



PEACE 1918

WESTENDER

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FROM OUR ARCHIVE



Our picture above shows the old Hickley Farmhouse, alas long since demolished, the area now forms part of the site of the Ageas Bowl in West End, home of Hampshire Cricket. Hickley Farm dated back to the Middle Ages and was one of the oldest farms in the area. More information is available in West End's Local History Museum. Ed.

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**WEST END
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THE DISAPPEARANCE OF MAJOR ALBERT CHARLES THORN

By Sue Ballard, PhD.

Albert Charles Thorn was born in 1892, one of eight children born in West End to Albert Thorn and his wife, Elizabeth Day. The Thorns were an old West End family; Albert Thorn senior had also been born in West End and started out as a farm labourer like his brothers, father and grandfather, before finding steady employment as a labourer with the London & South Western Railway. Elizabeth Day was born at Roxwell in Essex. She was the daughter of a maltster, John Day, and his wife Rebecca Mead, a farm labourer's daughter, but Elizabeth appears to have been brought up by her maternal grandparents in Chelmsford, Essex. Elizabeth's first recorded appearance in Hampshire is her marriage to Albert Thorn in 1887. We do not know for certain when she moved to Hampshire or why, but it is probable that she was in service at one of the gentry houses – most likely to Harriet Haselfoot or her sister Charlotte Hills of The Chestnuts, who both originated in Essex. Harriet Haselfoot had moved to West End in 1863, a few months before Elizabeth Day was born, but Charlotte Hills moved here from Chelmsford shortly before 1884, so may have brought Elizabeth as her maid.

Young Albert Charles was a bright lad; at the age of 12 in 1904 the parish magazine reported his winning first prize for his essay in the school's "Barnes Prize" competition and in December of that year he performed a character role as part of a Band of Mercy entertainment at the Old School Rooms. The 1911 census records him as an 18 year old Private in the 1st Battalion Hampshire Regiment at the Wellington Lines, Aldershot – making him one of Kitchener's Old Contemptibles, a member of the regular army before war was declared. We next hear of him on 5th October 1918, when the Hampshire Advertiser noted that Major Albert C. Thorn had returned to his military duties in France. The 19th October issue of that year reported that he had written to West End Council thanking them for their congratulations upon his promotion and successful military career, showing that Albert Charles was both remembered by his local community and appreciative of it. Then, in August 1919, the H.M.S.O. Daily Casualty Lists recorded Major Albert Charles Thorn of the Machine Gun Corps, then attached to the North Staffordshire Regiment, as missing, believed a prisoner.



Machine Gun Corps crest, courtesy The Machine Gun Corps Association

The Machine Gun Corps specifically recruited men and officers who showed an aptitude for mathematics, especially trigonometry and calculus. It was a so-called "war-raised unit", created expressly for service in the Great War. After a year of warfare with only one machine gun section of two guns per battalion, the great tactical value of having larger, specially-trained machine gun units was realised. In October 1915 the machine gun sections from the regiments were formed into a specialist infantry Machine Gun Corps.

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It is likely that this is when Albert Charles Thorn transferred from the Hampshire Regiment. As it developed, the Corps had a Cavalry Branch, a Motor Branch and a Heavy Section for tanks, formed in March 1916 and separating off to form the Tank Corps (later the Royal Tank Regiment) in July 1917. Around 170,500 officers and men constituted the Machine Gun Corps, which served in all the main theatres of war, suffering casualties of 49,551 injuries (29%) and 12,498 deaths (7%); 13,000 Silver War Badges were issued to members of the Machine Gun Corps invalided out of service. Albert Charles Thorn's rapid rise from Private to Major would have been through a series of battlefield promotions, reflecting the heavy losses of Machine Gun Corps officers. Albert Charles survived and was awarded the 1914 Star, known colloquially as the Mons Star, awarded to all those serving in France or Belgium between 5th August (the declaration of war) and midnight of 22nd/23rd November 1914 (the end of the first Battle of Ypres). Although the Great War ended with Armistice on 11th November 1918, Major Albert Charles Thorn and other members of his Corps had been drafted to Russia to serve in the Russian Civil War.

Following the February Revolution in Petrograd in 1917, Russian soldiers hoping for an end to war and a fairer social system at home had deserted en masse during Russia's attempted offensive against the Central Powers in June 1917. In an attempt to restore order, a military coup was planned by the right wing but it failed. By the time the Russian Empire finally collapsed with the 1917 October Revolution, the Russian army was in complete disorder with officers unable to control their remaining men. The loss of Russia seriously undermined the Allied Powers in the Great War. The Eastern Front collapsed, leaving Central Powers free to concentrate on the Western Front – a grave threat to the Allied Powers over and above the loss of Russia as an ally. In addition, the 40,000-strong Czechoslovak Legion had been cut off without support in Russian territory and Russian military supplies and equipment for use in the Great War were simply abandoned – leaving both vulnerable to the Germans. The situation became critical when, on 3rd March 1918, the fledgling Bolshevik government of Russia formally signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with the Central Powers, ceding territory to Germany in return for an end to Russia's involvement in the Great War. The surrendered territory included Finland, Poland, the Baltic provinces, Ukraine & Transcaucasia – together comprising a third of the population, agricultural land and railways of the former Russian Empire, three-quarters of its industry and most of its iron and coal resources. Although the cost to Russia was crippling high, peace was imperative to the Bolsheviks. When Trotsky initially refused their terms, Germany ruthlessly pushed its invasion of Russia further east. Russia had no army left with which to resist. The German army is said to have advanced as much in 5 days as it had in the previous 3 years. The Bolsheviks were also in a politically precarious position; Russia's involvement in the Great War had been highly unpopular at home and the Bolsheviks had promised the populace "Peace, Bread & Land", yet had gained less than 20% of the vote in the November 1917 election, which had been won by a coalition of liberals and moderate socialists who formed a Provisional Government. The loss of the army had left the Bolsheviks with only the Red Guard against the threat of counter-revolutionaries at home. The counter-revolutionary threat proved to be a real one. The White Army, a loose confederation of various anti-communist groups under the leadership of former Tsarist officers, resisted Lenin's Bolshevik Red Army in the Russian Civil War of 1918-1922. The Allied Powers, including Britain, France, Italy, Greece, the USA, China and Japan provided financial and military support to the anti-communist White Army with the declared aim of aiding the Czechoslovak Legion, securing the abandoned munitions and re-establishing the Eastern Front. Although fear of rising communism was certainly an underlying motive, prior to Armistice the very real threat of a German takeover of the region was of far more immediate concern. The Machine Gun Corps was mobilised as part of the British North Russian Expeditionary Force and Albert Charles Thorn found himself taken prisoner by the Bolsheviks.

We do not know the particulars of how Major Thorn came to be taken prisoner and know little of what life would have been like for him while serving in North Russia. The port of disembarkation for the Allied powers was at Archangel on the White Sea coast. Like Siberia, the Archangel region has a sub-arctic climate characterised by long and very cold winters (November to March) and short cool summers (June to August). Average temperatures range from 21 Celsius (71 Fahrenheit) in July to minus 16 Celsius (2 Fahrenheit) in January. Record lows have been recorded of minus 45.2 Celsius (minus 49.4 Fahrenheit). It would have been bitter, with chilblains on fingers and toes and a real risk of frostbite. In November 1918

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Machine Gun Corps camp at Kapselga, North West Russia 1919 © Imperial War Museum (Q 16841)

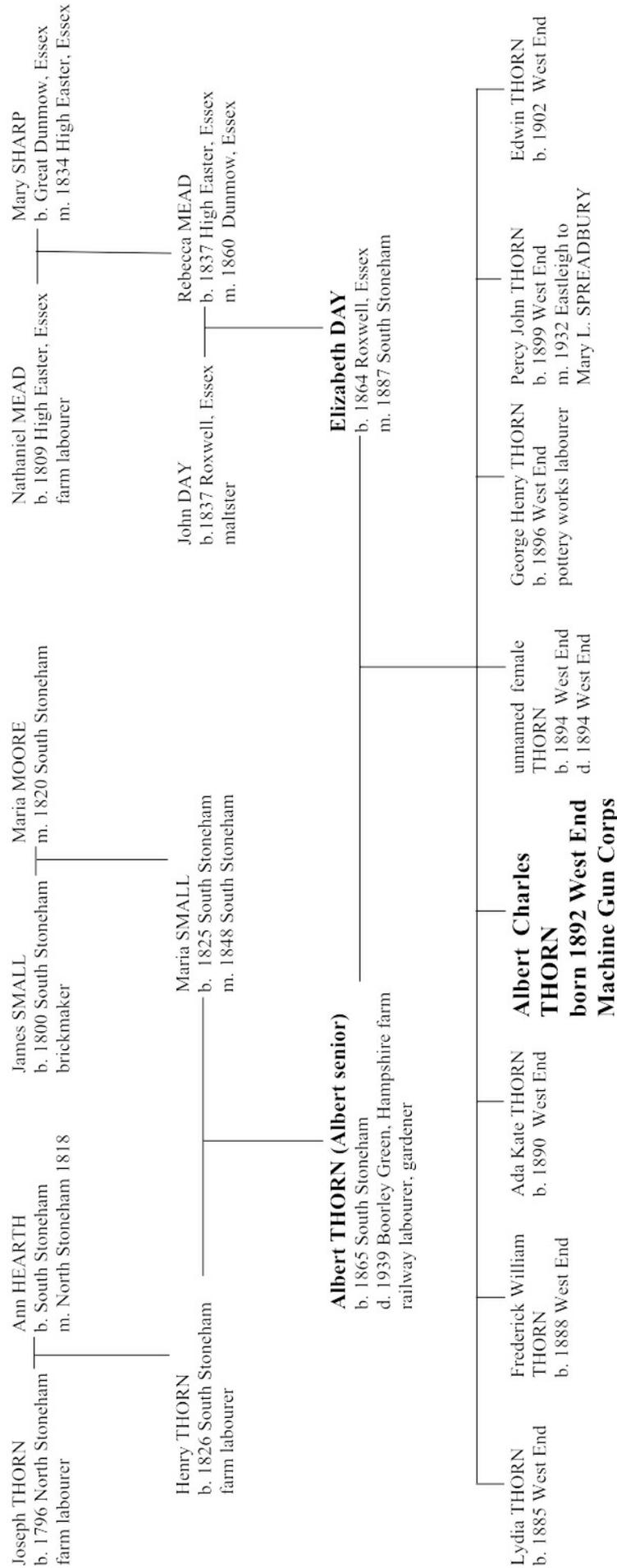
Mrs Cumming, the wife of the Corps' former commander General Cumming, organised a Machine Gun Corps Comfort Fund to send parcels of "comforts" to "our men in Russia" to help mitigate the cold, which, it was reported, was so intense that the men slept with their machine guns rolled in their blankets to prevent the water-cooling chambers from freezing.

In 1919, the People's Russian Information Bureau published a leaflet with letters purporting to be from soldiers serving in the British North Russian Expeditionary Force, describing the harsh weather and criticising the food and accommodation provided. One quote states: "it is a damn shame that troops who have been in France should have to come out here to suffer this when the war is over and we ought to be at home having a good time with our wives and children". The quotation seems to ring true – we can imagine that many soldiers who had served in dire conditions in the worst conflict yet known would have been sick of war and army rations and anxious to return home. Yet we need to bear in mind that the People's Russian Information Bureau was a socialist organisation based in London supporting the Hands Off Russia campaign and explicitly opposed to British involvement in the Russian Civil War; the real purpose of the People's Russian Information Bureau leaflet was to serve as propaganda. As such, its descriptions of the conditions endured by British soldiers may be exaggerated. Although the harsh climate cannot be denied, the food and accommodation may have been no worse than in the trenches of the Western Front. Colonel R. H. Beadon, in "Army Service Corps: A History of Transport & Supply in the British Army" tells us that 1,000 British troops and 400 tons of supplies were transported through Archangel using wagons (sleighs in winter) pulled by ponies, reindeer and later sled dogs imported from Canada. In addition to supplying the British troops, they also supplied food to the local population of about 100,000. The document describes the practical difficulties faced by British troops struggling with the climate but makes it clear that men and supplies got through intact, suggesting that the troops did not lack the necessities for survival: food, fuel, warm clothing and bedding.

Much has been published about conditions in which prisoners of war were kept on both sides of the conflict

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Family Tree of Major Albert Charles THORN

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during the Great War itself, but what were conditions like for prisoners of war under the Bolsheviks in Russia? There is no doubt that under the Bolsheviks prisoners of war were used for forced labour, as they had been during the Great War, whether in the hands of the Germans & Austro-Hungarians or the Russian, French & British forces. Depending on where the camp was situated, they may well have been working under shell-fire; even after the Allied Powers had withdrawn from the conflict, the White & Red armies were still fighting. Death rates of prisoners of war during the Great War had been high, although they varied by the nationality of both the prisoners and captors. For example, Romanian prisoners in German camps had a death rate of 29%, while German prisoners held by the British had death rates of only 3%. One of the main causes of death was typhus due to unsanitary conditions, especially in Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Russian Empire where epidemics broke out in 1915. By 1916 Germany had largely resolved this by introducing latrines and disinfectant vats, but the situation in Russia is unclear. However, German sources suggest that the death rate for German & Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war in Russian camps during the Great War was “extraordinarily high” compared with those held by others. With Russia itself torn apart and most of their resources ceded to Germany, we cannot imagine any improvements were made after the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, when resources would be at a premium. Widespread hunger among the population of North Russia was reported in December 1919, with appeals for flour, fodder and coal. Albert Charles was perhaps lucky in that he was held close to Moscow, where camps had better access to resources, and as an officer his living conditions may have been somewhat better than those of other ranks – but still dire. It is unlikely that prisoners of war would receive full rations if the general population were starving.

Sources agree that after Armistice and the removal of the threat from Germany, Allied intervention in Russia was only desultory as the reasons for intervention no longer existed and popular opinion was firmly against men still being killed after the Great War had ended. These factors, together with mutiny in the White Army and the commitment of funds needed at home for post-war reconstruction (and widespread misappropriation of those funds by White Army officials) made it clear that Allied intervention should end. Following the Great War, the Paris Peace Conference was convened in January 1919 to set the terms for peace between the Allied Powers and the Central Powers. One of the last decisions made by the Conference in June 1919 was the termination of Allied support for Russia’s White Army and the withdrawal of all Allied forces from Russia. By the autumn of 1919, all Allied troops had left Russia, with the exception of Japan which did not withdraw from the conflict until October 1922. In December 1919 a conference was held in Copenhagen to discuss the exchange of British civilians and prisoners of war in Russia for Russians held in territories under British jurisdiction. If news reached them in the camps, morale for Major Thorn & his fellow prisoners of war must have been high as they anticipated coming home. The Bolsheviks were reluctant to release prisoners of war because they were a valuable source of labour within the camps and in industry and agriculture. They set very demanding terms, which Britain refused to accept. The negotiations failed and all prisoners remained where they were. Prisoners’ morale would have hit an all-time low. Despite intercessions by Red Cross Societies from various countries and the League of Nations’ High Commissioner for Refugees, in 1920 Bolshevik Russia still held almost half a million prisoners of war of different nationalities, not only Allied troops who had supported the White Army in the Russian Civil War, but also Germans & Austro-Hungarians captured during the Great War – two years after the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk had ended that conflict for Russia. Agreement for an exchange of civilians and prisoners of war between Britain & Soviet Russia was finally reached on 10th March 1920. By this time, Britain had sent the White Army over £1 million’s worth of equipment, although we are told that only a few thousand troops from Britain, France & the USA actually went to Russia and few of them saw any action. Major Albert Charles Thorn was one of those few. Nevertheless, he was lucky; it was reported that a total of 12 British officers had been captured by the Bolsheviks, of whom 4 had been shot in captivity.

In April 1920, the West End parish magazine announced “NEWS! GOOD NEWS! Major Albert Thorn, the Machine Gun Corps, a Prisoner in Moscow, is returning home to England”. It went on to express congratulations to his parents on such good news of “so celebrated a son as ‘The Major’.” This snippet confirms that both his parents were alive in 1920. The June 1920 issue reported that the young men of the village held an informal concert

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organised by Colin Mattison to welcome the Major home. Major Albert Thorn was quoted as saying that he much appreciated being among his old school friends again and that they remembered him. He was 28 years old. He was never mentioned in the parish magazine again. Did he simply not engage in community events or did he move away?

What happened to Albert Charles after his homecoming? He is not found in marriage or death records for Hampshire – or for British Armed Forces Overseas – after 1918. Neither is he found in the 1939 Register, although this did not include military personnel. Is it possible that he remained in the Army? In 1920 fire broke out in the Headquarters of the Machine Gun Corps at Shorncliffe in Kent, destroying all its operational records. Further, many of the enlistment records for its men and officers were destroyed in the London Blitz in 1940 along with those of most other World War One units. Between the fire and the Blitz, only an estimated 15% of records for the Machine Gun Corps have survived. After the Great War, the Machine Gun Corps had also gone on to serve in the Third Anglo-Afghan War (May – August 1919) on the Northwest Frontier of India, but financial cutbacks led to its being disbanded in 1922. Many of its personnel were demobilised but The Times reported plans to distribute small machine gun sections among the regiments as before. In 1924 the Hampshire Regiment placed advertisements in local newspapers specifically aimed at recruiting ex-members of the Machine Gun Corps. Did Albert Charles re-enlist in his old regiment?

The census shows that in 1901 & 1911 his family lived in West End High Street, which had also been young Albert Charles's home before he joined up. Local directories show Albert Thorn living at Elm Cottage, Swaythling Road, West End between 1925 & 1935, but it is unclear whether this is Albert Charles or his father. Neither was living at that address on 29th September 1939, when the 1939 Register was taken. The 1939 Register does show a widowed pensioner named Albert H. Thorn born 24th December 1863 living at 28 Allbrook Hill, Eastleigh who appears to be Albert senior – he is found nowhere else in Hampshire. Albert senior's birth was registered in the second quarter of 1865; however, mistakes did occur on the Register. Albert Charles's mother Elizabeth appears to have died some time between 1920 & 1939, but I have not found a death or burial record for her. His younger brother Percy is shown on the Register as a baker living at Arnold Road, Eastleigh with his wife Mary. Our final definitive record of the family is when, on 2nd October 1939, at the age of 74, Albert senior committed suicide by cutting his own throat at his home in Boorley Green, where he worked as a gardener. Percy testified at the inquest that his father had been ill for some time and frequently expressed a wish to die. No mention was made of Albert Charles.

HOBART'S FUNNIES

A review by Roy Andrews

Dr. Henry Goodall was our speaker at the October meeting and began with a plug for the *Friends of the New Forest Airfields*, an organization with which he is involved. Some of you may recall a talk given to this society in July 2015 on the twelve WWII airfields built in the New Forest and Dr. Goodall's Society promotes interest in their history. What I did not recall being mentioned at the earlier talk, perhaps it had not been set up then, was that there is a museum commemorating the airfields at Bransgore which, from the views we were shown, looks well worth a visit but do check on opening times.

Then it was down to the main business of the evening: a talk on the escapades of General Sir Percy Hobart, a man who made a major contribution to the success of 'D' Day but of whom few have heard. He was born in 1885 and joined the army in 1904; during WWI he served in France and Mesopotamia after which, in 1923, he joined the Royal Tank Corp. In 1927, he was involved in a scandalous divorce, having an affair

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with a junior officer's wife who was also much younger than Hobart. He did eventually marry her and the marriage lasted the rest of his life. The scandal did not seem to interfere with his promotions as he made Brigadier General by 1935; it also helped perhaps that Hobart's sister married Montgomery, later of *D Day* fame.



Brig.Gen. Sir Percy Hobart



Sherman "Flail" tank

In 1937 Hobart was promoted again and in 1938 he was sent to Egypt to form what became known as the *Desert Rats* mobile force. Col. Heinz Guderian of the German Army was impressed with how Hobart used his tank Brigade and modeled his Panzers and the Blitzkrieg-Lightning War along the same lines.

In 1940 the man in charge of the army, General Wavell, who hated Hobart, forced him to retire. However following an article in the *Sunday Pictorial* on wasted brains in the services Churchill upon hearing of this made Hobart re-enlist in 1941.



Sherman "DD" duplex drive swimming tank



Sherman "DD" tank with waterproof skirt up

In 1942 Hobart was assigned to raise and train the 79th Armoured Division which in 1943 became a specialist unit Ministry of Defense 1(MD1) to prepare for 'D' Day. Hobart had a year in which to find ways of overcoming obstacles to armoured units in an invasion: these would be rivers, minefields, concrete walls, banks and ravines, also there would be a need to recover stranded vehicles.

Based on tank chassis Hobart developed answers to all of these problems with armoured bulldozers, carpet layers for soft ground, flails to explode mines, various bridge layers and even one which carried bundles of wood to fill in wide ditches. They were given interesting names like Double Onion, The Bobbin and The Facine and went on to make their mark on history.

Hobart died in 1957.

ARMING THE HOME GUARD Pt. 1

By Mike Downer

Nearly 80 years on, ask most people what they know about the Home Guard and they are bound to mention 'Dad's Army'. Although played for comic effect, the sense of making do and the various character clashes are probably very close to how it really was. One of the co-writers, Jimmy Perry has said that the whole idea for the series came from his own experiences in the Home Guard where he saw himself as 'Private Pike'.

On May 14th 1940, Anthony Eden, the Secretary of State for War, announced on BBC radio the formation of the Local Defence Volunteers (LDV). This force was intended to defend Britain against invading German troops, in particular paratroops, and British fifth columnists. Its members were to be men between the age of seventeen and sixty-five. The thought that Britain was alone and facing invasion brought out volunteers in their thousands predominantly old soldiers who had served in the Great War. These old soldiers would have been in their mid 40's by this time and not eligible for call up. At its peak, the force numbered 1,793,000. The Home Guard was stood down in December 1944.

The speed with which the force was set up far outstripped supplies of both uniforms and equipment, particularly firearms. This is the story of the struggle to arm this huge force with effective weapons. In part one I shall cover the small arms and in part 2 look at the sometimes weird and wonderful support weapons.

Early Weapons

Invasion Pikes

A less than credible suggestion was the creation of pikes by welding a surplus WW1 bayonet into a length of 2 inch gas pipe. The thought of sending troops armed with spears against a modern mobilized army is enough to make the blood run cold. Luckily the howls of derision that greeted their issue was enough to ensure the shelving of the whole idea. Lord Croft, Under Secretary of State, came in for a great deal of political banter when he publically supported the scheme.

Shotguns

Although frowned on for use in combat, shotguns were in plentiful supply in rural areas like West End where every farmer owned at least one weapon. Instructions were issued to solidify shot to give greater range and hitting power. This usually involved taking the cartridge apart and pouring in candle wax. Lack of ammunition supplies meant that this was only ever going to be a stop-gap solution to arming the troops.

Rifles

Ross Rifle



Ross Rifle - bolt and backsight

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its range pedigree and using the British standard 0.303" from a 5 round magazine typical of its time. It was shorter than the P14 Enfield making it ideal in the confines of the trenches. The straight pull bolt required only two actions to load and cock the weapon against four in the standard SMLE Mk3 . In the field it was a different story, it soon became apparent that the rifle was totally intolerant of mud, water and dirt, all the things that were plentiful in Flanders. Troops would complain that half their time was taken up with cleaning in order to keep the weapon in service. Worse was yet to come. It was found that, in the heat of action, the bolt could be reassembled incorrectly and only discovered on firing when the bolt and rifle would part company violently - to the detriment of both weapon and soldier ! Questions were being asked in the House resulting in the rifles being modified to prevent this happening but the damage to their reputation was already done. The weapons were withdrawn in 1916 and stored only to be remembered and given a new lease of life in 1940 with the Home Guard. The old sweats of the Home Guard were very happy with the rifle and considered that the time spent pampering the rifle was well worth it.

Pattern 14 Enfield



P14 and bayonet

This was a British development produced in America to fill the shortfall in the numbers of SMLE Mk3 rifles available during WW1. The 5 round internal magazine was chambered for 0.303" rounds and manufacturing was contracted out to the giant American arms companies Winchester and Remington. These were stored after the war and offered with the P17 below to the UK in 1941. Sounds like a sharp deal to offer them as Lend-Lease when they were built for the UK in the first place.

P1917 Enfield

LDV under instruction with the new P17



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In 1918 the Americans forces had to quickly produce a weapon in quantity for their overseas army. The Pattern 14 rifle that they were building for the UK was adapted with various minor amendments to fire the US standard 0.3" cartridge. After WW1 these were stored until 1941 when they were offered under the Lend-Lease agreement. The Lend-Lease Act of March 11th 1941 was the principal means of providing U.S. military aid to foreign nations without payment as by this time Britain was virtually bankrupt and the Americans were still neutral at this point. These are the rifles seen in 'Dad's Army'. An unspectacular but adequate weapon with a 5 round internal magazine it was not popular with the soldiers of WW1 because of its length and weight. With its 17" bayonet (Cpl. Jones's weapon of choice) it was usually taller than the man carrying it. Looking very similar to the P14, and with the two different sizes of cartridge, supply accidents were bound to happen leading to the old yarn of Home Guardsmen being issued with 5 rounds and told to make them last !

Sub Machine guns The Sten Gun



Mk2 Sten

The Mk1 Prototype was introduced in 1941 but was soon superceded by the definitive Mk2. Said to resemble a roughly assembled collection of scrap metal it was a blowback operated weapon firing a 32 round magazine. The effective range was around only around 100 yards although at this range there was little accuracy and old soldiers tell tall tales of its feeble 9mm round being stopped by a thick greatcoat !

Many toy manufacturers were used to machine and assemble Sten guns notably the Lines Brothers, owners of brand name Tri-ang. These factories had been put under government control when toy manufacture was deemed non essential to the war effort. The resulting weapon was crude but cheap and surprisingly very successful mainly because it could be produced in quantity by a relatively unskilled workforce.

There were of course snags and compromises. Using the magazine as a side grip (as seen in many war films) could result in the feed becoming misaligned and jam the weapon beyond repair in the field. The correct method was to support the barrel with the left hand although being so short the barrel would soon get very hot and burn your hand ! A more common fault was to be found by dropping the weapon - this would bounce the main spring to load and fire the weapon without help from its *owner regardless of whether the very basic safety catch was applied ! It was said to be an exciting weapon to have around.*

Thompson M1928A1



Regular soldier with Thompson and 50 round mag.

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This weapon was offered under Lend-Lease but initially the British authorities were unenthusiastic. Possibly the association with American gangsters of the prohibition era smacked of villains and piracy to the powers that be in the UK. They were also put off by the big 50 round drum magazine which added to the already heavy (10lb) weapon and also allowed the rounds to rattle around, not a good thing if you're trying to keep quiet in the presence of an attentive enemy ! Later a 30 round stick magazine was available which made it much more attractive to clandestine units like Commando units, SAS and LRDG. The weapon fired a massive 0.45" round with huge stopping power although at low velocity all of which were an advantage in close quarter fighting. Because of the initial reluctance of the authorities to authorise issue to front line troops, many Thompsons were issued to Home Guard units who considered them a first class weapon - just as long as you didn't have carry it too far ! Private Pike is issued with the platoon Thompson in 'Dad's Army' and spends much of the time doing Al Capone impersonations, much to his CO's annoyance !

Light Machine Guns

Lewis gun



Mk1 Lewis

This was developed during WW1 by US Col. Isaac Lewis as the first practical Light Machine Gun. Other machine guns of the time like the Vickers or Maxim were designed to be used in a static defensive role and with the associated water cooling, ammunition belts and sturdy tripod were impossible to move in a hurry. At 28lb the Lewis is still a weighty piece of kit to carry around requiring the 47 round pan magazines to be carried separately by the other members of the platoon. Stocks of these weapons in both 0.3" and 0.303" calibre were held in store from their service during WW1. Many of these were ex anti-aircraft guns lacking the wooden stock shown above which was replaced with a skeleton construction. In theory the US versions should have a two inch red band painted on them. The weapon is air cooled which accounts for the rather clumsy looking shroud around the barrel covering the cooling fins and has a gas operated reload system similar to the more modern Bren Gun.

Browning Automatic Rifle



BAR 1918A2

This 0.3" US weapon was introduced into the forces between the wars and incredibly was still in service right up to the 1970's. It was offered in small numbers to Home Guard units under Lend-Lease. Those lucky enough to be issued with BAR were very enthusiastic about its reliability, light weight (16lb) and accuracy in single shot mode. The 20 round box magazine was considered too small by front line UK troops and unlike the Bren gun, the barrel cannot be easily changed making long burst fire inadvisable. Like the Lewis and Bren guns it has a gas operated reload system. For an excellent demonstration of the gun in action watch Steve McQueen in the film "The Sand Pebbles".

All images courtesy of Wiki apart from the P14

To be continued in the next issue of Westender

RECIPE CORNER - Sue Ballard "SPECULAAS"

We tend to associate gingerbread men with Christmas, but in the Netherlands they enjoy speculaas biscuits on the feast of St. Nicholas (6th December). The name speculaas (or speculaasjes for a single biscuit) comes from the Latin word for mirror (speculum) as the biscuits were a mirror image of the mould in which they were made. They were traditionally in the form of a man and a maiden and were exchanged by sweethearts on St. Nicholas's Eve. Modern speculaas moulds come in a variety of beautiful, intricate designs.

The recipe dates back to the 17th century when the speculaas spice blend of cloves, ginger, cinnamon, coriander and cardamom, which were costly in Britain and Europe, became more readily available to the Dutch. Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, better known to us as the Dutch East India Company, was a chartered company founded in 1602 when the Dutch government granted it a 21 year monopoly on the spice trade with India and South East Asia, taking over the trade from the Portuguese. The Company was remarkable both for being the first public company to sell shares on the open market and for its size – with factories, enormous shipyards, 5,000 ships & 10,000 troops at its peak, it is still acknowledged as the largest corporation in history. For a time, it made the Dutch Republic the world centre of commerce and was the chief rival to Britain's fledgling Honourable East India Company, triggering the three Anglo-Dutch Wars of 1652-1654, 1665-1677 & 1672-1674. The Dutch East India Company traded mace, cinnamon and nutmeg, which at that time grew only in the Spice Islands (the Moluccas, north-east of Indonesia) and in 1607 gained a trade alliance with the Sultan of Ternate in the Moluccas, giving the Company control over the clove trade. This marked the beginning of European colonialism in the East Indies as the Dutch East India Company built forts there and installed a Governor General. The Company's trading interests were not confined to spices. Porcelain and tea were imported from China and as early as 1604 they moved into India, importing silk, cotton and opium. Indian silk was exported to Japan, where they had exclusive trading rights operating from their own island, Deshima, in the Bay of Nagasaki as Europeans were not allowed to enter Japan itself, which was still a closed nation. Due to losses in the Anglo-Dutch Wars, cheap sugar from Brazil and the loss of trade in India including its factories in Malabar & Ceylon, the Dutch East India Company closed in 1799, although the Dutch remained the only Europeans with whom the Japanese would trade until the 1850s.

Speculaas Spice Blend Recipe – store in an airtight jar in a cool dark place

3 tsp ground cinnamon
 1 tsp ground coriander
 1 tsp ground nutmeg
 1 tsp ground ginger
 ½ tsp ground cloves – some recipes also include ground aniseed in the same proportion as cloves
 ¼ tsp ground white pepper

Speculaas Biscuits Recipe - makes 8-10 speculaas or 20-30 smaller biscuits. Prepare 24 hours in advance.

200g flour
 1 tsp baking powder
 2 teaspoons speculaas spice mix
 ½ tsp salt
 150g cold butter, diced
 125g soft light brown (light Muscovado) sugar
 100g chopped almonds
 1 tsp milk

1. Sieve together the flour, baking powder, salt and spices.
2. Rub the butter into the spiced flour mixture.
3. Add the milk and knead to a smooth dough. Leave to rest overnight.
4. Preheat oven to 350F / Gas 4 / 180C (160 fan).
5. Mould the dough in speculaas moulds or roll it out and cut out small biscuits in any shape you like.
6. Bake for 15-20 minutes until golden brown. Cool on a wire rack.



MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

It doesn't seem like a year ago that I was producing the Christmas edition of Westender, this year we have a "bumper" edition for you. We have had some excellent articles written by members throughout the year and my sincere thanks to all those who contributed. Just as I was putting this edition together my trusty old laptop played up and so this is the first time I am using a different computer and software to produce this, I hope you will forgive any mistakes. As you will see from the programme of talks for 2019 shown on page 20 we have quite an interesting and varied list of speakers and topics, hopefully something for every one. It just remains for me to wish all our readers a very Happy Christmas and New Year from the Editor and Committee.

HATCH FARM - an introduction to Albert Fray's farm diary Part 2

By Pauline Berry

The following is the August 1895 extract from Albert Fray's Hatch Farm diary, with kind permission from his grandson Adrian Fray. Hatch Farm covered an area of approximately 200 acres, adjacent to Hatch Grange house, where the landowner, Mr R.W. Fletcher lived. It was a 'mixed farm' growing cereal crops (wheat, barley and oats), root crops (swedes, turnips and mangolds) and rearing dairy cows and sheep. Although horses still did much of the heavy work (carting and ploughing), the arrival of farm machinery was beginning to relieve some of this burden. I have added some explanatory words in brackets, here and there.

1895

- August 1st. A fine day. We have been busy, cut about 7.5 acres of oats....
- August 2nd. Fine drying day, but we have had a heavy thunderstorm this evening. Roberts cutting oats and barley, but was stopped by rain Other men hoeing turnips. Aunt Miriam has been to see us today from Fareham Park.
- August 3rd. A wet day, we have shifted hurdles (moveable stick frames) into the turnips by the copse ... Father sent over 14 sacks of winter oats.
- Sunday**
- August 4th. We have had our (son) Benjamin Arthur christened today at church. Brother John and Annie and John Mabey came over.
- August 5th. Bank Holiday, damp and dirty, men hoeing turnips...Mr Perkins sent cheque for 1 ton of straw (£3 1/4) and Mr Bessemer (Townhill Park) sent cheque for 1/3 ton straw (£1 1/2)... Returned receipts by post.
- August 6th. Showery day. Carter's has been to Upham Chalk Pit with waggon and cart. Men tied out 1/2 ton of straw for Mr May (Shopkeeper) and delivered it....
- August 7th. Fine day ... we picked out 10 sheep and sent them to market but were not sold. Put them into turnips by copse.
- August 8th. A fine day but has come on to rain this evening..... Cut clover in field by Candy's (Allington Lane)... and tied 1/2 ton of straw for Mr Blakiston (The Wilderness).
- August 9th.Carter's dung carting in Candy's (field)....Mr Othen (Hope Farm) had 1/4 ton barley straw and paid 27/6d. Mr Blakiston had 1/2 ton of straw... Found sheep dead this morning, but was in time to bleed it and sold hind half to Mr Giles (butcher & grocer) for 15 shillings.

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August 10th. Showery day.....Robert's began to cut some second cut clover on the (Hatch) hill. Davis cut road around the wheat in Birchmoor (arable field of 11 acres). Paid Reeves for all his hoeing on the swedes.

Sunday

August 11th. Heavy shower in the morning....Mother (wife Augustus) and I drove down to Fareham Park (to see Aunt Miriam).

August 12th. Britford Fair (near Salisbury)... we have cut about 10 acres of wheat in Birchmoor (field) and tied a good part of it, worked till nearly nine o'clock. Moody....and Boyt (shopkeeper) had much of it.

August 13th. A very wet morning, fine afternoon. Robert's fetched a load of chalk (using) 4 horses... wheat did not dry sufficient to tie.

August 14th. Fine day. (after) cutting and tying wheat ... men went off to Flower Show (West End). Sent 15 sheep to town (Southampton £28

August 15th. Beautiful fine day with nice sunshine....carted dredge corn (mixed crop of oats and barley for animal feed) in the afternoon, in good order, into the upper barn...sent postal order (18 shillings) to Lamb (for) driving 75 lambs from Salisbury Fair. George Spencer (Mr Gaters carter) buried today.

August 16th. A beautiful day, bright and hot. Carted (wheat and oats) Worked till 9 o'clock.

August 17th. Beautiful fine day. Robert's cutting grass (8 acres) all day. 7 good loads of cut hay carted from Candy's field...

Sunday

August 18th. Fine hot day. We went to (Bible Christian) Chapel and heard the new Minister, which we thought very good.

August 19th. Fine and warm, we have carted thrashed wheat from Birchmoor (field), 57 sacks off the machine.

August 20th. Fine day...Fred and I picked 3 cart loads of hay and unloaded 2 loads. Men carted (?) bulls and calf first thing this morning.

August 21st. Fine day, very hot....Cutting wheat - barley... carting hay this evening. Moody paid for 3/4 ton of straw £2 1/4.

August 22nd ...a shower this morning and a very heavy thunderstorm this evening... I have partly thatched wheat rick... Harris had a 1/4 ton of straw (17/6d.)

August 23rd. Fine day. Carter began to plough Birchmoor for winter oats...I have been to Town, drew £10 from Bank. Sold wheat to Leggatt at £6.

August 24th. Fine day. Roberts finished cutting barley by dinnertime.... I have been to Stoneham (Farm) and bought home 6 bundles of spurs (lower woody twigs protruding from trees and hedges).

Sunday

August 25th. Fine drying day. Memorial service to Mr George Spencer (Carter) conducted by Mr Squire (at Chapel).

August 26th. Romsey Fair. Wet morning.... I have borrowed (brother) George's winnowing machine (for separating the chaff from the corn) and got wheat to go away tomorrow, 61 sacks....Fred Rogers home with a bad back.

August 27th. ...Men doing the general work.

August 28th. Fine day. Roberts took 31 sacks of wheat to (Southampton) Quay....Carted some waggons with wheat, ready for the morning.

August 29th. Fine day....Roberts took a waggon load of wheat to Town (Southampton)...returned 70 empty sacks and paid for their hire (5/10d.)

August 30th. A beautiful day, we have been very busy all day.....filled up the barn with barley. Gave Mrs Thorn (probably the tied Hatch Farm cottage in Chapel Road) a month's notice to quit cottage.

August 31st. Fine day....a good day cutting barley.... Made a good rick, worked till after 9 o'clock.

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF WESTENDER Ed.

THOSE DEVOTED WORKERS, THE MIDDLETON SISTERS

By Paula Downer

These words came from Sisters from the Society of St.Margaret in East Grinstead having received a 'most kind and hearty welcome' from the Vicar George Rundle Prynne and two sisters at St.Peter's Church in Plymouth.

The Middleton sisters here are Nathaniel Middleton's (of Townhill) granddaughters. Their father Henry Johnson Middleton was born in South Stoneham c.1790 (see previous articles in the 'Westender' Vol.10 Nos.5 & 6). Henry spent many years in India covering a wide area in the northern part of the country in various official administrative and judicial roles with the Honourable East India Company's Civil Service. He retired on Annuity in May 1836, returned to England with his wife, Mary Ann (née Ochterlony), their two sons, Henry Ochterlony, Charles Frederick and five daughters, Louisa Herbert, Henrietta Marie, Mary Ann Ochterlony, Eliza Mary and Marie Beckford. They appear to have settled initially in London (sources show them living at Radnor Place near Hyde Park in 1846). Their grandfather Nathaniel Middleton had died in 1807.

The eldest son Henry Ochterlony Middleton became an ordained minister of the church which was unusual in those days as it was normally the younger son who sought to make his own way in life either in the church or military service. The eldest son was usually provided for, having inherited his father's estate (primogeniture), perhaps the life of a landowner or business man did not appeal to Henry Ochterlony? At Sherborne School in Dorset, he won a prize in 'The English Verse', and then went on to gain a Master of Arts degree at St.Mary Hall, Oxford.

In 1846 Henry and Mary Ann's second daughter Henrietta Marie married William Lhoyd of Llwydiarth, Anglesey. But tragedy was to follow a few months later when Henry and Mary Ann's youngest daughter Marie Beckford Middleton died at the age of only 17. Incidentally, Marie Beckford was born in Paris in April 1829, Henry Johnson had taken Furlough (leave) February 12th 1828, returning to India by 8th July 1831.

In 1851 (ref: Census of England) Henry Ochterlony and two of his sisters, Mary Ann Ochterlony and Eliza Mary, were in Devonport, Plymouth. Henry Ochterlony is a curate at nearby Anglican Church of St.Stephen's, his sisters being described as Gentlewomen. It may have been around this time that the sisters became involved in the church in response to the Reverend Prynne's request for help in the care of the poor people of his parish, of which there were many. The priest was new to the parish, he had different ideas, he wanted to revive Catholicism in the Anglican community but, during this time, many Anglicans were suspicious of the Roman Catholic Church.

In 1852 Henry and Mary Ann's youngest son, Charles Frederick, returned to India to join the Bengal Army (40th Regiment Native Infantry (Volunteers)), their red coats distinguished by dark blue facings/gold trim. In 1854 the regiment was based in the military cantonment of Dinapore in the Bihar state of India, in 1855 Charles Frederick Middleton was promoted to Lieutenant. It is very likely that Lt. Charles Middleton was caught up with the infamous Indian Mutiny (Sepoy Mutiny), a major uprising due to discontent amongst the native soldiers (sepoys), across Bengal they had turned against their European Officers. The 7th, 8th and 40th sepoy regiments at Dinapore did likewise which led to an eight day siege at Arrah, a European Civil Station some 24 miles away. It took two years to suppress the revolt and after this, the Bengal Native Infantry Regiments were radically reorganised (eventually becoming part of a unified single Indian Army in 1895). Lt. Charles Middleton held the position of Adjutant to the Meerut Infantry Levy in 1858. He was then transferred to the Staff Corps (administrative division) of the 45th Regiment Native Infantry - facings Dark Green/Gold.

The next census (1861) show Henry Ochterlony as a Clergyman in Islington, London, the two sisters still living in Plymouth. By then their father, Henry Johnson and his wife, Mary Ann, had moved to the exclusive Royal Crescent in Bath. They had the means to employ a footman, maids and a cook to look after them. Their coachman would have lived in lodgings above a carriage house to the rear of the property which was separated by the residents' gardens.

Their son, Lieutenant Charles Frederick of the 45th Regiment Native Infantry, was still in India (Assam) but they were soon to hear devastating news in that their son had died, he was only 28 years of age.

Henry Johnson Middleton died in March 1866 at the age of 76, a very wealthy man - a multi-millionaire by today's standards ! He is buried in Locksbrook (Walcot) Cemetery in Bath.

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Henry Johnson and Mary Ann Middleton lived at No.25 Royal Crescent

In 1871 the two sisters, Mary Ann Ochterlony, Eliza Mary along with their housemaid/domestic servants were living very close to St.Peter's Church in Wyndham Square (No.27). The church needed to be rebuilt, they had made do with the existing church for 30 years. The sisters contributed £6,000 which was a lot of money in 1878. One of the sisters, Eliza Mary, died in December at the age of 52, their mother Mary Ann had died in June. Henry Ochterlony and the surviving sister gave £1000 for a memorial chapel to be built in their beloved sister's memory. In 1880 the foundation stone for the new church was laid by the Earl of Devon, the church completed in 1882. Through perseverance the Reverend Prynne was by this time winning the hearts of many of his people.



St.Peter's Church in Wyndham Square, Plymouth

In 1880 Elizabeth's House of Rest in Plympton St.Mary was established in memory of Eliza Mary Middleton. The property is now Grade 2 listed, in 2006 it was converted to a hotel.

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The 1881 and 1891 Census for England show Henry Ochterlony Middleton living in Hastings described as Clerk of the Holy Order, Church of England, he died in August 1903 aged 83.

Mary Ann Ochterlony Middleton never married, she died in May 1905 in Plymouth aged 81.

In the words of the Reverend George Rundle Prynne's biographer :-

The Misses Middleton, those devoted workers, chiefly by liberality of the Middleton family, notably Mary Ann and Eliza Middleton that the church was built. These good women, for the good of the parish, contributed lavishly of their money and as long as health permitted, laboured ceaselessly in countless ways. The completed church of St. Peter's, largely due to Mary Ann Middleton's generosity will form a visible memorial of this good woman's long and valuable association with the parish.

The church has had further work done since then, in 2006-7 St. Peter's Church was restored and re-configured internally with funds from the Heritage Lottery, Mary Middleton Ecclesiastical Charity and others.



In Wyndham Square, the Middleton sisters are still remembered

From a report written for the Anglo-Catholic Congress at Plymouth in 1929 :-

St. Peter's Church will be forever remembered in the history of the Catholic Revival for the long years and devoted labours of Fr. Prynne, whose name is a household word among all Anglo-Catholics who remember his defence of the Sacrament of Penance and his restoration of the daily Eucharist in the Church of England. His long incumbency of 55 years covers the whole period of the fight for the Catholic cause of which he was indeed the leader for the West of England. If only for his sake, St. Peter's has been, and is, a place of pilgrimage and interest to the Anglo-Catholic, who has entered into the inheritance for which he fought.

REMEMBRANCE IN WEST END THE CENTENARY COMMEMORATION OF THE END OF THE GREAT WAR 11.11.2018



It was a sunny morning, the rain held off for the Remembrance Parade from St. James' Church, and the larger than ever crowd of people, young and old made their way to the war memorial for the service ending with two minutes silence and the bugle call of Last Post. Afterwards there were refreshments provided for all at the Hilldene Centre . A new engraved stone with the twelve names of those that fell that had previously been missing from the memorial was seen for the first time.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



THE PROGRAMME FOR 2019

January 2

FOR VALOUR: The Victoria Cross story

Jeremy Prescott

February 6

WILLIAM COBBETT'S BOTLEY

Geoff Watts

March 6

**PORTSMOUTH: Harlots, Dung
& Glory Part 1** *Andrew Negus*

April 3

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Plus

MYSTERY RELIGIONS: Cults & Sects of

The Roman Empire

Andy Skinner

May 1

SOUTHAMPTON LIDO

Jake Simpkin

June 5

AN UNWILLING PURITAN MARTYR:

The Life of Dr. John Bastwick

Dr. Frances Hurd

July 3

THE LIFE & TIMES OF

ALFRED THE GREAT

Kay Ainsworth

August 7

SOCIAL EVENING AT THE MUSEUM

(including raffle and free refreshments)

ALL WELCOME

September 4

WOMEN, WORK & WOOL: the

Women of Tudor Southampton

Dr. Cheryl Butler

October 2

THE LADY WHO SAVED

THE NATION

Colin van Geffen

November 6

PORTSMOUTH: Harlots, Dung & Glory

Part 2

Andrew Negus

December 4

SOCIAL EVENING

QUIZ, CHRISTMAS BUFFET

