

WESTENDER

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THE WAY IT WAS



VE-DAY PARTY IN ORCHARDS WAY 1945

Our picture this edition shows the VE-Day party in Orchards Way, just up the road from the museum (fire station) which can be seen in the background. As you can see things were a little different then, the road was gravel, no pavements and after all the war years everything looks very drab. On the left between the houses and fire station there appears a long 'hut like' building with all the windows open - has anyone got any idea what it was? We also have another picture taken at the same time showing the celebration bonfire that was erected at the top end of the road. Has anyone else got similar pictures of VE-Day celebrations in West End which we could borrow to scan for the archive?

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PARISH
COUNCIL**



THE FEBRUARY MEETING

A Review by Stan Waight



TUDOR HOUSE AND ITS GARDEN

More than fifty members and visitors braved a bitterly cold evening in the expectation of hearing Anne Baxandall, MBE, talk about life in Nelson's navy. In the event, Anne had had to cancel, but it was fortunate that Andy Russel was able to fill the gap. Andy is the manager of Southampton's Archaeology Unit and came to talk about the restoration of Tudor House. He spoke for more than three-quarters of an hour, fluently and without notes.

The Tudor House museum site is (like Stonehenge!) a Grade 1 scheduled monument, and has elements from the Norman, Medieval and Early Modern periods. The timber-framed element that we all recognise so readily is significant because it is so magnificent but also because it is a town house. Timber-framing has survived quite commonly in rural areas, but not so much in towns where change is relatively frequent.

The house was originally constructed in the 1490s by John Dawtry, but the elegant frontage dates from the early 17th century. It was saved from slum clearance by the Victorian philanthropist William Spranger in 1890. Spranger restored it and sold it to the council as a museum in 1912.

By the 1990s it was apparent that Spranger's work had not been totally successful and that more serious restoration work was required. After much consultation with English Heritage and the promise of funding from its lottery fund, work began in 2002. English Heritage is very insistent on working to original 'plans' and using similar materials to those used by the original builders. In consequence, high-tech methods and high quality, often hand-made, materials had to be employed to plan and execute the restoration. Many problems were encountered and had to be resolved, but the opportunity was taken to learn more about the origins of the building, including the use of dendrochronology or tree-ring dating. Sophisticated modern technology was then installed to display and protect the unique museum exhibits.

Other buildings on the site were also restored at the same time and it is significant that the earliest of them is the two-storied, rendered house on the southern end of the grand frontage. The combination of all the factors made the work very expensive, and the final cost was £5.8 million. The work was completed and the museum reopened in July 2011.

Bill White gave the Vote of Thanks, and hoped that the creaking of the wooden floor had been retained - it appears that this is just one of the idiosyncrasies kept in the restoration process.

LOCAL HISTORY EXHIBITION AT WARSASH

By Warsash Local History Society



Plans are being drawn up for a comprehensive exhibition of “Warsash through the Ages” in the Spring of 2012. Archive Days have been held throughout 2011 for people to contribute photo's and memorabilia, and our recently established Heritage Centre in Shore Road has encouraged input from many local families.

Warsash, with its companion village of Hook, has been continuously occupied since prehistoric times, with excavations showing artefacts from middle, new, bronze and iron ages. In medieval times it was a centre for shipbuilding and repair, and had a somewhat touchy relationship with its overlords, the Abbots of Titchfield Abbey. The dispersal in the 18th century of the Earl of Southampton's estate, of which it formed part, led to the rise of a number of individual big houses along the shoreline, and the local industries of horticulture, fishing and gravel extraction began to expand into a thriving local economy. The onset of World War Two saw the area play a vital role in the development of small-boat war-fare, and the preparation and launch of some of the D-Day landings. We hope to show something of all this, and more.

The event will be held at Warsash Victory Hall over the first May Bank Holiday weekend, 5th., 6th. and 7th. May 2012. Entry fee £2 for adults, children under 16 free. See our website on www.warsash-lhs.org.uk for more details.

FROM OUR ARCHIVE



Our picture shows the West End Civil Defence volunteers outside the old Church Hall at St. James' Church in West End sometime before the disbandment of the organisation, possibly the late 1940's. If you have any more information about this picture or Civil Defence in West End, or even similar pictures taken in West End please contact us. We would like the opportunity to add similar items to our growing archive. Many thanks. Ed.

MAJOR REFURBISHMENT AT MUSEUM



Our pictures show our 'new look' museum after total refurbishment. We have been able to replace all the display cabinets with brand new illuminated ones thanks to grants received from The League of Friends of Moorgreen Hospital, West End Parish Council and Eastleigh Borough Council (HEWEB). Our grateful thanks to these organisations and I think you will agree the museum has never looked better. Thanks also to Peter Wallace our Treasurer, who gave his time and expertise to make it all happen. New displays are in place with more in the pipeline soon.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

I would like to express my thanks to everyone involved in the Titanic Centenary commemorations here in West End. In particular the ladies who provided such excellent refreshments at the plaque unveiling on Saturday 31st March, Delphine, Margaret, Vera and Lin and the WELHS committee, a big thank you. To Cheryl Butler, Chair of the Diaper Heritage Association, thank you for all the work you put into the event and making it a success. To Ron and Pearl May for creating such touching and evocative memorials for the museum thank you. To all the many people who attended, some from far afield, thank you for your presence and making it such a memorable occasion. Ed.

MEMORIES OF A WEST END GIRL - Part 3

by Judy Jones

Being a family with four girls our house was always an attraction for the boys of the village. One of my favourite anecdotes was one which involved my second eldest sister Joan. A couple of the local boys (Terry Wilshire comes to mind) used to pester us in the evenings by calling out or knocking on the door and then legging it. Well mum was getting fed up with this so one night Joan hid round the side of the house covered by a white sheet. When the boys were just about to knock on the door Joan floated out without a sound. You can imagine their reaction when they saw the drifting white shape floating towards them. They took off up the path, across the road and jumped over the wriggly tin fence which surrounded the grounds where Midlands Estate is now. They were heard to whisper ... What the **** was that! Needless to say we weren't bothered with cat calling and whistling boys for some time to come.

As a youngster one of my friends was the policeman's daughter. Her dad got to know that our family liked dogs but no longer had one. One day he visited mum and asked if she would look after a dog which belonged to some friends of his who ran a pub "The Tichbourne Arms". Apparently, the dog, named Whisky (a smooth haired Irish Terrier) let punters in the pub but didn't let them out and had bitten someone. Mum agreed. He looked endearing – brown and white – with a lovely face but oh what a mad dog. If you put him on the lead to take him for a walk he walked on just his back legs, yapping and barking at everything that moved. It was so embarrassing and if you let him off the lead he would take off and not come back for hours.

Anyway, back to the boys, a different one this time, Angus Jacobs. He used to ride by our house on his bike calling out and whistling and of course aggravating Whisky. One day mum had enough of this behaviour and as soon as he rode by calling out, the dog started barking so she opened the door and off he went up the path on to the road and chased the lad on the bike, caught his trouser leg and held on even though the boy was yelling and trying to shake him off as he tried to ride away. A few choice words were spoken no doubt, how we amused ourselves.

Well, our mum valued education greatly and she was very strict about homework for June the second youngest daughter and me and this had to be completed and errands run before we were allowed to play or go out.

I supported the local football team probably because my brother-in-law played. I was really keen and followed the team loyally. I even have their signatures in my autograph book.

I went to the pictures which were shown weekly in the Parish Hall. I remember that as well as the main feature we had a sing along where the words came up on the screen and a red dot jumped along over the words to prompt us – just like a karaoke. Nothings new they say! "When the red, red robin comes bob, bob bobbing along" was a favourite song. Money wasn't plentiful in those days but it just cost a few old pennies. I recall that the picture man was a Mr Snelgrove and he drew and coloured a lovely picture on a postcard for my autograph book. These autographs must have been done after 1950 because mum had written inside "To Judy with love from mum Christmas 1950". I also noticed that the album itself was made by Chad Valley and they are still in business today, wonders!!

There were Whist Drives, various socials in both the Parish and Church Halls. I also went when allowed to the Ritz Cinema in Bitterne on Saturday mornings for the Children's Films. We watched films like Flash Gordon which was shown as a serial and therefore persuaded you to go again next week to find out what happened next.

I remember when I was really young that there was a garden party in the village and one year my sister June won first prize dressed as Little Bo-Peep. I also used to just play outside with my friends, skipping, climbing trees etc..

In my young teens I used to go to Old Time Dancing in the Parish Hall. All ages participated. We danced to the Freddy Bevis Trio and two people sometimes demonstrated the dances teaching them to us. As I grew older I progressed to modern dancing, jive especially, at the Guildhall or the Royal Pier in Southampton.

A really exciting time was when a talent competition was to be held in the Parish Hall in the village. It was

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called “Opportunity Knocks” but I don’t think it was the legitimate broadcast show. One of my sister June’s friends called Jimmy Boyce had a fantastic singing voice and he could yodel too. We as a family went to the show and supported him but to our amazement and disappointment he didn’t win. The winner was a girl tap dancer called June but I can’t remember her surname. We often wondered what happened to Jimmy Boyce but of course in those days young men were called to do National Service and we tended to lose track of them.

In the summer we went swimming in the River Itchen near the White Swan (pub). There was a fantastic rope swing attached to a branch overhanging the river. You sat astride a piece of wood, swung out over the river and dropped in. In those days we made our own fun.

On winter evenings we as a family played games like Snakes and Ladders, Ludo and Housey Housey which was really Bingo. Our favourite game was where each player wrote down a list:

Country

County

Town

River or Mountain

Lake or Sea

Fish

Bird

Animal.

A letter of the alphabet was chosen by sticking a pin into a newspaper and each player had to try to complete the list, e.g. Letter A chosen.

America

Ayreshire

Alton etc..

We also listened to the wireless (radio). June and I used to cuddle up together and listen to Dick Barton Special Agent, scared stiff, but just having to listen. However if the accumulator (battery) was low it was my job to deliver it to Mr Rawlings at the bicycle shop to get it charged up. Another wintertime treat was to sit around the fire and roast chestnuts in the ashes or bake potatoes. A really exciting time was at Easter when the fun fair came to Southampton Common. Oh how we looked forward to that and would plague mum and dad to take us. We went for cycle rides taking picnics. In those days we were allowed to go out freely as long as we told mum where we were going.

We played skipping, hopscotch, big ship sails through the alli alli oh, and then a new game was devised where you put a ball down to the toe of an old stocking and with your back facing a wall you swung it from side to side bouncing the ball against the wall, sometimes lifting one leg and bouncing it beneath the leg. We were not allowed to play this game if anyone indoors had a headache!

What good old days they were when we could play safely outside!! And then ... Mr and Mrs Nash opened a Fish and Chip shop which became the centre of our social life rather as MacDonalds or Kentucky Fried is today.

Other businesses in the village.

Starting at the lower end of the village on Swaythling Road there was The West End Café run by Mr and Mrs Hurst. Mr Hurst also ran a taxi. There were three girls, Joan, Pauline and Peggy and a boy called Bill – real dare devil of a lad! Moving further up there was a tiny sweet shop called Smythes. Opposite that was The Crown and Thistle (now The Master Builder) where the Wheeler family lived. They had twin boys and a daughter called Margaret.

In a cottage a few doors away lived the village dressmaker called Esme Lawrence. On the other side of the road on the corner of Ivy Lane was one of the three bakers in the village, Emman’s. I remember the son was called David, I think. Further along Ivy Lane was a snob – that’s a shoe mender, Mr Bartlett. Our dad usually did our simple shoe repairs but Mr Bartlett would do the difficult ones. On the other corner of Ivy Lane was a small shop, Brown’s, selling newspapers, cigarettes, tobacco and newspapers.

To be concluded in the next edition of Westender

RONALD 'RON' BEALE

By Roy Andrews

There cannot be many males who have lived in West End some when between the 1930's and 1980's who, at sometime, did not pop into have a "short back and sides" at Ron Beale's Barber Shop in the High Street.

The shop was started by Ron's father Eli and as far as I know, Ron spent all of his working life there. My mother Doris nee Pope and father Jack were in the same age bracket as Ron and when they were what we now call "teenagers" in the 1930's, they all socialised together and with the rest of that generation in the village life. In fact in later years, mum used to tell that she had "gone out" with Ron a few times.

Ron, I am told, gave me my first haircut when I was a baby and apparently I fell asleep on that occasion as he set to with his scissors and I continued to do so for several years thereafter on each visit to Ron's salon. Although these days I have a lot fewer follicles than then. as soon as the barber sets to on them, I could still nod off. When I started at St. James School, I used to make my own way down Shotters Hill to Ron's shop after school - would any five year old be allowed to today? - and no matter how long the queue in front of me, Ron always seemed to be able to get to my turn and finish me off in time to catch the five o'clock bus home to Thornhill. Ron would walk me out to the bus stop outside of his shop and ensure I got on the bus.



RON BEALE OUTSIDE HIS SHOP

By the 1960's, Ron had expanded his shop by moving the barbers into the room next door and the original room became an emporium for the sale of scents and soaps and such like.

At Thornhill in the late 1950's, Ron's brother Len Beale opened a barbers shop in the parade of shops on Thornhill Park Road where he operated for many years.

THE MURDER OF WILLIAM PEARSON 1901

By John Avery

Only a little is known of the background of George Henry Parker who also used the name Hill. His birth was registered in the Aston district [Birmingham] in the summer of 1878 and it was thought that he had 2 or 3 brothers. What is known is that he had been discharged from the army and had a chip on his shoulder in that he believed that he had been dealt with unfairly. He seems to have been a binge drinker but whether this was the cause of the end of his army career or as a result of his discharge is not clear. By August 1900, we find Parker in Portsmouth where he had befriended Mrs Elizabeth Sarah Rowland of 24 Prince Albert Street, Eastney. Lizzie as he called her, recalled that he treated her with kindness and affection and that he was of a very affectionate nature, generous but at times of a short temper. Apart from occasional visits to the theatre the pair spent their time drinking in bars – on the odd occasion he took too much liquor and passed out. Parker returned to his family as he was out of work and his constant expenditure on drink soon exhausted his funds. He told Lizzie that his father would help him out with funds and find him a job and he would return. Parker arrived back in January 1901 and was welcomed with Lizzie to afternoon tea at her

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mother's nearby house and they resumed their carefree but somewhat drink led relationship. Lizzie [and presumably her mother] had omitted to tell George Parker that Lizzie was married to James Rowland, a private in the Scottish Rifles on service in India and that her wedding ring was tucked away safely in a drawer in her room.

After his arrival at Portsmouth on 12th January they visited a couple places of entertainment and continued their by now familiar routine of visiting the local bars. Parker decided that before returning to London they should stay together overnight at Southampton so on Wednesday 16th they travelled there by train. On the following morning as they headed to Southampton West Station they called in at a snug bar to consume more drink and Parker urged Lizzie to stay there as he needed to do some business in the town. In late Victorian England it would be unusual for any reputable lady to sit unaccompanied in a pub but he must have assured her that his mission would be a short one. Parker headed to Bernard Street and purchased a revolver and ten rounds for seven shillings and five pence. Lizzie was not aware of the transaction nor had noticed it in his pocket on his return. Unless they had come across the dealer whilst out walking around the town, it does raise the question as to how Parker knew the location of such a dealer in Bernard Street.

Lizzie claimed that Parker took but one glass of porter when he returned to the snug and then they left to go to the station and he urged her to accompany him on part of his journey to London promising that he would return to Portsmouth on the Saturday. He bought her ticket to Portsmouth having checked that she should change at Eastleigh just 10 minutes or so up the line and somewhat oddly purchased his own ticket to Eastleigh, not Waterloo. They both boarded the 11-15am train and at Eastleigh he got off to see her onto the Portsmouth train before dashing back to the London train.

Mrs Rhoda King, wife of Thomas George King, a printer, of 35 Exmoor Road had purchased a third class ticket to London as she was to be away a few days to visit a sick relative. She was the only occupant and travelled in the rear carriage with her back to the engine adjacent to a toilet. At Eastleigh a young man boarded [Parker] and sat also with his back to the engine near the door of the carriage, both being in corner seats. She took little attention of him except to note that he had a persistent cough and at times became quite restless. They continued to Winchester when another passenger [William Pearson] joined them and sat in the corner seat opposite Mrs King. There was no sign of recognition between Mr Pearson and Parker and Pearson read his newspaper for a while then appeared to be dozing in response to the rhythm of the train. Just before approaching Surbiton, Parker went into the lavatory and was in there about two minutes. As the train passed Surbiton, Pearson changed his seat to the other side of the lavatory door. Mrs King took her ticket out of her purse and lowered the window to check the progress of the journey. She heard two loud shots and spun around, she had not felt the bullet grazing her cheek but the warm blood caused her hand to touch the wound. In shock she focussed on her two companions, Pearson lay still with a shot wound to the temple with blood pouring out and Parker holding the pistol staring at his victim. Mrs King cried "What have you done?" and Parker replied "I did it for the money, have you any money?" It is usual for a robber from a mugger to a highwayman or bank robber to demand money by producing a firearm but less likely to kill the individual first before robbing the individual.

Their attention was drawn back to Pearson who had gurgling noises in the throat and then the final silence of death. Parker removed a cigar case, a purse and a sovereign from Pearson's pockets, the sovereign he offered to Mrs King almost as an inducement for her silence which she refused. Her two handkerchiefs were now blood soaked and suddenly reflecting the caring nature that his lady friend at Portsmouth had noticed in his character, Parker offered his own handkerchief but was urged instead to cover the wound and face of the dead victim. Almost as a shock reaction to his misdeeds Parker began incessantly talking that he was from Birmingham and on Saturday night was going to Liverpool [but had earlier promised Lizzie that he would go to Portsmouth] and then to South Africa [however the Union and Castle lines were the principal liner trade to South Africa from London and Southampton and not from Liverpool]. Mrs King realised at this stage that she had to fight for her own survival so offered him one shilling from her purse and went on her knees to beg for her life. This had the effect of calming him down and he mused as to whether he should place the weapon in the hand of the dead man to appear as a suicide. Mrs King told him to throw the gun out of the window and perhaps the bullets from out of his pocket.

Parker began to take the advice and lowered the window on the door and hesitated as a repair gang were

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working that stretch of line. At last he threw it out and Mrs King remembered that it was near to some glass roofed buildings at Nine Elms [this later was helpful for the police when the weapon was recovered].

Mrs King was quite a feisty lady and her calmness helped to keep her alive. As they reached Vauxhall, Parker sprang from his seat and jumped onto the platform. On removing the personal effects from the dead man he had the good fortune to take Pearson's ticket as otherwise the ticket of Southampton to Eastleigh would have raised questions at the barrier. Mrs King called for help and shouts of "Stop that man" were heard as he ran out of the barrier. A following porter spotted a constable on point duty and urged him to join the chase. Parker eventually after a long chase, ran into the coke gas chamber rooms of the South Metropolitan Gas Company works and employees joined the chase cornering Parker in the dark chambers next to a parked coal truck. The constable arrested him and took him to Larkhall Lane police station and belatedly Parker realised that Mrs King had triumphed in the situation. He made the remarks "I wish I had killed the woman and then I would have got away had I had killed her"

Such a thankfully unusual event on a train journey soon attracted the press and rumours began to spread through the LSWR network to Southampton. One person thinking that they were serving a good deed rushed to Mr King at his print works to tell him that his wife was dead having been shot on the train. Mr King passed out at the news and went into deep shock but later a policeman called to tell him that his wife was in St Thomas' Hospital and that the wound was superficial. Mrs King gave clear lucid statements about the event and after 8 days in hospital was released. She made a very credible witness at the coroner's inquest and the trial. The judge commended her for her clear thinking and action.

A group of maintenance men searched the track and near to Wandsworth Bridge and retrieved the gun and the police got the dealer in Southampton to confirm it was the weapon sold to Parker.

On Friday, 1st March 1901 Parker appeared at the Central Criminal Courts before Mr Justice Phillimore. His lawyers advised him to plead not guilty on the grounds of diminished responsibility. His defence Mr P. Clark argued that years of heavy drinking with the likelihood of DT's had produced temporary insanity. The jury was not convinced and the judge sentenced him to execution by hanging.

Parker gave reasons for the shooting both under police interrogation and via letters sent from prison as he awaited his fate.

He claimed that Pearson, a well to do farmer and the brother in law of a London barrister, had caused him harm during his army service and this was an act of revenge. The fact that Pearson boarded the train at Winchester and randomly chose a carriage and seat suggests that Parker had never previously made his acquaintance. Mr Pearson had had no connection to the army.

Parker wrote to Lizzie his friend at Portsmouth and a letter of apology and sympathy to the Pearson family and to his father and variously signed as George Henry Hill and some as Parker.

Parker claimed that as his life was a miserable one and his lady love was in a very unhappy existence that he had purchased the gun so that when he returned to his love two days later at Portsmouth, he intended to shoot her and himself if he failed to get more money from his father which would end their misery. Lizzie was shocked at this revelation and said her life was not an unhappy one and she had no knowledge that he owned a gun. In writing to his father he confessed a life long weakness to spend, spend money often leaving him penniless. He accepted his fate but emphasised it was completely out of character and queried his own sanity.

Improved control on the sale of handguns in the UK began in 1903, with the Pistols Act, which required the production of a Game or Gun Licence before buying certain kinds of pistol was introduced.

VOLUNTEERS FOR MUSEUM STILL WANTED

We still need a steady stream of volunteers to man the museum throughout the year, so if you have a couple of hours to spare in a good cause, contact Peter Wallace at the meeting and volunteer your services. Thank you. Ed.

A WINTER'S TALE

By Pauline Berry



Here in the South we rarely suffer severe winter weather, unlike a true story, told by John Barton in 'Hampshire Headlines', of a winter in 1881. On January 18th of that year, a bitter east wind brought a severe blizzard to South-East England, which lasted several days. The high wind soon covered the area with a deep blanket of snow, bringing life to a standstill.

On the first day, Southampton was soon deserted after half a metre of snow fell, drifting up to the window-cills. Trams ground to a halt and both man and beast huddled indoors. The mail steamer set out for France, but soon turned back safely to port. The railway line between Southampton and Portsmouth was blocked at Fareham. Inside a train travelling east out of Portsmouth, the passengers were trapped for several hours. Yet another train, due at Winchester, had to be dug out of a drift at Micheldever.

Despite the deep snow drifts, reported to be 3 metres deep in places, several staunch postmen endeavoured to deliver the mail by foot or on horseback, having abandoned their carts. A baker from Winchester, however, was forced to leave his bread delivery in the snow and return home.

Twyford and Colden Common were cut off by impassable roads, and Bishops Waltham was only accessible by crossing fields, for the snow drifts had reached the hedge tops. On the Isle of Wight, everyone was housebound, including Queen Victoria, it was said, who could not venture out of Osborne House. At Ryde, several vessels broke away from their moorings and the pier was extensively damaged.

During a break in the blizzard, snow-clearing started in Southampton and thousands of cartloads of snow were emptied into the sea! But the snowfalls returned and the town found itself covered by another half metre of snow and drifts of three metres deep were reported. There was much deprivation in the poor areas of Southampton where many houses were so flimsy that the snow had found its way indoors. Soup kitchens were set up in Northam and St. James (sic). Many of the unemployed were engaged in clearing the streets, although the Mayor noted that some were refusing to do so and should not be paid.

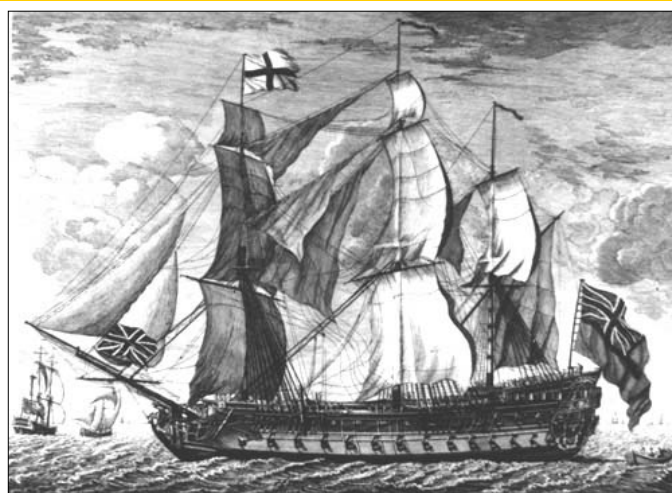
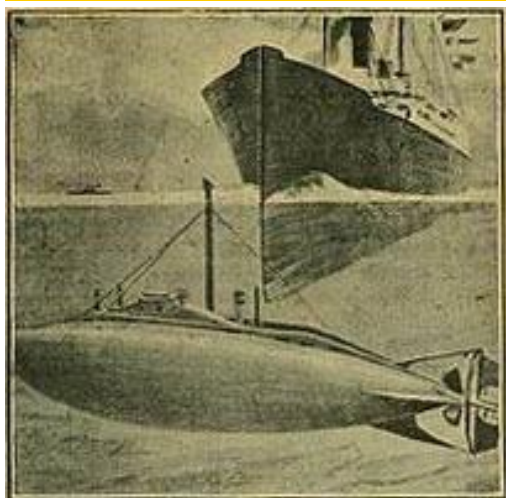
In Portsmouth, many house roofs collapsed under the weight of excessive snow falling in one hour. Troops from the garrison were ordered out to help shift what was believed to be over half a million tons of snow.

When the snow finally stopped a few days later, the Inner Docks in Southampton, were frozen over and the town was said to have looked picturesque in the snow. Skating took place on the reservoirs on The Common and snow-balling was popular amongst the young. Newspapers, mail and fresh produce slowly filtered through to the residents. Nevertheless, over 100 people died in Southern England, through accidents or exposure to the elements and severe frosts (-20F).

There were other freezing winters in the late 1800's and the late local historian, Charles Sillence, reminded us in his book 'Tales of Old West End' (available in the Museum bookshop) of the skating on Hatch Farm pond and the frozen River Itchen at Gaters Mill. Great hardship was caused to the unemployed in West End and John St. Barbe Baker and his wife set up a much needed soup kitchen at their home, The Firs, in Beacon Road. One can only trust that the residents of South Stoneham Poorhouse were kindly treated during those bitter winters which, hopefully, are a thing of the past.

THE HISTORIC WRECKS OF THE SOLENT BESIDES THE MARY ROSE

A Review by Stan Waight



The speaker at our March meeting was John Bingeman, a marine engineer and long-time holder of a Government licence to excavate marine wrecks.

John is a fluent speaker and his talk was well supported by some excellent slides. He spoke for well over an hour and for some there may have been a little too much detail. However, of the nearly 60 members and visitors who were in attendance, many of us were absorbed by the backward look at the days of sail.

He told us about seven wrecks around the Isle of Wight and where, when and why they sank. They were HMS *Assurance* and HMS *Pomone*, which foundered on rocks off the Needles in 1753 and 1811 respectively; what is thought to have been the *Santa Lucia* in the Yarmouth Roads in 1567; the great *Grace Dieu* reduced to ruins by fire after being struck by lightning in the Hamble in 1439; the *AI* submarine off Selsey Bill in 1911; HMS *Hazardous* in Bracklesham Bay in 1706 and HMS *Invincible* (illustrated above) stranded on the Horsetail sandbank in 1758 and torn apart by gales. Apart from the uncertain *Santa Lucia*, the wrecks have all been positively identified.

It was interesting to learn that some of the ships had been captured from the French, whose ship-building methods were different, and in some respects, better than ours. For instance, the standard size of their gun-ports made it necessary to modify them to accommodate British armament.

John gave us a little of the history of each ship and what they were doing at the time of the wreck. Such as the submarine *AI*, which was lost with all hands in 1904 when she was run down by the *Berwick Castle* (see illustration above left), salvaged, damaged by an internal explosion in 1910 and finally lost in 1911 while unmanned and under automatic control.

But perhaps the most interesting part of the talk dealt with artefacts, of which there was a multitude. The team developed a method of conservation that was more effective than that used in the *Mary Rose* and two items were handed around the audience - to me it was quite a thrill to handle a 250-year-old pulley block in excellent condition and still in working order. Some items threw further light on the working of these ships and one or two even showed other sources of information to be incorrect. For instance, HMS *Invincible* grounded soon after leaving Portsmouth with troops aboard for the campaign in Canada; tunic buttons recovered from the wreck proved that regiments were using embossed insignia fifty years earlier than had been thought.

The talk was deservedly well received - it was a thoroughly interesting evening.

TITANIC HERO

A book review by Peter Wallace of one of the latest books published in the run up to the centenary of the Titanic sinking

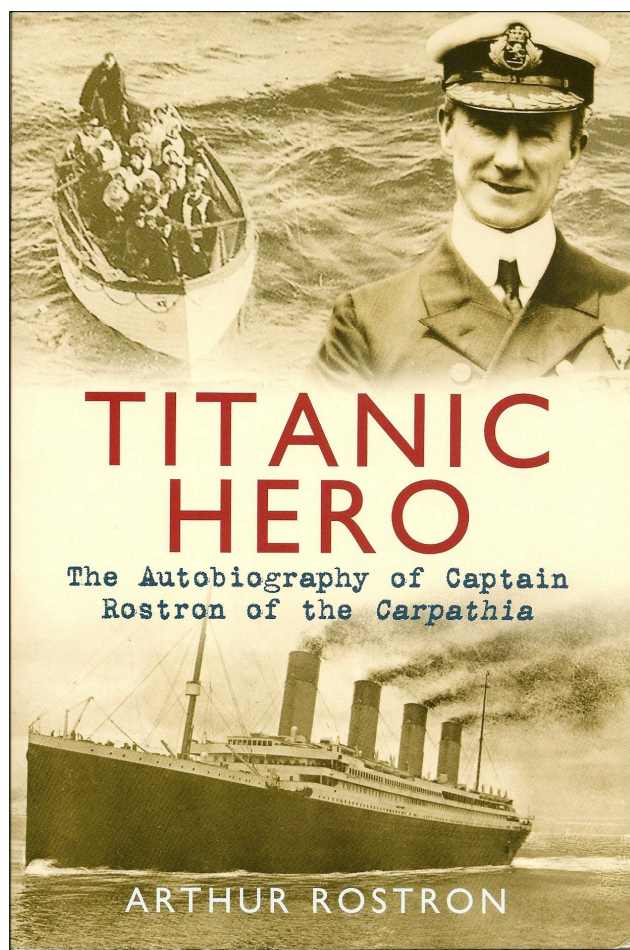
TITANIC HERO is a republished version of HOME FROM THE SEA an autobiography of Captain Arthur Henry Rostron of the Carpathia first published in 1931.

The book relates to his formative years at sea on sailing vessels plying all around the globe in mountainous seas.

Arthur left the training ship Conway after two years as head boy, in 1887 he joined Cedric the Saxon a fully rigged clipper ship as an apprentice in the Royal Naval Reserve.

In January 1912 he was given the command of the Carpathia, it was when the ship was on its regular crossing of the Atlantic a distress message was received from the Titanic.

During the rescue of the survivors of the Titanic some amazing and very poignant stories are told. Two stories spring to mind one of which relates to a young lady who gave up her seat in a lifeboat because it was overloaded, she was subsequently lost at sea. The other one was about two sisters who were saved only to find that their Uncle and Aunt Mr & Mrs Marshall were sailing on the Carpathia. You can imagine the surprise on the faces of the couple when their cabin steward knocked



on their door at 6.30am the following morning announcing that their nieces were there to see them.

The Marshall's had retired to their state cabin early the night before after receiving a private message from the two young ladies saying "We are enjoying the trip on the Titanic", of course Mr & Mrs Marshall were totally unaware of the previous nights events.

During the First World War Rostron was captain of Alaunia running troops into the theatre of war at Gallipoli at the same time as my great uncle was on the Aquatania going to fight at Gallipoli. (as written about in the Jan/Feb copy of Westender). In 1915 he became captain of HMHS Mauretania a well-appointed hospital ship with 40 medical staff, 72 nursing sisters and a 120 orderlies.

In 1918 Mauretania was commissioned and armed as a cruiser, Captain Rostron was on the bridge again; during this period the ship had the code name HMS Tudor Rose and it was used to transport troops from America.

Captain Rostron heard about his Knighthood through the Mauritania's daily onboard newspaper because he had left his Liverpool home hours before the official letter arrived.

His last command was the Berengaria, which he described as a splendid vessel and during his four years in command he was made Commodore of the Cunard Fleet.

During his time on the Atlantic crossing he met many famous people such as Sir Malcolm Campbell and Sir Henry Segrave who held the World Land and Water speed records. He also met many Lords, Lady's, and politicians like David Lloyd George and too many others to mention. This has been a very informative and interesting read.

*"Titanic Hero: The autobiography of Captain Rostron of the Carpathia", 192 pages. Published by Amberley Publishing.
ISBN 9781445604206 Available from all good booksellers or On-Line*

NEW TITANIC PLAQUES UNVEILED AT MUSEUM



Saturday 31st March 2012 was cold and cloudy but that didn't stop our plaque unveiling event in the museum. Eric Reed's Heritage Walk in the morning was very successful with 47 people taking part and ending up in the museum for refreshments. In the afternoon at 4.00pm the Mayor of Eastleigh, Cllr Wayne Irish unveiled our two new Titanic related plaques accompanied by a museum full of invited guests among whom were descendents of John Lovell Diaper, Fred Woolley and James Jukes. Our Chairman Neville Dickinson opened the proceedings, followed by Cheryl Butler, Chair of the Diaper Heritage Association with photo's being taken by an Echo Press photographer, again refreshments were provided.



WREATH LAYING AND BLUE PLAQUE UNVEILING

On Sunday 15th April 2012 at 11.00am for 11.15am, there will be a wreath laying and short service at the graveside of Captain Sir Arthur Henry Rostron, Captain of the Titanic rescue ship 'Carpathia', in the Old Burial Ground, West End, just behind the War Memorial. There will be wreaths laid from the West End Local History Society, British Titanic Society and Cunard Line (Rostron was Commodore of Cunard). The Rev. Brian Pickett, MA of St. James' Church will lead the short service and prayers. At 2.00pm there will be a blue plaque unveiled at 84 Chalk Hill, West End; Captain Rostron's house where he lived from 1926 to 1940, again the public are welcome although space is limited.

THE NEXT MEETINGS ARE....

May 2

ARMCHAIR WALK AROUND THE OLD TOWN (Southampton)

Jake Simpkin

June 6

TITANIC Destination Disaster

Jill Daniels

July 4

THE CENSUS Did I count?

Colin van Geffen

August 1

SOCIAL EVENING AT THE MUSEUM

(including raffle and free refreshments - all welcome)

ON THIS DAY.....

On this day (4th April) in.....

1581 Francis Drake was knighted on board the 'Golden Hind' at Deptford, on the River Thames.

1617 John Napier, Scottish mathematician and first to publish logarithm tables, in 1614, died at Merchiston Castle, Edinburgh.

1774 Oliver Goldsmith, Irish writer, notably 'The Vicar of Wakefield', died in London.

1841 William Harrison, American statesman and 9th President, died after only 31 days in office, as a result of catching pneumonia during his inauguration - his term of office was finished by vice-president John Tyler.

1929 Karl Benz, German engineer and pioneer of early motor cars with internal combustion engines, died aged 84.

1949 The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was created in a treaty signed at Washington.

1968 Martin Luther King, American Negro civil rights leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1964, was assassinated at his motel at Memphis in Tennessee - the alleged assassin was James Earl Ray.