taken up by the British Legion and first appeared in the UK in November 1921.

NEXT YEARS PROGRAMME

2013

January 2

CALSHOT ... a place in Time

Colin van Geffen

February 6

SARAH SIDDONS, actress

Geoff Watts

March 6

LIFE IN NELSON'S NAVY

Anne Baxandall MBE

April 3

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Plus

DEAD ON ARRIVAL ... a Policeman's Story

Roy Andrews

May 1

ROMAN SOUTHAMPTON

Dr. Andy Russel

June 5

SOUTHAMPTON & ITS FRENCH

CONNECTION

Jake Simpkin

July 3

**THE HISTORY OF ITCHEN FERRY
VILLAGE & ITS FAMILIES**

Cheryl Butler

August 7

SOCIAL EVENING AT THE MUSEUM

(including raffle and free refreshments)

ALL WELCOME

September 4

CIVIL WAR IN HAMPSHIRE

Don Bryan

October 2

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Heather Hook

November 6

HASLAR HOSPITAL ... what next?

Eric Birbeck

December 5

SOCIAL EVENING

CHRISTMAS BUFFET,

ENTERTAINMENT

& RAFFLE

ON THIS DAY.....

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

1594 Gerard Mercator, Flemish geographer and cartographer, died at Duisberg.

1697 The first Sunday service was held in the new St. Paul's Cathedral.

1766 Christie's, famous auctioneers of London, held their first sale.

1791 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Austrian composer, died of typhus in Vienna, and was buried in the common ground of St. Mark's churchyard.

1839 George Armstrong Custer, American cavalry commander in the West, born in Harrison County in Ohio.

1870 Alexandre Dumas the elder, French novelist, best known for 'The Three Musketeers' and 'The Count of Monte Cristo'. Died at Dieppe.

1872 'Marie Celeste', an American brig, captained by Benjamin Briggs, was found by the 'Dei Gratia' abandoned in the Atlantic on its way to Genoa with a cargo of alcohol.

1901 Walt Disney, American cartoon film producer, born at Chicago in Illinois.

1926 Claude Monet, French painter and one of the founders of the Impressionist movement, died as a recluse at Giverny.

1933 Prohibition in America was repealed by the 21st Amendment—having come into effect on 16th January 1920.

1958 The first STD telephone service in Britain was inaugurated at Bristol, by the Queen calling up the Lord Provost of Edinburgh.

The first motorway in Britain, the 8½ mile Preston by-pass section of the M6, was opened by the then Prime Minister Harold MacMillan.