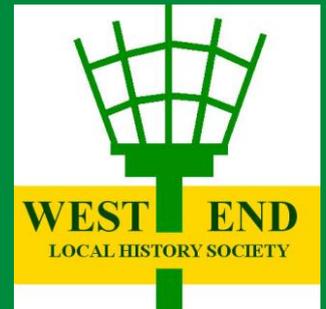


# WESTENDER

Newsletter of the West End Local History Society  
Winter 2021



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Fray's Stores in the Snow c.1951

Christmas clip art in this issue courtesy of <https://publicdomainvectors.org/>

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## West End Service of Remembrance Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2021

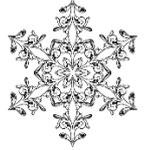


The Reading of the names of the fallen of World War One was read by Councillor Janice Asman. Those of World War Two were read by Lt. Col. (Retd.) M.M.T. Burton-Doe. As can be seen below, the service was very well attended.





## Christmas in Old West End By Pauline Berry



Previously published in the West End Parish Magazine, Christmas 2012

Approximately one hundred years ago, there was still a stark contrast between the Christmas celebrations of the rich and the poor in the village of West End. The large houses lining Moorhill Road, Church Hill and the country estates of Midlands, Townhill Park and Hatch Grange enjoyed much more lavish festivities than the farm cottages and those in the centre of the village.

Mrs Daisy Gibson (née Cannings) was a maid at Hatch Grange House and waited at the family's table heavy with Christmas fare. In the evening there would be a dance held for the owners and guests and she would watch the merriment from the staircase unless she was pulled down to join in a dance.

Townhill Park House was usually full of Lord Swaythling's guests and the children would each receive a sackful of gifts. Christmas dinner would consist of several courses including turkey and plum pudding with brandy. The staff, some from West End, were allowed to attend church early in the morning and have their own Servants' Ball, shared with their employers, on Boxing Day or New Year's Eve.

Mr St. John Barbe Baker, evangelist and horticulturalist, of The Firs in Beacon Road, was well-known for his generosity to the less fortunate of the village. He often gave clothes, jumpers, shirts or socks to the children who attended his chapel. Joe Malloy's gift, when he was four or five, was his first buttoned shirt, but unfortunately it reached his ankles! Needless to say, this garment had good use in the ensuing years.

Every widow in the parish received one hundredweight of coal at Christmas from this same kind gentleman. Bob Moody said his mother may have been the last to receive this gift in the 1920s. Bob also recalled the Yuletide treat for members of his Sunday School, which was held at the old Parish Hall (corner of Chapel Road and High Street). It consisted of a "sit down tea" followed by some form of entertainment, such as a Punch & Judy show. The carol singers at St. James Church itself were organised by the Rev. A.G. Sayer in the 1920s. His wife enjoyed producing Nativity plays, too, which were performed in the church for the first time, so Bob believed. So popular, the plays were taken and performed in other local churches, too.

Christmas in the cottages was a simpler, but pleasant, occasion, with holly and mistletoe collected from the woods nearby, homemade paper chains and stockings hung from bedposts and mantelpieces, containing oranges, fruit, nuts and sweets. Toys were often hand-made from any wood, even orange boxes, too hand. So, on one festive season about 1916, Bob's family were overjoyed to be given a trunk load of toys from one of the big houses. Included were several sets of clockwork trains and a set of bagpipes which Bob misguidedly took to school. Needless to say, the bagpipes were confiscated by Mr Shelley, the head teacher, who caned him yet again!

*Continued on page 4*

The Moody family did have one difficult Christmas when scarlet fever was in the house. The family was quarantined and there were few celebrations that December. No plum duff, just “stirred in apple pudding”, and no presents. Fortunately for Bob, his Sunday School teacher, Miss Drew, handed him a box of chocolates through the sitting room window. The family thankfully recovered and the sick room was later fumigated, as was normal.

Miss Synge, of Tower House, was responsible for frequently putting on festive shows in the Parish Hall. In the days before mass entertainment in the cinema and on television, these were highly popular with the villagers and often all-girl events, since she also ran the GFS (Girls Friendly Society). Carol singing proved to be popular and lucrative for the local children when visiting the big houses. Townhill Park was known as “The Mint” by some, because they received silver coins, not coppers, for their funds.

Joe Malloy and Arthur Houghton were members of the West End Boys’ Brigade which was based at the Swaythling Road Methodist Chapel (now site of Lincoln Court apartments). When carol singing, they carried a small collapsible organ for Mrs Houghton, Arthur’s mother, to play. Having sung outside Midlands House, Mrs Hollingsworth came to the door and asked what religion they were. Knowing they may not receive their usual half-crown if they were from the Chapel, they hesitated. Mrs Houghton promptly replied “We are inter-denominational!” and quickly played another carol to satisfy the lady of the house, who then paid up.

Most West Enders managed, regardless of income, to enjoy their Christmas. Even the 200-plus inmates of the Workhouse in Botley Road received extra rations on top of their normal meagre diet. This included all sorts of meat and plum pudding at a special Christmas dinner in the decorated dining room of 1903. It was later followed by a choir touring the wards singing carols. The children received bon bons, fruit and nuts, the men were given clay pipes and tobacco and the women, tea and sugar. Much was contributed by kind and wealthy donors in the area.

Thus, everyone in West End did their best, by whatever means available, to make the most of very little during these early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A good time was had by many.

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## **West End in The Great War**

### **By Nigel Wood**

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 Germany’s 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.

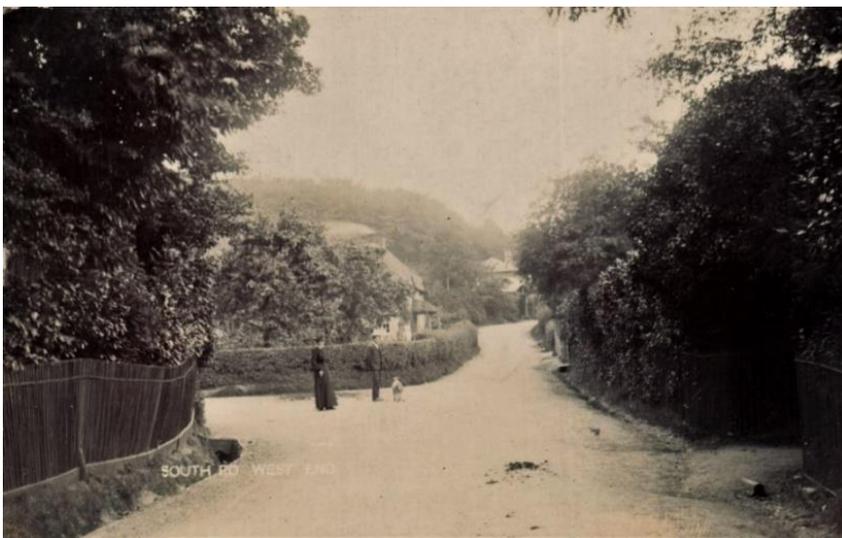
In 1914 the population of this sleepy little village of West End was less than 2,000 souls. Somewhat different from today when we have a growing population around five times that number.

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The village was a quite separate community from the hamlet of Moor Green. Wilfred Langford was sub-postmaster in Westend whose Post Office was situated on the corner of High Street and Upper New Road, whilst Charles Pearce was his opposite number at Moor Green. St. James' School was housed in the building that is now Hilldene Community Centre, and in 1914 had another classroom added by local builder Haines Bros., to accommodate the growing number of schoolchildren. The village extended from the 'Crown & Thistle' pub (now the 'Master Builder') in the Swaythling Road up to the Old Telephone Exchange (now a Ladies' Hair and Beauty Salon). The Parish Hall had taken over occupancy of the old National School on the corner of Chapel Road and High Street and Hatch Grange was a private estate with a grand house belonging to Ralph Warneford Fletcher.

During that hot summer of 1914, very few people could have imagined the horrors that would very soon be unleashed on the world and would continue for the next four years. West End was a quiet, fairly insular community, much like many others in the country areas and not unduly affected by world events, but that was soon to change.

Some 269 men from West End volunteered or were conscripted over the next few years and of these 47 men lost their lives, two men whose names did not appear on the original War Memorial but in 2014 were added on a separate stone in front of the cross were Private W. Rogers, Hampshire Regiment who lived at 4 Chalk Hill, West End (then known as South Road) who died in hospital at Winchester of wounds received in action in November 1917 and Private W. Stevens, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Hampshire Regiment, who lived at Hatch Farm Cottage, Chapel Road, West End and was killed in action at Ypres on 16<sup>th</sup> November 1914. 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 and Harding to name but a few.



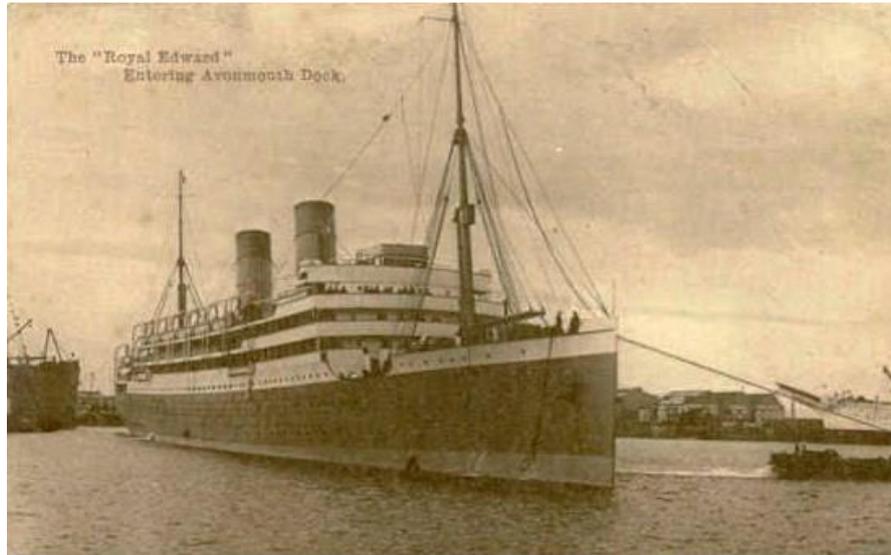
South Road, West End in 1907



Rev. Rowland Dawson  
Vicar of West End 1911-  
1923

On the home front everyday life had to continue during these difficult times, the vicar of St. James' Church, the Revd. Rowland Dawson did much to keep up morale as did many local notaries some of whom visited the wounded at the Royal Victoria Hospital at Netley. The collecting and donation of fresh eggs and vegetables to help supply our forces was also carried out most successfully, even soliciting a letter of thanks in 1915 from Lord Jellicoe, Admiral of the Fleet.

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Postcard of HMT Royal Edward

When the troop transport HMT “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 as well: Wing Commander Arthur Wellesley Bigsworth, a R.N.A.S. air ace and Brigadier General Sir George Henry Gater, who after coming from civilian life in 1914 was made a General at the age of 31 after only 3 years service! He became one of the youngest Generals in the entire British Army.

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### **Suffer The Little Children** **By Pauline Berry**

In 1847/48 when the South Stoneham Workhouse was built in Botley Road, West End, the national figures for children residing in such buildings was sadly very high, amounting to over 50,000 in total. These numbers were so high because they included orphans, illegitimate, deserted, disabled and children of at least one widowed parent.

In the 1861 census, just over half the inmates at South Stoneham Union Workhouse were “scholars”, 90 children aged below 15 years. A sad indictment of those times when death, unemployment and poverty were rife. The only support for the paupers was from the workhouses throughout the county. The orphans were the saddest, perhaps but there were many children who entered this workhouse with one parent who was destitute. Often this was their mother, who was sick, widowed or unmarried. They were often recorded as being laundresses or domestic servants. The five B----- children and the 3 D----- children entered with their mother. But the seven H----- children were accompanied by both their parents.

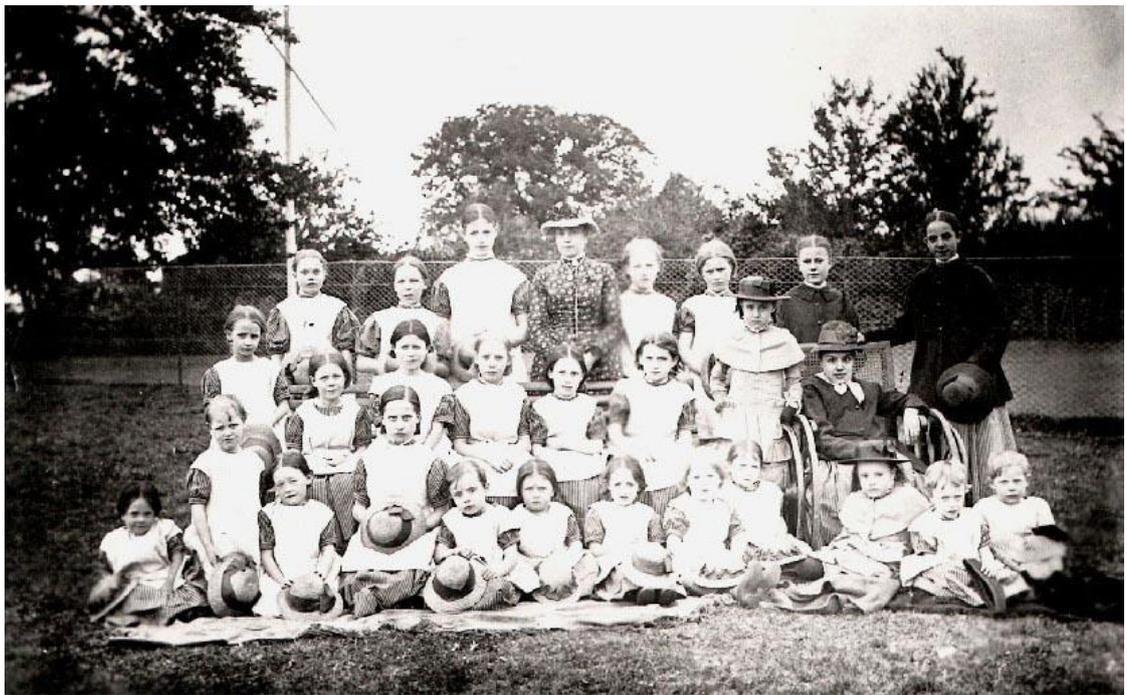
By 1870/71 the Guardians in charge of running the West End workhouse resolved to relieve the problem of high numbers by boarding out some children to “suitable, sober and respectable” foster parents living locally. This move had mixed results; some returned promptly, some were adopted and some returned due to neglect by the foster parents.

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In the 1871 census, about one third of the 225 total inmates were in fact children. Again, not all were orphans, but the 5 I----- children, the 5 M----- children and the 5 B----- children must have found life hard when brothers and sisters were separated. Their absent or deceased fathers were often labourers or farm workers in the Union area who had fallen on hard times.

In 1873, the Board of Guardians decided to send out young orphan girls to Canada, with some success. But Miss Jenkyns of Botley came to the rescue of different girls in 1894 by generously helping the Union to place older girls in special training homes in Southern England. There they would be taught household duties, laundry work and sometimes typing. Permission had first to be given by the Local Government Board owing to the costs involved.

Some boys who were considered suitable, like Ernest Budd and O. Craig, were sent to the training ship “SS Mercury” at Hamble, which was run by C.B. Fry, the famous cricketer, and his wife Beatrice. Both were former residents of West End for several years (1892-1910). A successful move for some, but not all, depending on their attitude and behaviour. (C.B. Fry also offered holidays to some “scholars” at a cost of 15 shillings each.) Regular reports were made and several boys became competent sailors and eventually entered the Royal Navy. A few, however, returned to the workhouse. After leaving the workhouse and entering service or training aged 14 or 15, young people were expected to pay back any costs of their clothes from their first year’s earnings.



Girls from South Stoneham Union Workhouse on a Visit to Shales in 1885

The Local Government Board gave instructions that the workhouse children between the ages of 5 and 15 should be educated until they had reached Standard Five. Education in the workhouse varied greatly in quality and was divided into Elementary and Industrial (practical) training. In 1857, the West End workhouse had no separate building for teaching, so a schoolroom had to suffice. This particular schoolroom was divided for the sexes and had no heating and the boys’ room had no windows! IN 1868 the accommodation and conditions were much improved.

In 1893 the same Board authorised the spending of 13 shillings (65 pence) per annum on school fees. Some of this was spent on Test Cards, songbooks, chalk and slates. Regular visits to the workhouse school were carried out by the Diocesan Inspector of Schools and Governments inspectors. An 1896 inspection reported on the boys' excellence in Religious Knowledge. In 1899 an advertisement for a new schoolmaster stipulated that applicants should be under 35 years of age, single and should forward a photograph of themselves!

Teachers, not always well qualified, varied greatly and some were dismissed for their unsuitability. Women received, early on, about three-quarters of the men's £10 annual salary. A total of 70 plus pupils from all backgrounds were taught and some were flogged for bad behaviour, carried out before the Guardians. The schoolmistress in 1906 was a Miss Kate Hutchinson, who complained that she was overworked by having 33 pupils of all ages and so, in 1906, a girl pupil-teacher was employed to assist her for £12 per annum.

In 1904 the old West End School (now Old School Gardens) was vacated by the young pupils being transferred to the newly built National School built nearby in Botley Road (now the Hilldene Centre). The old building was acquired by the Workhouse Board and was thoroughly redecorated and extended for the workhouse children at a cost of £600 plus. That year, it was resolved to allow Church of England children in West End to be allowed to attend Rev. Patey's Sunday School.

There were growing moves to remove children from the workhouse and educate them in the National Schools. Thus, in 1914, an extra classroom was built onto the new school in West End and several workhouse children were allowed to attend it. He late Bob Moody revealed in his book "I Remember", the following: "I remember the boys and girls used to come to [my] school from the workhouse. The girls had short hair and wore long plain blue frocks. The boys had almost shaved heads and wore dark grey, rough tweed suits, blue striped shirts without collars and heavy hob-nailed boots." He was most indignant at having to leave class and go home to fetch his obligatory Eton collar, which he had forgotten to wear.

Also in 1914, thirteen older boys from the workhouse were sent to attend the new Hedge End [Secondary] School and after several refusals by the staff there, they were reluctantly admitted.

Life for the children was occasionally lightened by treats, concerts and outings arranged by kind and generous local people such as Mrs J. St. Barbe Baker (1906, The Firs) the Rev. Osborne (1907, Botley), Mr & Mrs Vokes (1907 & 1908, Birch Lawn), C.B. Fry (190 Hamble) and local societies. Children living on out-relief received sixpence (2½p) from a kind donor in 1904. Later, there was an exciting railway trip to Bournemouth paid for by a charity. The workhouse children received 82 Royal Doulton Coronation mugs (seconds) in 1902. The boys only were gradually encouraged to watch or take part in various sports by the Master of West End Workhouse.

Miss Jenkyns of Botley continued her generosity by helping young people to find work when they reached 14 years. Miss Heigham (of Heather Mount) and the Brabazon Employment Agency were also engaged in such work. In 1921, many older girls were still receiving domestic training and attending

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evening classes for typing. Some of the boys who were suitable found placements in apprenticeships etc. Local firms such as the store E. Mayes (later Owen & Owen), Amey's Laundry and the British American Tobacco Company offered employment to certain workhouse leavers.

It was not until 1930 that the structure of the New Poor Law was finally dismantled and the responsibilities of the Guardians was handed to County and Borough Councils. An elderly peoples' home and finally homes and apartments "The Pavilions" took over the Victorian building.

NB: For more information, read "Half a Loaf" by Eric Raffo.

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## **The Tragic Tale of Gertrude Charlotte O'Meara (Update)** **by Paula Downer**

I recently received an email from Jenny Abrahamson in New Zealand as I had written an article in 2015 (Ref. 'Westender' Vol.9 No.12) whereby I had said that Eugene John and Gertrude Charlotte O'Meara's daughter was born in India in October 1900 and died a month later. Apparently, Jenny found this daughter alive and well on the 1911 Census for England, being looked after by her grandmother in Heavitree parish, Exeter, Devon! Jenny obviously wondered where I had sourced my information. At the time of my research in 2015 the British Library India Office Family History website gave the following details:

Kathleen Hollingworth O'Meara  
b. Oct 1900 d. Nov 1900  
Transcribed by British Library

The website has been updated since and shows:

Name: Kathleen Hollingworth O'MEARA  
Event type: Birth Date: 15 Oct 1900  
Location: Meean Meer  
Parents: Eugene John, Lt., I. M. S. 11th B. L.; Gertrude Charlotte

Event type: Baptism Date: 27 Nov 1900  
Location: Meean Meer  
Parents: Eugene John, Lt., I. M. S. 11th B. L.; Gertrude Charlotte  
Transcribed by: British Library India Office Records Ref: N/1/286f.173  
Presidency: Bengal, India  
Lt., I.M.S. - Lieutenant, Indian Medical Service B.L. - Bengal Lancers

The later version shows that Kathleen Hollingworth O'Meara was baptised in November 1900!

Eugene John O'Meara was a Surgeon in the Indian Medical Service, which meant that wherever Eugene and his family were stationed in India, they were exposed to nasty diseases such as plague and cholera so it is possible that Gertrude had been ill and was going back to England to recuperate and at the same time take her new baby Kathleen to her mother-in-law Hester O'Meara's house in Devon to be cared for. Gertrude, very sadly, did not make it, the 'Deaths at Sea Register' show that Gertrude Charlotte O'Meara was buried at sea on 25th April 1901.

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The following year, in August 1902, Eugene married Eva Valentina Bullock; their daughter Eileen Hester O'Meara was born in 1904 in Dalhousie, India. Eileen also appears (aged 7) on the 1911 Census for England, listed with her half-sister Kathleen (aged 10). Eugene's mother Hester M O'Meara, aged 60, is shown as Head of the family, Eugene's father Frederick Augustus O'Meara had passed away in 1888. Hester Maria (née Snook) was the niece of Jenny Abrahamson's great-great grandmother. Young children born in India were normally sent back home to England to be schooled. With Eugene and his wife constantly on the move to wherever Eugene was posted, it was not an ideal environment for their daughters' upbringing and education, the enforced painful separation from their children was something that parents living and working in India had to contend with. When Eugene and Eva O'Meara returned to England in 1909 so that Eugene could recuperate from a severe bout of malaria, they had not seen their daughters for some years. As Eugene and Eva drove up Heavitree Hill to Eugene's mother's house, they did not recognise the young two girls walking down the hill to meet them as they had grown so tall!

In 1909, Captain Eugene John O'Meara F.R.C.S. (Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons), DPH (Doctor of Public Health) was promoted to Major, then gained further promotion to Lieutenant Colonel in 1917. Eva Valentina O'Meara sadly died in January 1916, in Agra, India. Eugene re-married the following year in March 1917, to Mamie Nicholson in India. Eugene and Mamie had a son Brian Nicholson (1921) followed by a daughter Bridget Maureen (1923), both were born at Drayton Wood in Norfolk. Sadly, Eugene and Mamie got divorced in 1936.

Eugene then married again in March 1937 to Hannah Vestey whom was the daughter of Sir Edmund Hoyle Vestey, 1st Baronet (he was created Baronet in the 1921 Birthday Honours for his services supplying food to British troops during the First World War).

The two half-sisters Kathleen and Eileen were well travelled, taking in many exciting places around the globe, such as Canada, New York, Hong Kong, California and Buenos Aires. Passenger Lists show Kathleen's occupation as a nurse and Eileen as a gardener; later lists (1928-9) show Eileen's occupation as 'Secretary/Stenographer' (Ref. Ancestry website). In 1927, both sisters were on board the Cunard Liner 'Berengaria' to New York, its Master was Arthur Henry Rostron, familiar with his contemporaries for rescuing a great many survivors from the disastrous sinking of RMS Titanic in 1912. The sisters would have been most interested to learn that Captain Rostron recently had a house 'Holmecroft' built for him at the top of Chalk Hill in West End, Hampshire, not far from the Hollingworth's family home at 'Midlands', and intended to retire there. The Southampton Directory for 1931-32 lists 'Rostron Capt. Sir Arth. Hy. K.B.E., R.D., R.N.R. (ret.), Holmecroft, Chalk Hill'.

In 1959, Eileen Hester O'Meara sadly died in Mount Stuart Nursing Home in Torquay, Devon, at the age of 55. Her half-sister Kathleen Hollingworth O'Meara died in 1977, neither of them had married. Eugene John O'Meara O.B.E. died in Bournemouth, Dorset in June 1962. His wife Hannah passed away in 1998, at the grand age of 101!

Gertrude Charlotte O'Meara, dearly beloved wife of Eugene John O'Meara, is remembered on the Hollingworth's family grave in the Old Burial Ground, West End, Hampshire.

Many thanks to Jenny Abrahamson for providing additional information and resolving my queries.

*Continued on page 11*



The Hollingworth's family grave in the Old Burial Ground, West End

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**“Portsmouth: Harlots, Dung and Glory 1850-1930 – Into the modern world.”  
A Review by Roy Andrews**

After somewhat of a delay the next part of Andrew Negus's history of Portsmouth finally arrived for our delectation at the September Society meeting and was well worth the wait. What follows here is an outline of the facts and figures which poured forth in every sentence of Andrew's fascinating presentation.

In 1850, Portsea Island still had the four small towns we heard about in earlier presentations and much of the northern part of the island was still very rural. The dockyard was employing 3000 workers, which doubled in the next 30 years, and the island inhabitants supported 12 breweries, perhaps why 30,000 gallons of urine were produced every day!

1861 saw the arrival of HMS Warrior, the first iron clad and most modern warship in the world, and by 1870 a large new docks was built on mudflats reclaimed from the sea to the north of the original docks. Mud/silt removed to make way for the harbour was transported onto a small Whale Island which grew into HMS Excellent, the Navy's gunnery school. Years later, the Navy was forced to pay the Bishop of Winchester a large sum of money because the mud they had removed belonged to the Bishop.

To improve the health of the island's residents, Eastney Pumping Station was opened in 1870 to pump  
*Continued on page 12*

sewerage out to sea. About the same time, sailors' wives began to be employed in corset manufacturing with eventually 28 factories on the island with names like TWILFIT (think about it) making Portsmouth the centre of corset making in the country.

HMS Vernon, the Underwater Warfare School, was opened and two islands at the north of the harbour were joined together to create Horsea Island, the torpedo school. By 1880 the massive defences built around the towns were demolished as no longer considered necessary; the Landport Gate is the sole survivor of the four gates. And at the same time, the railway was extended from the town station into the dockyard; Southsea received a branch line improving access for holiday makers.

St. Mary's Church in Fratton, the oldest church on the island, was deemed ugly and so was rebuilt in 1889 at a cost of £40,000, of which £30,000 was donated by W.H. Smith of book stall fame whom the vicar met on a train one day. In Andrew's opinion, the church is the finest example of its kind architecturally in the country and should have been made the cathedral when Portsmouth was made a City, with Lord Mayor, in 1926.

By WW1 the dockyard was employing 15,000 workers and could cater for all of the Navy's 1,000 ships. 6,500 residents died in the Great War, the Battle of Jutland accounting for 500 dead. Andrew told of some of the famous people who lived or were born on the island including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, H.G. Wells, Rudyard Kipling and Peter Sellers. Less well known are Angela Weston who opened Sailors' Rests to provide food and beds but no alcohol and also Sarah Robinson who did the same for Portsmouth soldiers.

Much, much more was covered: 12 theatres, Eastney Cemetery (7 VC's) Portsmouth Grammar School (3 VC's), Portsmouth Football Club 1898, Hospitals, Farlington Race Course and so on. But we finished in the 1930's with recession and war looming but with the Schnieder Trophy seaplane races watched by thousands giving hope as the race spawned the 'Spitfire' and with Andrew Negus whetting our appetite for his next and final Portsmouth presentation.

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## **"Beggars, Rogues and Vagabonds: The Poor in Tudor Southampton"**

### **A Review by Roy Andrews**

Dr Cheryl Butler gave her usual well-presented presentation at the October meeting and started by listing the concerns of the 16th century Southampton residents namely the Reformation, climate change, population increase, crop failure and immigration - as she said not much has changed since!

Pre-Reformation, the responsibility for looking after the poor and sick was taken on by the church and in Southampton this fell mainly to the Priory situated in the south east corner of the town next to the old walls. The Leper hospital of Mary Magdalene, where the Civic Centre now is, looked after the sick and some Alms Houses were provided by St. Julien's Chapel.

After Henry VIII closed the monasteries and took for himself their wealth, it fell to the citizens of

*Continued on page 13*

Southampton to pay towards helping the poor; the payments depended on the residents' wealth and property and the charges ranged from one penny to twelve pennies. Those in need had to show why they could not work i.e. injury or disability or were orphans.

In the 1520's, there were 64 paupers listed, 90 living at subsistence level and 13 beggars who were licensed to beg, overseen by the Town Crier. The licence ensured no itinerant tramps /gypsies, of whom honest citizens lived in fear, could operate within the town and for any persistent itinerants or those pretending to be disabled, the punishment could be the stocks, whipping or hair shaved.

In 1563, new Alms Houses were built next to St. Mary's Church containing nine bedrooms, all paid for by the sale of a captured pirate ship but by 1618 the authorities had felt that just dishing out alms was not the best way to help the poor and so Houses of Correction were built where the poor had to work for their meal and a bed; these 'Work Houses' lasted well into the twentieth century.

By the eighteenth century the State of Georgia in the Americas was the first to realize that the poor of this country could be used to populate that state and started to ship them there, the only stipulation being they had to be married.

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### **Portsmouth: Harlots & Glory Part 4 - Prosperity at Last** **A review by Roy Andrews**

Andrew Negus appeared at the November meeting to present in his usual bright and cheerful way - although not without some controversy at the end - his final talk on Portsmouth. After a lightening recap of the past three talks, he took up the story in the 1930's when the population of the city was 180,000, of whom 10,000 worked in the Naval Dockyard.

At this time, Portsmouth, as with the rest of the country, had suffered recession, unemployment, disarmament and poverty. In the case of Portsmouth, Andrew blamed the poverty, which still afflicts the City to this day, on the low pay meted out by the Dockyard. However, the opening of the airport on the northeast corner of the island, in 1935, brought fresh employment with the designing and building of aircraft by *Airspeed*, a company headed by the author Nevill Shute, who lived on Hayling Island. The City's football team had managed to win the FA Cup before the outbreak of war and this resulted in them becoming the team who has held the cup for the longest period as no tournaments were played during hostilities.

The arrival of WW2 saw the dockyard payroll increase to 23,000 and the large number of forts built around Portsmouth since Napoleonic times become redundant because of aircraft attacks and potential attacks from submarines requiring nets to be strung across the Solent. There were 67 raids on the city, resulting in 4000 buildings being destroyed and 950 killed; the worst attack was on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1941. To protect the citizens and provide other services, 1,500 yards of tunnels were dug into the chalk downs at Portchester (from a personal point of view, I worked in the area in the 1990's and several residents insisted that tunnels were still being dug under the hills as they could hear noises coming from under their houses!!! Who knows?)

The story of Southwick house and its role in the planning and organization for 'D' Day was told. The house, like hundreds throughout the country, was commandeered for use by the military but, unlike most of those houses, Southwick remains in the hands of the Military. Again, I learned in the 1990's how the Botherwick-Nortons, the owners of the house, were paid £20,000 when the house and surrounding lands were seized; they moved to a smaller house on the estate and still had 4000 acres. The condition of the takeover was that when/if the military gave up possession of the house, the Botherwick-Nortons could buy the house back for the original £20,000 - not bad if it were to happen today! Also, ironically, given the forced move from the house was because of the Germans, by the 1990s the best customers who paid to hunt on the estate were Germans who found the quality of the deer on the estate much better than anything in Germany.

It was not only the dockyard which played its part in the war; *Airspeed* built the Horsa gliders used on 'D' Day and the massive concrete Mulberry Harbour parts were built in the area. One of these still languishes in Langstone Harbour having broken up while under construction.

By 1951, the population had grown to 234,000 and large tracts of Havant, Cosham and Bedhampton had been taken over by the City to house the growing population. Andrew spoke of the dangers of being in the vicinity of the Dockyard when 10,000 'Dockies' poured out of the gates to go home for lunch.

In 1965, a large, typical 60's glass and concrete extension was planned for the cathedral but luckily, some might say, the treasurer ran off with the money and so a much more sympathetic structure was built, but not until 1994. Many more vignettes were told by Andrew and he finished with what the future might hold for the City if the Navy ever moves out. There is much potential for the whole of the Dockyard to be turned over to commercial use: cruise ships, car exports and much more.

Unfortunately, to illustrate all of these options, he showed pictures of Southampton with perhaps the suggestion Portsmouth could steal the lot from Southampton. This resulted in something I have never heard before at one of our meetings - members muttering discontentedly to the speaker at such a suggestion. I think his comments were intended as light hearted, but he needs to look at a map to see that Portsmouth would have nowhere near the acreage Southampton has. It does not have the depth of water or the double-tides. He mentioned new aircraft carriers but when they were being built, there was talk that because of their size, they may have to dock in Southampton. Much dredging has allowed them to squeeze into Portsmouth and they only weigh 65,000 tonnes - much, much smaller than a lot of what Southampton takes. Big is beautiful.

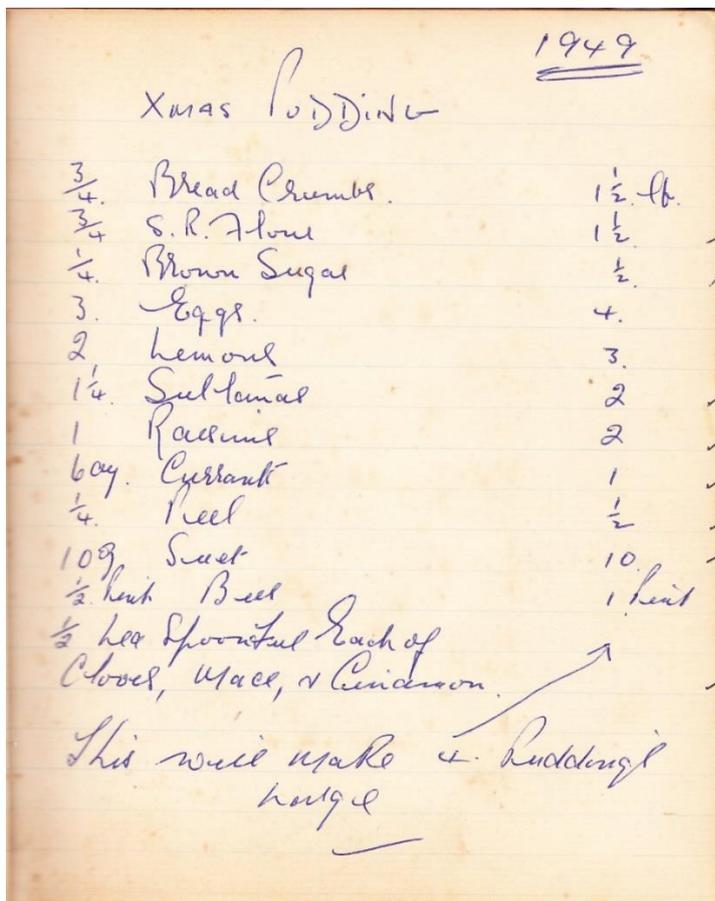
However, controversy aside, Andrew gave us, over four informative and entertaining presentations, a comprehensive and sometimes personal insight to the history of Portsmouth.

## RECIPE CORNER: Violet Vare's Christmas Pudding



Here is another recipe from Violet Vare's recipe book, which we are lucky to have in the archive of the WELHS Museum. As stated with her Madiera Cake recipe published in the July-August 2018 issue of Westender (Vol.11, Issue 6), Violet Vare (1910-2005) was born and brought up in West End. Her memories were published by Pauline Berry in Volume 4, Issue 10 of Westender.

Unlike modern recipes for Christmas pudding, this uses beer rather than sherry, port or spirits, reflecting the austerity of the post-War years.



$\frac{3}{4}$  lb (12 oz) bread crumbs  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  lb (12 oz) self-raising flour  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  lb (4 oz) brown sugar  
 3 eggs  
 2 lemons  
 $\frac{1}{14}$  lb (20 oz) sultanas  
 1lb raisins  
 6 oz currants  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  ln (4 oz. peel)  
 10 oz suet  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  pint of beer  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoonful each of cloves, mace & cinnam

*The numbers which Vera has written down the right hand side of the page are double-quantities (with the exception of eggs and lemons) to make 4 large puddings.*

Violet dated this recipe 1949 and like many of her recipes and others from this period, no method is given as it was obvious to her, the recipe being merely a reminder of quantities of the ingredients. Simply beat the ingredients together and pour into greased pudding basins. Seal carefully before steaming. Vera doesn't specify the size of a "large" pudding. Most modern recipes for 2 pint (or 1 litre) puddings suggest steaming for 2 hours and reheating by steaming for 1 hour.

PLEASE NOTE: I have not tested this recipe.

# HAPPY NEW YEAR!

## West End Local History Society Meetings 2022

January 5	“HISTORY OF NETLEY HOSPITAL”	Ursula Pearce
February 2	“WILLIAM COBBETT’S BOTLEY”	Geoff Watts
March 2	“1338 AND ALL THAT”	Andy Skinner
April 6	AGM <u>plus</u> “HISTORY OF BROADLANDS”	Phoebe Merrick
May 4	“CUNARD HISTORY AND GLAMOROUS STARS”	Steve Herra
June 1	“PEOPLE ON PLINTHS”	Tony Cross
July 6	“WE LANDED BY MOONLIGHT”	Dr. Henry Goodall
August 3	SOCIAL EVENING AT THE MUSEUM	
September 7	“WINDSOR CASTLE – Monument of Tradition, Symbol of Change”	Jake Simpkin
October 5	“THE MIRACLE FLOWER – from Flanders to the Tower”	Jeremy Prescott
November 2	“MARMALADE, SPUDS AND A BAG OF GOLD – gift giving in Tudor Southampton”	Dr. Cheryl Butler
December 7	SOCIAL EVENING, CHRISTMAS BUFFET & RAFFLE <u>plus</u> “MY LIFE ON THE STAGE”	John Pitman

PLEASE NOTE:

Meetings may be subject to change or cancellation according to Covid regulations.