



# WESTENDER

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Website:

[www.hants.org.uk/westendlhs/](http://www.hants.org.uk/westendlhs/)

E-mail address:

[westendlhs@aol.com](mailto:westendlhs@aol.com)



EDITOR

Nigel G. Wood

EDITORIAL AND PRODUCTION  
ADDRESS

40 Hatch Mead

West End

Southampton, Hants

SO30 3NE

Telephone: 023 8047 1886

E-mail: [woodng@aol.com](mailto:woodng@aol.com)

## ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL FAIR



Another successful Local History Fair was held at The Point, Eastleigh on Sunday 20th March 2005. Organised by Eastleigh Borough Council it comprised stalls manned by local history groups, museums and living history re-enactment. The weather was fine and a good steady number of members of the public attended. WELHS book sales did extremely well and much interest was shown in our stand pictured above. It is hoped that the event will continue as it has done for the last few years, giving your local societies a chance to showcase what they do and to encourage more people to participate to the various activities.

West End Local History Society is sponsored by



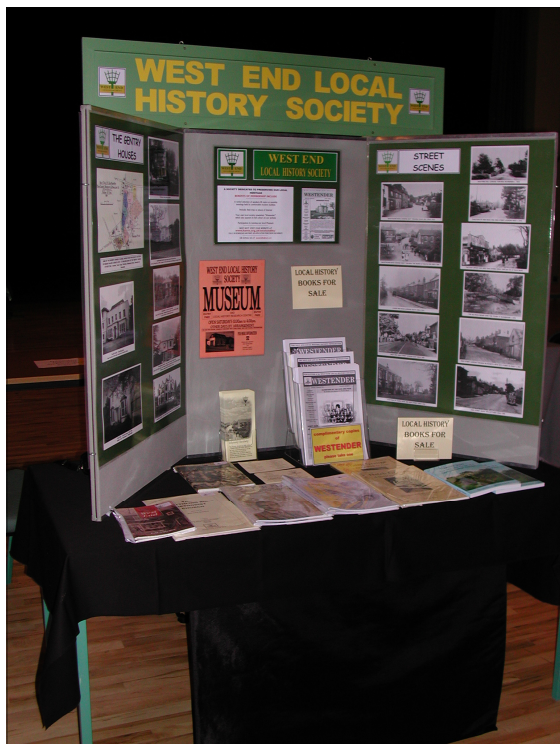
**WEST END  
PARISH  
COUNCIL**





## MORE IMAGES FROM THE LOCAL HISTORY FAIR

The Point, Eastleigh—Sunday 20th March 2005





## CHANGE OF TALK FOR APRIL 6th

Review by Stan Waight

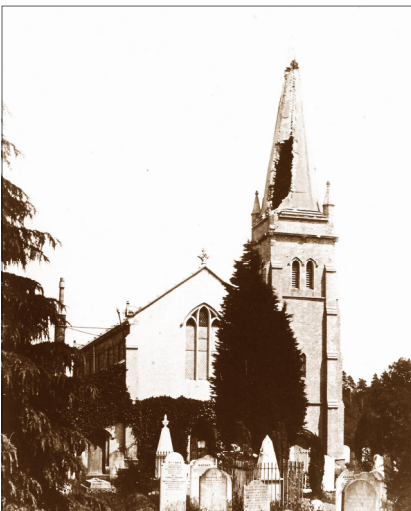
The advertised speaker for our April meeting, Peter Jones on 'Penny Clothing Clubs', unfortunately had to cancel at a very late stage, and we were lucky that a replacement was found in the person of Jeff Paine. Jeff is interested in all forms of transport, but the subject of his talk was 'A Look at Southampton Tramways', and we heard about the Corporation's tramway system from its inception with horse drawn cars in 1879 almost until it was withdrawn in the 1950s - I say almost because Jeff ran out of time and had to cut his talk short (to my personal disappointment I might add).

Speaking easily and fluently and without notes, Jeff's presentation was accompanied by loads of first-class slides, many of which were of the pre-electrification era. There was much technical detail on the development of the rolling stock, but there were also quite a few general asides on the contemporary scene in Southampton.

The system began with two routes, from Shirley to the Floating Bridge and from Portswood to The Junction (it's interesting to think that we still call it The Junction even though the trams are long gone). In its early stage it was a means of transport for middle-class passengers, but with electrification in 1900 it became affordable for all. Clean and profitable, it expanded over time and there was even a route over the newly-built Cobden Bridge to serve the development on the east side of the Itchen.

Profitability apparently depended upon the Corporation generating electricity at its own plant near the Central Station, and disappeared when it had to pay for the supply. It's a pity that Jeff couldn't complete the talk, for I would like to have heard the reasons for the demise of the system.

## ST JAMES' CHURCH THROUGH THE AGES



Top left: The Old Church with tower but minus the spire in 1880.

Top right: From an FGO Stuart postcard showing the "new" church around 1905.

Bottom left: The earliest picture of St. James' showing the "old" church with spire damaged by lightning in 1875.

Bottom right: St. James' today photographed in 2000.

WELHS Archive photo's



## 60th ANNIVERSARY OF VE DAY MEMORIAL SERVICE

### West End - Sunday 8th May 2005



West End held a Memorial Service to mark Victory in Europe—VE Day on Sunday 8th May 2005 at the War Memorial (see pictures above). Prayers, readings and Act of Remembrance were followed by the Last

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Post played by a Bugler and the laying of wreaths by Councillor Neville Dickinson for West End Parish Council, Councillor Steve Broomfield for The Royal British Legion, members of The Youthouse - West End Youth Club, Inspector Newstead for Hampshire Constabulary and Mr D. Simmonds for the West End Garden & Allotment Association. It was good to see such a good attendance and the weather which had been a little mixed changed to bright sunshine for the occasion.



The Service was taken by the Revd. Brian Pickett of St. James' Church with the Roman Catholic padre from St. Brigids' at West End in attendance.

At the end of the Service most people made their way back to the Parish Centre where Tea, Coffee and Light Refreshments were available (see pictures above) courtesy of the Staff and Parish Council of West End.

Thanks should go to the Parish Clerk, Laura Cooke, her staff, the Parish Council and all those involved in the organisation of this event, well done!

## VJ DAY 60th ANNIVERSARY & TRAFALGAR DAY

The Parish of West End will be celebrating the 60th Anniversary of VJ-Day (Victory over Japan and the end of World War Two) on Saturday 13th August 2005 at the Parish Centre. There will be a "VJ Day 60th Anniversary Dance" starting at 7.30pm with a "Glenn Miller" type band, female vocal, 1940's music, dancing, spot prizes, bar, commemorative cake and bubbly for the loyal toast, and on a more sombre note a minutes silence to remember those who did not survive. Dress is 1940's style and the Dance closes at 11.30pm. Tickets are available to West End parishioners from the Parish Office (limited numbers available so book early)

This year also sees the 200th Anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, when Admiral Horatio Nelson defeated the combined fleets of France and Spain, one of the greatest naval victories ever and to celebrate this the Parish will light the Beacon on Hatch Grange, there will also be a period dress competition, old fashioned rides, hog roast, stalls, entertainment, bar and to round off the evening a spectacular firework display—see HMS Victory defeat the enemy! The events will be held at the Parish Centre and on Hatch Grange on 21st October 2005 from 7.00pm onwards.

For more information regarding the above events contact West End Parish Centre, Chapel Road, West End, or phone 023 8046 2371 during office hours.



## FRIDAY NIGHT FEVER (in West End)!!

Pauline Berry



Stories about the popularity of the dances in the Old Parish Hall, West End (on the corner of Chapel Road) abound and here, Joe Molloy, recalls his memories. The dances used to be held on Friday nights in the 1920's when the young locals and also 'Bitternites' would gather there for a lot of fun and noise. The visiting band would play all the 'new' music including the Charleston and soon it was "*all legs, beads, wild gyrations and bouncing bosoms*", Joe reports. No wonder the young men attended in good numbers and enjoyed these carefree times!

For a few pence, the young people could forget the austerity and problems of the post First World War years and relax to a new kind of music which must have caused older eyebrows to be raised in either shock or amusement.

Joe, not much more than 14 years of age and from Chalk Hill, had been told about the dances by a friend who worked in the same Millbrook garage as he did, has happy memories of those early, carefree days. The names of Mr Lee, Frank Knowlton (the baker) and Ben Fray from Merry Gardens (the big house in Chapel Road opposite the Parish Centre) who added 'a bit of class' to the proceedings, are mentioned.

The girls wore straight and shapeless dresses with short skirts cut above the knee, as were their overcoats too. During this new era of expression, girls wore red, rosy lipstick and even powder on their faces! Their hair was often 'shingled', very short like a man's. 'Bingled' hair was a milder version of this style. All this was learned via his sister Molly, Joe hastens to add!

Young men's fashion was less extreme; the older and more daring, sported a 'type of fringe to their hair, with short back and sides'. Some young men (the name teenager had not yet been invented) who could afford them, wore Oxford Bags, which were light grey trousers with 22 inch (56 cms) bottoms which flapped about their ankles. Jacket, collar and tie completed the ensemble 'to smarten ourselves up' for the weekly event. Whether or not these fashions were approved of by their parents we can only guess!

Not all was so happy-go-lucky, for Joe can well remember the General Strike of 1926 when large lorries rumbled along the High Street in West End, with "FOOD" printed in large letters on their sides. This allowed them safely through the pickets at certain points of delivery along their route. 'Things were very political in those days' Joe reminds us. If you have memories of old West End, please let us know!



## WEST END ..... THEN AND NOW



GENERAL STORE ON THE CORNER OF HIGH STREET-CHAPEL ROAD AROUND 1900 AND AS THE WINGED FELLOWSHIP IN 2000



MR PARKERS HOUSE ON THE CORNER OF UPPER NEW ROAD-HIGH STREET IN 1969 AND TODAY A BLOCK OF FLATS



WEST END BREWERY CORNER OF HIGH STREET-LOWER NEW ROAD EARLY 1900's AND TODAY WITH NEW PUB SET BACK



THE RUINED MOORGREEN HOUSE IN 1995 AND IN 2000 AS NEW DEVELOPMENT JUKES WALK OFF MOORGREEN ROAD



## NEPTUNE'S DAUGHTERS

A review by Stan Waight

The title of Jean Cook's talk for our May meeting looked interesting, and Jean made it a complete entertainment in her inimitable way. As fluent and amusing as ever, she set out to demolish the tradition that there was no place for 'weak, hysterical and feckless' women at sea. She is a self-confessed 'radical feminist', but I'm sure that her many controversial remarks were made with tongue very much in cheek, and that the exchanges with male members of the audience in question-time were really intended to be lighthearted (I hope so anyway!).

Although women on board were supposed to bring bad luck, Jean began by pointing out that wives had been permitted to accompany certain officers on their voyages from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and that ladies of somewhat lower status sometimes shared the mens' accommodation. She then briefly ran through the employment of women in the marine services in modern times, culminating in full integration in the Royal Navy twelve years ago. But the main content of her talk consisted of potted biographies of a number of women who made names for themselves by their seafaring exploits.

After the death of her child and abandonment by her husband, 18<sup>th</sup>-century Hannah Snell took her brother-in-law's clothes and name and joined first the army and then the navy. Her activities aboard *H.M.S. Swallow* were reported in the press under the title 'Female Warrior'.

Mary Lacey disguised herself as a man and joined the navy in 1759, but ten years later became an apprentice and subsequently a respected artisan in Portsmouth Dockyard. Mary was the subject of a book called 'The History of a Female Shipwright'.

Little is known of Mary Read except that she was captured by a pirate band led by Anne Bonney and subsequently became a pirate herself. Anne Bonney had been a woman with good connections but had chosen to marry a penniless sailor and was subsequently drawn into the exciting life of piracy. The band was finally captured, but the two women escaped hanging by pleas of pregnancy (something no man could ever do, Jean!).

Grace O'Malley was another woman who was involved in piracy from 'Scotland to Spain'. She was active for 50 years and became a national heroine in Ireland.

After a brief mention of Artemesia, Xerxes' female admiral at the battle of Salamis in 480 BC, we then came right up-to-date with Jo Carstairs, for whom being the fastest woman speedboat-driver wasn't enough - she wanted to be the fastest speedboat-driver, full-stop.

Provided that one could live with Jean's more outrageous feminist comments, it was a highly entertaining evening and I look forward to her next visit.

## HAMBLE VALLEY TOURISM CLOSES

Eastleigh Borough Council have confirmed the closure of the Hamble Valley Tourism unit according to the *Informer* magazine (May 2005 edition page 6). The cuts were deemed necessary as a result of Council resource constraints, which in plain speak means "short of cash". It is such a pity that something as successful as the Tourism Unit should be axed, given the reduction in industry in our area Tourism and Heritage are even more important to bring money and jobs to the area. However, it seems they are also the easy option when it comes to making cuts. One of the events the Tourism Unit organised was the Local History Fair held at The Point in Eastleigh, which provided a useful "shop window" for local groups to reach the general public. The "Strawberry Coast" literature/guides were also another excellent production of the Tourism Unit. Let us hope that those in a position to will reconsider the decision to close such a useful and important department - but do not hold your breath!

Ed.



## GATERS MILL REVISITED

Nigel Wood



Recently on a hot sunny day I decided to visit Gaters Mill to update my collection of photographs for the WELHS archive. On arrival I noticed just how much work has been done recently to refurbish and in some cases rebuild the Mill which had previously fallen into disrepair. The Mill which is no longer used for that purpose but is today used for light industry and office accommodation has an air of tranquility about it. While I was there I spoke to a lady from one of the offices, and we agreed that it was a perfect setting.

There has been a Mill on the site for many centuries, in 941 it is mentioned as “*a mylle place by Northe Mannysbrygge*”, and when the mills were put up for sale in the 1600’s it was known as “Upmills” and described as a great paper mill, flock mill and corn mill. Sold in 1685 by William Percy to a consortium for £406 the mill was the base for *The White Paper Makers Company* which by the 1700’s included in its number a certain Henry Portal whose descendants still produce banknote paper for the Bank of England. Known at various times as “Upmill”, “West End Mill”, “South Stoneham Mills” and later as “Gaters Mill”, the mill was sold in 1772 by John Bond to Mr John Gater who initially made good quality paper at the mill. In 1865 paper making came to an end and flour milling continued. In 1866 a large part of the mill had to be rebuilt after it was destroyed by fire. Another fire in 1917 caused much damage (*see the newspaper pictures and details in the WELHS Archives at the Museum*).

In 1954 the ownership of the Mill passed from R.S. Collins to the present owners, Lower Itchen Fisheries. It is good to see old buildings being restored and finding new uses for them—far better than demolition which was the fate of too many of West Ends old buildings in the years before the founding of West End Local History Society.

(There are many pictures and much information about Gaters Mill in the WELHS Archive at the West End Museum)



## ARAUCARIA COTTAGE REFURBISHMENT



It's good to be able to report that one of West End's oldest cottages is being refurbished. "Araucaria" on the Swaythling Road next door to Lincoln Court is undergoing much needed sympathetic renovation by the new owner. The cottage is in two sections, the oldest which is at the back and thatched with cob walls is believed to date back to the 17th century, whilst the newer front section has a tiled roof and probably dates from the late Victorian/Edwardian times. The picture on the left shows the work at an early stage.

### On this day (June 1st.) in.....

**1792** Kentucky, the Blue Grass State, became the 15th state of the Union.

**1874** Pullman carriages were introduced in Britain, by the Midland Railway, from London to Bradford.

**1907** Sir Frank Whittle, English inventor and pioneer of jet propulsion, born at Coventry.

**1935** Driving tests in Britain were introduced by Leslie Hore Belisha, and "L" plates were made compulsory.

**1946** The first television licences were issued in Britain, at a fee of £2.

**1957** The first Premium Bond prize winners were drawn by the computer "ERNIE" - with a prize of £1000.

## THE NEXT MEETINGS ARE ....

**July 6**  
**SOUTHAMPTON'S VICTORIAN CEMETERY**

*Geoff Watts*

**NO MEETING IN AUGUST**

**September 7**  
**THE CHOLERA YEARS**

*John Avery*

**October 5**  
**SOMETHING REMARKABLE.... (Story of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra)**  
*Derek Amey*