

# WESTENDER

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*WELHS... preserving our past  
for your future....*

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Website:

[www.westendlhs.co.uk](http://www.westendlhs.co.uk)

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)

## MEN WHO MARCHED AWAY (1)



**19653** Private Leslie Curtis, 10th Battalion, The Hampshire Regiment. Son of Frederick and Elizabeth Curtis of Moorgreen, West End. Died in the attack at Suvla Bay, Gallipoli on 10th August 1915. The Curtis family tragically lost three sons during the war; George (aged 22) and Frederick Curtis (aged 26) lost their lives with the sinking of the troop transport 'Royal Edward' on the way to Gallipoli and Leslie (aged 17) at Suvla Bay. A terrible loss for one family to bear, but all too common during the 'war to end all wars'.

West End Local History Society & Westender is sponsored by



**WEST END  
PARISH  
COUNCIL**



## THE DECEMBER MEETING

A review by Stan Waight



As usual, the December meeting took the form of a social get-together for members, and was well-attended. Where it differed from previous years was in that the major part of the evening was given over to a talk. However, the talk covered a very Christmassy subject - John Pitman speaking on pantomimes and, in particular, on pantomime dames.

John is a member of the Otterbourne Dramatic Society and has himself taken part in many pantos over the years, Widow Twankey being his favourite role. Elements of the comedy came through strongly in his talk and he had Maureen Russell and Lin Dowdell up front to 'audition' for roles on the 'Good' and 'Bad' sides of the pantomime stage.

Pantomime, an adaptation of the Greek word for mime, has been played since Roman times. For centuries, parts were played solely by men in dress that could be extremely gaudy. Much of it follows tradition, slapstick and audience participation featuring widely.

After the talk, the evening reverted to form. The buffet food was plentiful and varied and was taken back to individual tables seating four or six - the wine was equally plentiful and was provided by the society and conversation flowed. Finally, there was the usual raffle, with a seemingly endless number of prizes and the winning numbers were drawn by the Vicar (Revd. Thomas Wharton).

Neville chaired the proceedings in his usual manner and, once again, the whole committee are to be congratulated and thanked for putting on such a splendid 'do'.



## TAKING A SHORTCUT FROM THE AIRPORT?



**THE SCENE ON THE M27 WITH WEST END FIRE APPLIANCE AND CREW AT THE BACK OF THE PICTURE**



**ANOTHER VIEW SHOWING THE AIRPORT AND HAMPSHIRE FIRE BRIGADE APPLIANCES IN THE FOREGROUND**

Ever wondered what would happen if an aeroplane missed the runway at Eastleigh airport? With the close proximity of the M27 to the boundary of the airport it was just a matter of time.

Our photographs kindly supplied by former West End retained firefighter and WELHS member Colin Mockett show the aftermath of just such an incident which happened on Wednesday 26th May 1993. The aircraft was a Citation 550. The West End Fire Appliance answered the call and can be seen in the background on the top picture. Also in attendance where the Airport Fire Tender and the Eastleigh Water/Foam carrier. The aircraft was a write-off!



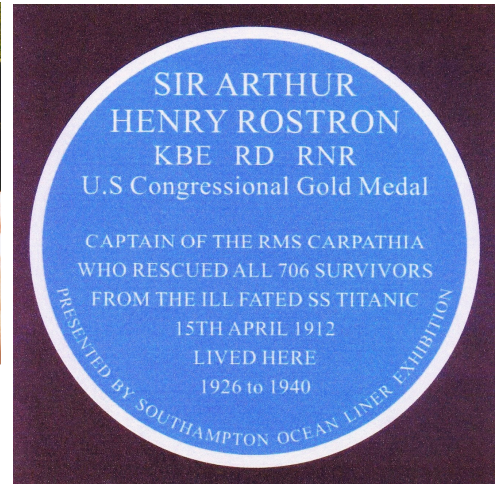
## SIR ARTHUR HENRY ROSTRON

By Alec Samuels



LEFT TO RIGHT

Rostron when Captain of Mauretania: Centenary wreath laying on Rostron's grave in West End 14.4.2012: Blue plaque erected in 2012 at his house.



Arthur Rostron was born in 1869 in Bolton in Lancashire and attended the local grammar school. Aged 15 he enlisted as a cadet at HMS Conway training ship in the Mersey, then was an apprentice seaman working out of Liverpool, working for the Waverley Line. 1895 he joined Cunard and spent the rest of his working life with them. Naturally in the course of a lifetime as a seaman he travelled the world. In 1907 he received his first command; in 1912 he was appointed captain of the RMS Carpathia, a 13,000 tons vessel carrying mostly tourists from New York to the Mediterranean and immigrants from the Mediterranean to New York. So committed was Rostron to the craft of seamanship that he was known in the service as the Electric Spark or Sparky because he was so boundlessly vital and enthusiastic and efficient.

0.35am 14 April 1912 the Carpathia received an SOS message from the sinking Titanic. The Carpathia was immediately ordered by Captain Rostron to change course and to sail full-steam to the scene, 58 nautical miles away, going at maximum speed over 17 knots, the normal being 14 knots; and there were icebergs all around. He ordered everything to be made ready for rescue: The public areas were prepared; the doctors were organised; berths were allocated; blankets were collected; coffee and soup was prepared; ladders, ropes, chair slings, canvas bags, boats, derricks and winches, everything for bringing people on board, were brought into action; lights were shone; rockets were sent up every 15 minutes. The Carpathia arrived at the site of the shipwreck at about daybreak, around 4 am, after 3½ hours sailing. Passengers and crew from 15 lifeboats were rescued, 706 people. The whole rescue operation was carried out in a thoroughly ordered, disciplined and quiet manner. When everybody was safely aboard Captain Rostron, a deeply committed Christian, arranged for a short service on board, for the dead and the living. Subsequently he gave very clear and compelling evidence to the US Senate Inquiry and the UK Board of Trade Inquiry.

His magnificent judgment, dedication to duty, and heroism was so rightly and widely appreciated and recognised. USA President Taft received Rostron, and Congress conferred the Congressional Gold Medal and the American Cross of Honour. A survivor Mrs JJ Margaret (Mollie) Brown presented a silver loving cup to Rostron and a medal to all the crew. New York conferred the Freedom of the City; and the Shipwreck Society of New York gave a gold medal. The Liverpool Shipwreck and Human society gave a medal. France gave the Legion of Honour, and Cherbourg Chamber of Commerce an award. Even the Archduke Franz Joseph of Austria gave a gold watch.

Rostron was created CBE in 1919 and knighted in 1926.

During the Great War Captain Rostron was involved in the Gallipoli expedition, and he commanded the Mauretania when she was adapted as a hospital ship and also when she was armed and ferried troops from the USA across the Atlantic 1917-1918. The Carpathia was torpedoed and sunk in 1918 200 miles off Ireland.

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After the war he commanded the recommissioned Mauretania and won the Blue Riband for the fastest crossing of the Atlantic in the 1920s. 1928 Sir Arthur became the Commodore of the Cunard Fleet serving on the Berengaria. In 1931 he retired. Ten ships had been commanded by him during his service.

On retirement he became active in the Southampton Master Mariners Club, assuming the captaincy and making donations to them, suitably recorded there. Also he played a part in the British Legion. His home was Holmecroft at the top of Chalk Hill in West End, and a commemorative plaque records his residence. He died in 1940 aged 70 and is buried in West End Old Burial Ground.

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Titanic Hero: Autobiography of Captain Rostron of the Carpathia, A H Rostron, reprint 2011.

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US Senate Inquiry 1912.

Board of Trade Inquiry 1912.

## **St. JAMES' CHURCH MAGAZINE EXTRACTS**

### **1923 - 1928**

**By Pauline Berry**

The induction of the Revd. Gerald Sayer, MA, following the departure of the Revd. F.R. Dawson, came in July 1923. The new vicar of St. James' Church took on the busy life in West End, including the never-ending task of money-raising. He was initially shocked by the overgrown state of the churchyard and requested the donation of flowers to decorate the church, instead of his picking them from his own garden.

He also thanked Captain and Mrs P.C. Pearson, of 'Oaklands' in Allington Lane, for the welcome party they hosted for him and his wife. The new vicar expressed some disappointment in the fact that only 53 parishioners out of a population of 2,000 plus, gave free-will offerings regularly to the church. Owing to lack of funds, the Sunday School's summer treat was held locally at Hatch Grange. Money was collected, however, for the Christian sufferers of the Japanese Earthquake disaster.

The new year of 1924 started with the consecration of the new church bell, which had been rung three times on Boxing Day. An electoral roll was composed of all worshippers, baptised and over the age of 18, who were eligible to be voted onto the Parochial Church Council. Following its AGM, a new council was elected including Messrs Synge, Pearson, Powlett, Bagnall, Hatley and of course, the vicar.

The sensitive subject of the 'Iron Room', where the scouts met regularly behind the church, was frequently discussed. It belonged to the Revd. Dawson who wanted to sell it. But the scouts could not afford to purchase it and so a new meeting place had to be found.

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**Left**  
**Revd. Gerald Sayer, Vicar of St. James' Church 1923-1928**

**Above**  
**Revd. Dawson (seated centre) with scouts in the grounds of the vicarage at West End in 1913**

In the summer, a Floral Fair was held in the grounds of 'Tower House' (now Tower Place) by the Girls Friendly Society who met there regularly, led by Miss Hilda Fletcher (of 'Hatch Grange'). The choir and servers enjoyed an outing to Queens College, Oxford, who were major landowners in West End. A mystery play was planned for Christmas by the vicar, who requested that the congregation should not applaud because it concerned *'the Birth of our Lord'*.

In February 1925, Col. D. Corrie Walker ('The Lodge') died and Capt. P. Pearson, RN (of 'Oaklands') became the People's Warden. He took an active part in church affairs and his name appeared frequently in reports. Revd. Molyneux, a former Deacon of St. James' returned to preach at the church.

Revd. Sayer reported on the Tea in the vicarage garden (cost 1 shilling) and suggested that no rice or confetti be thrown at weddings which made a mess. He also appealed for funds for the 127 destitute children in Southampton Society Homes. This was followed that summer by a request for money to fund the Sunday School outing to Lee-on-the-Solent in a Barfoot Bros. coach.

The following year, 1926, contained a report on the new Choral Society to be formed, meeting in the Old Parish Hall. In 1927, a surprising 'Pure White Lily Minstrel Troupe' held a concert in aid of the school repair fund. The head-teacher, the strict Mr Shelley resigned after many years at St. James' School in order to go to a school at Butlocks Heath. Mr Tommy Gibbs was offered the post, but refused. Eventually Mr H.V.M. Harris, from Bransgrove, accepted the offer and became a popular headmaster.

In July 1927, a garden fete was held in the vicarage grounds to raise funds for the new drains under the school playground. The fete enjoyed good weather and with so many stalls, it overflowed into the gardens of 'Kirkstyle' (Church Hill) and a tennis tournament was held at 'Nunton's' tennis courts off Moorhill Road. A flower show was held on Hatch Grange.

Revd. Sayer returned after some time off for medical reasons and reported on the floods and ruined crops in the country. On Armistice Day (11<sup>th</sup> November) children made a wreath of poppies and £13 was collected through the sale of poppies for the Haig Fund. The cost of graves was also given: 17 shillings double, 12 shillings single and 6 shillings children.

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On March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1928, the Queen Alexandra Flower Day raised money through concerts etc.. for the payment of pensions to all District Nurses in the country. During that year, both Mr & Mrs R.W. Fletcher (of 'Hatch Grange') died and so did Mrs G. Blakiston (formerly of 'The Wilderness').

The Revd. Sayer announced he would be resigning in September, due to his wife's illness. He was presented with a cheque for £21, with the usual list of donors. The Revd. Heriot Hill stood in for him until the new incumbent arrived the following year.



**Tower House photographed in 2000**



**Mr Ralph Warneford Cresswell Fletcher & his wife**

## **ANNUAL WRITING COMPETITION**

**Information supplied by Keith Marsh (BLHS)**

The Bitterne Local History are running their fourth annual local history writing competition. The competition is devised to encourage new writers to put pen to paper to record their memories of eastern Southampton, or to carry research into some aspect of the area, and unlike previous years, people who have entered before can submit a new entry.

Closing date is 31<sup>st</sup> July with the winner being announced at their AGM in September when The Lion Cup and the cash prize will be presented.

Full details can be found on the BLHS website at [www.bitterne.net](http://www.bitterne.net) or obtained from their shop at 231 Peartree Avenue, Southampton, SO19 7RD

## **MORE ARTICLES WANTED**

You may have noticed the newsletter is smaller than usual; this is due to a lack of articles coming in over the Christmas break and of course no meeting in January which means no review.

My sincere thanks to those who have contributed articles, but I can't help thinking that there must be members and readers of 'Westender' out there who are doing local history research or who have memories they would like to share of the 'way things were' in times past.

Perhaps you can be encouraged to put pen to paper by the BLHS writing competition detailed above, if so also think about contributing something for 'Westender' as well.

We rely on written contributions from our readers to maintain the newsletter, without your support there will be no newsletter.

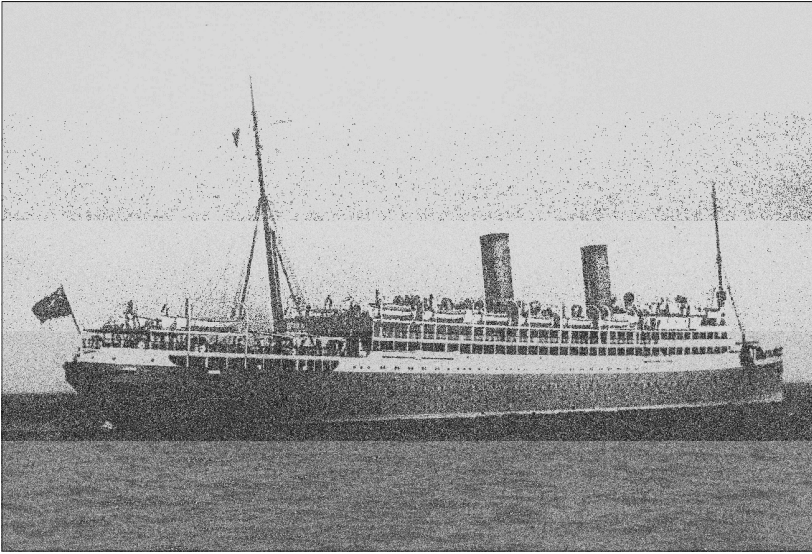
Please send articles to the Editor at address shown on the cover, or e-mail it to [westendlhs@aol.com](mailto:westendlhs@aol.com) or hand it to the Editor or any Committee Member at any of our meetings. Thank you. Ed.





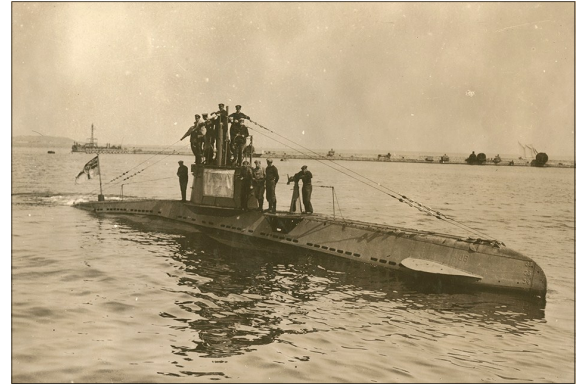
## WE SHALL REMEMBER THEM

By Nigel Wood



**HMT 'Royal Edward'**

*(Photo courtesy of The National Maritime Museum)*



**The German submarine U-14**

**This was the submarine which sank the  
'Royal Edward'  
In the Aegean whilst she was en route  
to Gallipoli**

This year we see the centenary of the start of the Great War. On 4<sup>th</sup> August 1914 at 2300 hrs Great Britain and her Empire declared war on Imperial Germany, this was the result of Germanys rejection of the British ultimatum, requesting German troops to leave Belgian soil after their invasion of this sovereign state.

West End played its part in that epic struggle and many from this parish paid the ultimate price. Some 269 men from West End volunteered or were conscripted and of these 47 men lost their lives as a result according to the Roll of Honour, of these only 45 names are recorded on our war memorial, the remaining two who do not appear were Private W. Rogers, Hampshire Regiment who lived at 4 Chalk Hill, West End who died in hospital at Winchester, of wounds received in action in November 1917 and Private W. Stevens, 1st. Battalion, Hampshire Regiment, who lived at Hatch Farm Cottage, Chapel Road, West End who was killed in action at Ypres on 16<sup>th</sup> November 1914. It is perhaps fitting that we should remember the sacrifice these men made in the cause of freedom. Men from West End served in just about every theatre of war, from the Somme, Ypres, Flanders and the Western Front to Mesopotamia, Gallipoli and the Balkans as well as Russia during the Allied Intervention period of the Russian Civil War. Well known West End family names feature prominently in the overall list of casualties – Curtis, Light, Othen, Ryves to name but a few.

When the transport "Royal Edward" carrying reinforcements to Gallipoli was sunk in the Aegean Sea by German submarine U-14 on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> August 1915, eight men from West End were amongst over 900 who lost their lives. West End also had its share of high profile decorated heroes a well, Wing Commander Arthur Wellesley Bigsworth, DSO (Distinguished Service Order) and bar, C.M.G (Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George) – On 17<sup>th</sup> May 1915 while patrolling near Ramsgate he attacked the German Zeppelin airship LZ39 which had bombed Ramsgate and Dover and was returning to its base at Ostend at night! He carried out the manoeuvre which was the first air attack at night on a Zeppelin for which he received a mention in despatches, later in August 1915 whilst still in the Royal Naval Air Service he became the first allied airman to single handed sink a German submarine off Ostend with bombs while under heavy ground fire from shore batteries, for this he received the DSO, later he was awarded a bar to his DSO for bombing and reconnaissance work in the Mediterranean.

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**Unveiling West End's War Memorial in 1920  
and below images of the memorial  
on the Remembrance Day 2013**



He was later awarded the Air Force Cross and made a CMG ; Brigadier General Sir George Henry Gater, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., DSO and bar, etc.. Twice badly wounded in action, he served at Gallipoli and on the Somme in France. After coming from civilian life he was made a General at the age of 31 after only 3 years service! One of the youngest Generals in the entire British Army.

For more information on West End's part in the Great War visit our museum at The Old Fire Station, corner of High Street and Orchards Way, West End, open 10am – 4pm on Saturdays (entrance is free) or visit our excellent website at [www.westendlhs.co.uk](http://www.westendlhs.co.uk) for the full story with pictures.

## **CLIPPING FROM THE "WEST END NEWS" COMMUNITY MAGAZINE 1983**

*Local Historian C.W. Sillence wrote in 1983.....*

"I am greatly indebted to Mrs Reuben Fray and her daughter-in-law, Mrs D. Fray, for the loan of some old Deeds which the late Mr R. Fray appears to have acquired, probably when the Gater family sold Black House. Some of them are very faded and difficult to read but I have managed to pick out quite a lot of past history of Hatch, Allington and Townhill.

The Manor of Hatch, as it was called in 1724, was owned by Edwin or Edmund Dummer, who lived at Swaythling.

The tenant of Hatch Farm was one Jeremiah Outon (Owton) who must have passed on the tenancy to his son, as it is also recorded that when Nathaniel Middleton died and the Manors of Townhill, Hatch and Allington were sold, John Owton was renting Hatch Farm, with an acreage of 198 acres, 2 roods - 22 perches.

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During the 18th century £5 of the income from Hatch had to be used annually towards the upkeep of a Schoolmaster but it is not mentioned where or to whom.

Later, when Mr. Caleb Gater bought the Manor of Hatch, 40 shillings of its income had to be donated to the welfare of South Stoneham's poor.

The Manor of Hatch was the land within the boundaries of Chapel Road, Quob Lane, Allington Lane junction with Quob, along to the junction of Swaythling Road and up through the High Street where it meets Chapel Road. Included was Hatch Farm, The Coppice and Lands of Bardensland (Barnsland). It is interesting to note that the Coppice, which measures 8 acres, must be what we knew as Dummers Copse and certain lands, buildings and coppices at Shamblehurst sometimes known as Shamble Street, which must have been an old name for Shamblehurst Lane.

These must have been what is now Berrywood Farm. Over the doorway of the Farmhouse is a stone tablet with the initials R.W.F. 1903, indicating that Richard (sic) Warnford Fletcher (possibly should read Ralph not Richard) had owned and built the house during his ownership of the Manor.

## ON THIS DAY.....

**On this day (February 5th) in.....**

**1788** Sir Robert Peel, British Tory statesman, Prime Minister and founder of the Metropolitan Police Force, born at Bury in Lancashire, the son of a cotton millionaire.

**1840** Sir Hiram Stevens Maxim, American inventor of the first fully automatic machine-gun, named after him, born at Sangersville in Maine.

**1840** John Boyd Dunlop, Scottish veterinary surgeon and patentee of the pneumatic bicycle tyre, born at Greghorn in Ayrshire.

**1924** The BBC 'pips', were heard for the first time.

## THE NEXT MEETINGS ARE....

March 5

**LIFE IN A VILLAGE IN THE 1940's & 1950's**

*John Pitman*

April 2

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

*Plus*

*An Evening with Bill White*

## OBITUARY

### ANNE LITTLEJOHNS

It is with deep sadness that we learned of the death of WELHS member Anne Littlejohns. She had been battling against cancer for some time, but finally succumbed on the night of 28-29th January 2014. She will be remembered by many of us for her bubbly personality and she will be sorely missed by all. Our sincere condolences go out to her husband Peter, sons Owen and Rhys and daughter Sian on their sad loss.

*The funeral service will be held at St. James' Church, West End on Thursday 6th February 2014 at 10.00am with a service of committal held afterwards at the Wessex Vale Crematorium*