

WESTENDER

Newsletter of the West End Local History Society
Spring 2025



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EDITOR Sue Ballard

Membership fees £12 per annum. Payment may be made by bank transfer:

Account Name: West End Local History Society

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WANTED

Neville has confirmed that he will not be standing for re-election as Chairman at the A.G.M. in April.

If you value the Society and would like to see it continue, please consider standing for election in April. We cannot operate without a Chair Person.

Without a committee, the Society – and the museum – will have to close.

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Kathleen Mills, Beloved Wife of Harry Woosnam-Mills, Ceylon

By Paula Downer



In the Old Burial Ground in West End, Hampshire, lies the grave of

KATHLEEN, BELOVED WIFE OF
HARRY WOOSNAM MILLS,
COLUMBO, CEYLON
BORN FEBRUARY 8TH 1878
DIED JULY 10TH 1923

Her husband is buried elsewhere, not in West End. I was intrigued, why was Harry Woosnam-Mills buried elsewhere? Harry Woosnam-Mills was a newspaper proprietor in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). He was in West End when his wife sadly passed away at the Southampton Arms Hotel in Moorgreen Road. Harry appeared to be temporarily staying with Harold Jackson at nearby Firgrove House in Moorhill Road.

Kathleen, born in February 1875, was registered as Mabel Kathleen Nagington, her parents were George and Elizabeth (née Tomkinson) Cox Nagington. Mabel Kathleen and her elder sister Lillian Maude grew up in the Town of Dudley, Staffordshire. By 1891, the family had moved to Fareham in Hampshire, where her father took over as Proprietor of The Railway Hotel.

Harry Woosnam-Mills, born 1872 in Montgomeryshire, Wales, trained to become a journalist, having gained experience in England, in 1895 he joined the staff of the 'Pioneer Civil and Military Gazette' in India. The Gazette was a daily English language newspaper founded in 1872, its Headquarters were based in Lahore, Punjab. Harry soon progressed to the role of Assistant Editor (Rudyard Kipling, English author and poet, was Assistant Editor from 1882-87). During Harry's three years in India, there were constant hostilities, skirmishes and fighting on the border in the North West, between British India troops and the local Afghanistan tribes. Harry Woosnam-Mills wrote and published detailed reports of the key events: 'The Pathan Revolt in North West India', followed by its sequel 'The Tirah Campaign'. Harry then spent two years in Paris, France before returning to England. He jumped at the chance to join the staff of the 'Times of Ceylon', a leading newspaper read by European residents and Plantation owners. But before setting off for Ceylon in the spring of 1901, Harry Woosnam-Mills got married to Mabel Kathleen Nagington. A son Harry Roland was born c.1903, followed by Philip Sydney c.1904, presumably in Ceylon. Harry became the Assistant Editor for the 'Times of Ceylon'. He went home on furlough in 1905 and a daughter Yvonne Phyllis was born 1906 in Ipswich, presumably where Kathleen's parents were residing at that time. When Harry returned to Ceylon it could be surmised that Kathleen decided to stay in England, to bring up her new baby and two young sons.

Mabel Kathleen's father George Nagington sadly died in 1917, his address shown as 'Caithness', Shakespeare Road, Worthing in Sussex. Mabel Kathleen is shown to be residing at this address

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during the period 1918-20. Kathleen and her mother Elizabeth shortly moved to Cornwall; the 1921 Census for England shows them both living in the Cornish village of Tregullow, near Redruth (it appears that Mabel Kathleen preferred to be known as Kathleen). Elizabeth's grandson, Kathleen's nephew, G. Ettore Ricci, age 21, is also listed along with a cook, two maids and a private sick nurse, Winifred Semmens, from a nearby Nursing Home. This suggests that Kathleen was in poor health, possibly with a form of Tuberculosis (TB). There was a high incidence of Tuberculosis in the U.K. at this time and was easily spread.

So why did Kathleen come to the parish of South Stoneham? Could it be that Kathleen or her nurse knew of Tuberculosis specialists in the wider area? Senior Physician R.A.M.C. Temporary honorary Major (whilst employed by the British Red Cross Hospital at Netley) Arthur de Winton Snowden M.D., was in charge of the Medical Section, specialising in Tuberculosis diseases. He instigated an open-air hut for the Tuberculosis patients as it was believed that fresh air and sunlight was beneficial. The 1917 Medical Directory for Southampton refers to a Doctor Holden who was a Tuberculosis Medical Officer and Bacteriologist.

A Rural District Isolation Hospital for South Stoneham was situated a short distance away from the South Stoneham Poor Law Institution (as it was known then). An Infectious Diseases Hospital had been here since 1894, built on eight acres of land purchased by the Rural Sanitary Authority for this purpose; they were responsible for Public Health. The Isolation Hospital, built of corrugated iron, lined with wood, was referred to by the Public Guardians, as "Foul Wards", "Consumptive Ward" or "Infectious Ward". The Medical Officer in charge at this time was the much-respected Doctor Alfred Spearman Pern (M.R.C.S. England, L.R.C.P. London) of Portland House in the village of Botley. It was his duty to ensure that satisfactory sanitary conditions of the building were maintained and that precautions were being taken to prevent the spread of contagious diseases. He also supervised treatment of the patients. The Medical Officer was normally a local General Practitioner whom carried out these duties as well as running his own practice. Tuberculosis, also known as Consumption, was one of the main causes of death during the 19th and early 20th century. Patients were treated at home, if possible, and if not, they were treated in the Infectious Diseases Hospital. Unfortunately, effective medication to treat Tuberculosis was not available at this time; consequently and very sadly Kathleen Mills died on the 10th July 1923, aged 47, of a chronic disease of her lungs causing Tuberculous Peritonitis. Tuberculous Peritonitis, spread by Tuberculosis in the lungs, can affect the abdomen. It can be caused by contaminated food, especially unpasteurised dairy. In the early years of the 20th century most of the milk was sold unpasteurised; the milk churns being used to deliver milk were easily contaminated. In 1922, in the U.K., milk required pasteurisation i.e. heat treatment to kill bacteria, although it was not made law. Is it possible that this is how Kathleen became infected? Sadly, antibiotics to treat Tuberculosis were not introduced until the mid-20th century.

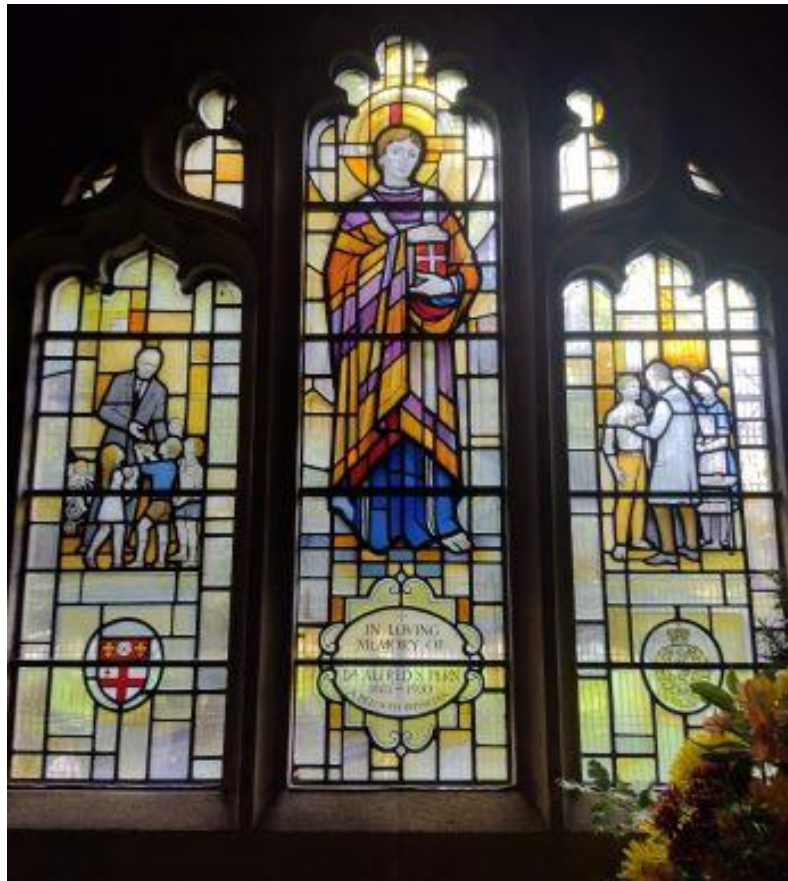
Only two years later, in March 1925, Kathleen's husband Harry Woosnam-Mills passed away, aged 52, in Las Palmas, Gran Canaria; he is buried in the English Cemetery in Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife.

Kathleen's sister Lillian Maude married Hector Ricci in Portsea, Hampshire in 1898, her nephew Ettore Salvatore Ricci was born in 1899 in Leicester, England.

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In 1931, Philip Sydney Woosnam-Mills married Phyllis Helen Mary Pearse in Hawley, Hampshire. They had a son, Philip Christopher, born 1934, and a daughter Susan Jane born 1940, both baptised at All Saints Church in Botley, Hampshire. Their father, Philip, is identified as a gentleman fruit farmer living at The Hermitage in Botley. Philip Sydney died 1975 in Wiltshire. In 1933, Yvonne Phyllis Woosnam-Mills married Cecil Wardley Gains in London and they emigrated to Melbourne, Australia. In 1937, Harry Roland Woosnam-Mills married Olga S McDonald in Marylebone, London. Harry Roland died 1983 in Bodmin, Cornwall.

South Stoneham Poor Law Institution became known as the West End Institute when the Southampton Board of Guardians took over the administration in the 1920s. The Isolation Hospital was subsequently referred to as the Infectious Diseases Hospital. The Local Government Act of 1929 abolished the Board of Guardians, transferring the responsibility to local Councils and Boroughs. This gave local authorities the power to turn the Poor Law Institutes into hospitals. West End Institute became Moorgreen Hospital, the newly formed National Health Service taking over the site in 1948. The Isolation Hospital in West End has long been demolished; the Kelly's Directory of Southampton has not referred to the Isolation or Infectious Diseases Hospital since 1939. Today, within the vicinity of the old Isolation Hospital, is the Tom Rudd Unit which was opened in 1982. Thomas Newton Rudd was a pioneer in geriatric medicine, who came to Southampton in 1957 as a consultant geriatrician; his geriatric service at Moorgreen Hospital had an excellent reputation. He also provided a psychogeriatric service at Knowle hospital near Fareham.



In All Saints Church, Botley, a Memorial Window to Alfred Spearman Pern reads:
IN LOVING MEMORY OF DR. ALFRED S. PERN 1887-1970
A BELOVED PHYSICIAN

Stories Behind a Museum Object: Horace Fanstone's photograph collection by Sue Ballard

Shortly after re-opening following the covid lockdown, the museum received a donation of a photograph album and three separate mounted photographs belonging to Horace Fanstone, who we are told had been the gardener at Townhill House with his father William, working under Head Gardener Bob Moody. The album was accompanied by a leaving card signed by the names of other servants at the house, including three members of bedroom staff, two kitchen staff, three dining room staff, a linen room lady and an evening lady. The photograph album contains several photographs of Townhill house (labelled by Horace "Swaythling House, Cutbush Lane") and its gardens, including the sunken garden, as well as several photographs of royalty visiting the house. Most interesting, though, are the pictures of family members and colleagues.

The largest and easiest photograph to identify was that of a wedding group, with the names of the bridal couple and of some of the guests. This enabled a basic family tree to be constructed which showed how the various individuals were related. The happy couple were Ted Rockett and Mabel Davis. The guests included members of both the Fanstone and the Davis families. The photograph was undated, but records show that Edward Cornelius Rockett and Mabel Davis were married at the church of St. James, West End in July 1915. The 1939 Register shows them living at 4 Hawthornes, Moorgreen. Edward (Ted) was a railway goods porter, classed as a heavy worker. Their son Gordon was an aircraft fitter and daughter Dorothea was a butcher's clerk.



The Wedding of Ted Rockett & Mabel Davis July 1913

Back row: (1) Ken Davis aged about 1 year old with his mother Laura Davis née Pavey. (2) Horace's father William Fanstone (Bill). (3) Ken's father Harry Davis. (4) Horace's grandfather John Davis.
Front Row: (5) Horace Fanstone with mother Ethel Fanstone née Davis. (6) Horace's grandmother Sarah Ann Davis née Harfield.

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The wedding photograph is not a formal studio portrait, but appears to be in the garden of a house. The windows match those of the front of a house in one of the other two mounted photographs, of Birchmoor Cottage, Swaythling Road. However, Birchmoor Cottage is clearly a single detached house, whereas the wedding photograph appears to show a double porch with two doors – perhaps a pair of semi-detached cottages by the same builder.



Ethel Davis at Birchmoor Cottage, Swaythling Road
Note the windows.

Mabel had been born at West End and was the youngest child of John Davis and his wife Sarah Ann Harfield. John Davis had been born at Rimpton, Somerset in 1859, the son of a farm labourer John Davis and his wife, Emma Rapson née Wright (a 25 year old widow when she married John Davis senior.) The young John Davis started out as a carter's boy at the age of 12 before becoming a carter himself. However, by 1884 he had moved to West End, where he married Sarah Ann Harfield and found work as a shepherd, settling at Hatch Bottom. John went on to become a cattleman and later reverted to a farm labourer. Sarah Ann Harfield was born at Twyford, Hampshire. She was the daughter of William Harfield, a shepherd, and his wife Harriet Jefferey, a laundress. Sarah Ann had worked as a servant in her teens and as a housekeeper in a small household by the time she was twenty-three years old.

John and Sarah Ann Davis had three children – Harry, a nurseryman who married Laura Pavey; Ethel who married George Fanstone; and Mabel, the bride who married Edward Rockett in our photograph. The family were poor. The 1891 census shows John as a shepherd and Sarah Ann working as a dressmaker, despite having three children under the age of five. Sarah Ann died in 1925 and John Davis died in 1937 at Moorgreen.

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The 1913 bride Mabel Rockett née Davis (left)
& her sister Ethel Fanstone née Davis in later life

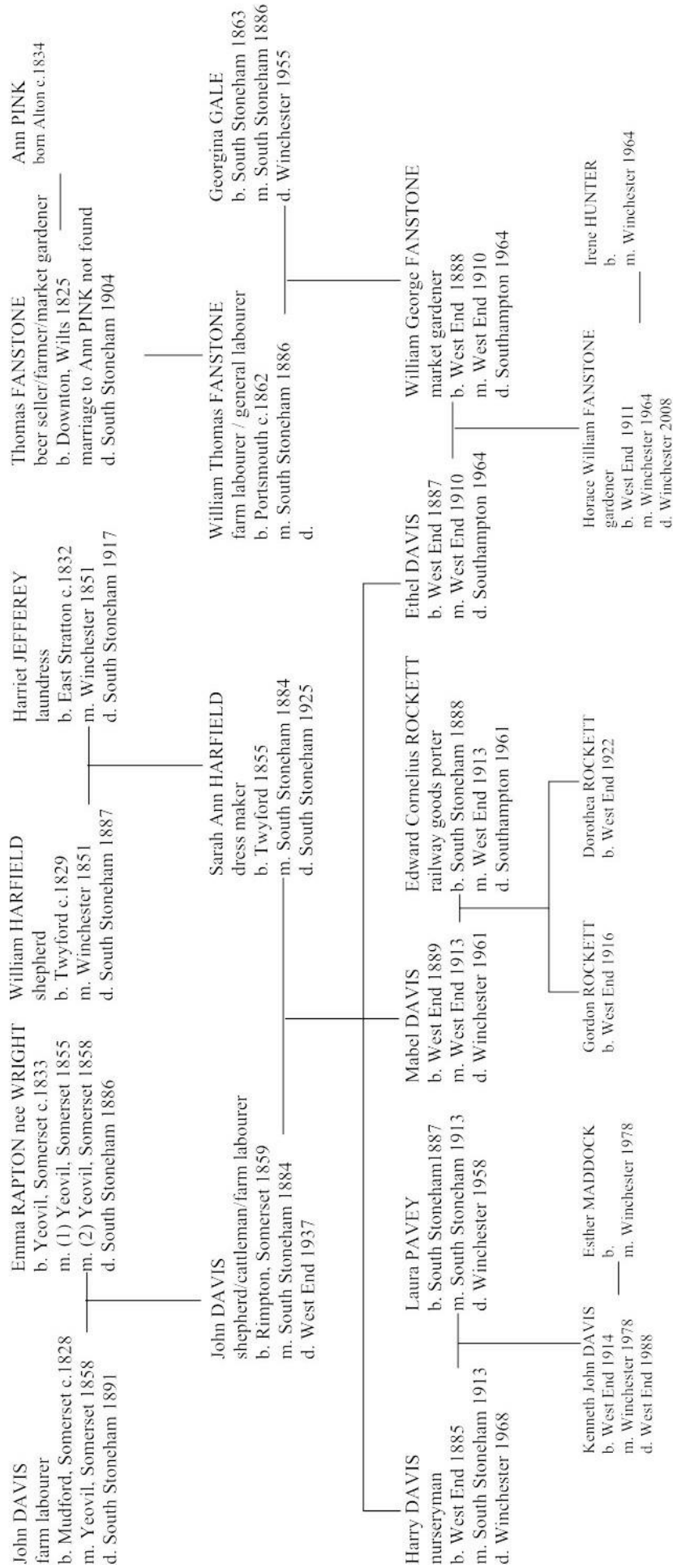
Horace William Fanstone was born at Moorgreen in 1911 and baptised at St. James's church, West End. Horace's father William George Fanstone (Bill) was also born at Moorgreen, the son of William Thomas Fanstone and his wife Georgina from Moorgreen. Three generations of his Fanstone forebears had lived and worked in West End, beginning with his great grandfather Thomas Fanstone.

Horace's great-grandfather Thomas Fanstone was born at Downton, near Salisbury in 1825, the son of Susan & Matthew Henry Fanstone. Thomas had a varied career – as a beer seller and general dealer at the Cricketer's Arms in Botley in 1871, as a farmer of 137 acres at Wildern Farm, Hedge End in 1881 and as a farmer at Hatch Bottom Farm, near Allington Lane in 1891. The birthplaces of Thomas & Ann's children show that the family had moved around Hampshire before reaching Botley – from Portsmouth, where Horace's father William George Fanstone was born, to Petersfield and later Durley. The changes in occupation suggest that he made sufficient money at the Cricketer's Arms to enable him to set up as a farmer. However, in the 1901 census Thomas had turned to market gardening at Hatch Bottom.

Horace's grandfather William Thomas Fanstone began as a farm labourer and then as a general labourer at Moorgreen. This would have been a step up, as farm labourers in the south of England were the poorest paid of manual workers – records show that in 1891 farm labourers were paid on average 13 shillings and 9 pence ha'penny (69p) per week – the equivalent of £35.88 per annum, compared to the equivalent of £41.94 per annum for general labourers.

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Horace FANSTONE & the DAVIS Family tree



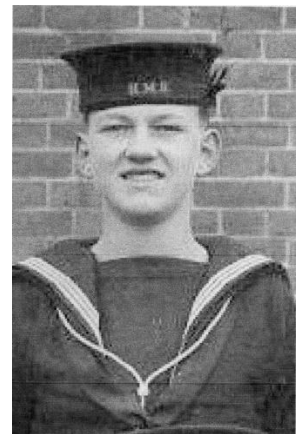
NOTES:
 West End was part of South Stoneham Registration District until 1927, when it was transferred to Eastleigh Registration District. It was transferred to Winchester Registration District in 1932.
 Bitterne was part of South Stoneham Registration District until it was transferred to Southampton Registration District in 1924.

Horace's father William George Fanstone is shown in the 1911 census to have been a market gardener (worker) – that is, he was employed as a market gardener and did not have his own business. The West End parish magazine of September 1910 shows that William George Fanstone of Moorgreen married Ethel Davis of Birchmoor Cottage, West End on 5th July 1910. The 1939 Register shows Horace as an agricultural labourer living with his parents William and Ethel at "Yokohama", Moorgreen. William was a gardener. No voluntary war work is recorded for William or Horace, though that does not mean that they did none. Horace married Irene Hunter in 1964. The 1970 Kelly's Directory of Southampton shows him living at Moorgreen Road and the 2004 electoral register shows Mr Horace W. Fanstone at 155, Moorgreen Road, West End. Horace died on 9th May 2008, having lived in West End all his life.

Shared Memories – Fred Harder

Sadly, Fred Harder, who shared some of his memories with us in this newsletter, died in November 2024, just after our Winter issue went to print. Our thoughts are with his family.

Fred very kindly provided the museum with a folder containing his memories of growing up in Northam before moving to West End, including a separate memoir named "My Navy Years". It can be viewed on request at the museum.



Fred as a new recruit.

FORTHCOMING LOCAL EVENTS

Saturday 7th June - West End Parish Council Summer Fete on Hatch Grange

Once again, West End Local History Society will be running the popular coconut shy this year. Do come along and support us.

JANE AUSTEN 250 EVENTS

29th March 2025-October 2025 – "A Very Respectable Company: Jane Austen & Her Southampton Circle" Exhibition at Sea City Museum, Southampton

Jane Austen's circle of friends and neighbours included Ann Newell her next-door neighbour an absentee landowner of plantations and slaves; Charlotte Fitzhugh married into a wealthy East India Company family and superfan of Austen's favourite actress Sarah Siddons; and Anne Middleton the mixed-race plantation heiress born in Jamaica, married in India, who had her private life splashed across national newspapers. Women who could easily find themselves portrayed among the characters found within the pages of Mansfield Park, Emma and Sanditon. Descendants have loaned items from family archives to provide new and largely unseen material linked to Austen and her networks, including the Austen Family Household Book.

3rd May 2025 Sea City Museum, Southampton– – Placing Jane: National figures, local context. A British Association of Local History Study Day – MAST Theatre. A special event for Communities and Local History Month. A whole day of presentations, looking at Jane in a literary and actual landscape, plus a private viewing of the exhibition *A Very Respectable Company*. Speakers include: Professor Gillian Dow, and Professor John McAleer from The University of Southampton, Jo Willet award winning television producer and the biographer of Sarah Siddons, Nicky Pink author of ‘Dibdin and Jane Austen: Musical Cultures of Gentry Women’, & Angela Barlow author of *Jane Austen & the Arts*.

4th May 2025, 2pm – 3.30pm Trafalgar Days Walk, starting point Holy Rood Church, High Street, Southampton. Costumed Guided Walk in the company of the Sarah Siddons Fan Club Theatre pre-booking strongly advised. Join our costumed guides and hear Naval stories and links to Admiral Nelson and Frank Austen, a tale of beef burgers, flogging and gambling, including a visit to St Michael’s Church to view the ‘admirals memorials’. www.wegotickets.com/sarahsiddonsfanclub

4th June – ‘Jane2025’, 2pm – 4pm Peartree Church Open Day FREE

visit the Austen family memorial, and the exhibition on the history of the church used by the Austen family. Jane Austen was god-mother to her cousin’s eldest daughter, Elizabeth Matilda Butler Harrison. You can also sit on the writer’s bench commissioned to commemorate Austen’s link with the Church, and enjoy an afternoon talk on Jane & Peartree. Refreshments will also be available at the Church. <https://www.peartreeandstmarkschurches.org>

10-14th June 2025 – ‘Pride & Prejudice (Sort of)’ Mayflower Theatre, Southampton

The Laurence Olivier Award winning production, this adaptation of Austen’s most iconic love story is both affectionate and audacious. As the Daily Mail put it ‘Completely faithful to the book, it’s also a raucously irreverent romp’. <https://www.mayflower.org.uk>

22nd June 2025, 11am – Sugar, Slaves & Seabathing – ‘Thinking Thursday’ Guided Walk starting from Tudor House (repeated as a Black History Month Hidden History Walk on 12th October 2025, 11 am)

The Southampton of Jane’s day was a watering place famed for sea bathing, but it was also a town dominated in politics by the ‘West Indian Party’, plantation owners who fought against abolition and made their money from sugar and rum. It was a town of admirals, shipbuilders and colonialists who were at the forefront of a growing empire. This walk was commissioned as part of the University of Southampton’s AHRC funded Maritime Communities research project.

24-26th June 2025 – ‘The Stinking Fish of Southampton’ – street theatre perambulation with the Sarah Siddons Fan Club Theatre, starts from Holy Rood church, High Street.

‘Beware of the insipid vanities and idle dissipations of the metropolis of England; Beware of the unmeaning luxuries of Bath and of the stinking fish of Southampton’. *Love & Friendship, 1790. Jane Austen*

Join Mrs Austen as she introduces you to her friends, neighbours, acquaintances and potential husbands for her unmarried daughters as you visit the site of the Austen’s home, the assembly rooms, bathing establishment and meet wealthy merchants, army deserters, famous actors, debtors and dashing naval officers. www.wegotickets.com/sarahsiddonsfanclub

10-12th July 2025 – The Global Jane Austen, conference – University of Southampton

With papers on all aspects of Austen’s writing and life, her posthumous reception, her influences, and her writing alongside that of her contemporaries. Papers on adaptations, translations and creative responses to Austen’s work (written and/or performed in all languages), material and textual transmission of her works, and her reception and reputation in countries outside the Anglophone world.

11th July 2025 – Concert, The Music of Jane Austen – Turner Simms Concert Hall

A rare insight into the family life of Jane Austen through her favourite songs and music.

[Turner Sims](#)

18th July Friends of Southampton Old Cemetery – walking tour which includes Austen family graves along with other notables from the period. Meet at Cemetery Gate, Cemetery Road.

<https://fosoc.org/>

19th July 2025, 11am Jane Austen & Southampton Spa Walk – starting from Tudor House

Jane Austen spent three key parts of her life in Southampton, firstly as a seven-year-old child on a stay as part of her education; as a seventeen-year-old young lady and acknowledged ‘flirt’ come to enjoy the balls and entertainments of the popular spa town; and finally, as a mature woman about to embark on her writing career and residing in Castle Square.

July Pattens to Peartree

Recreating Jane Austen’s Walk from Southampton to visit her friends the Lance Family of Chessel House, with a stop at the historic Peartree Church, inspiration for Thomas Gray’s Elogy in a Country Churchyard. This is a 5-mile walk, plus a stop at lunchtime to view Peartree Church.

www.wegotickets.com/sarahsiddonsfanclub

5th October 2025, 11 am Black History Month, Hidden History Walks ‘Black Georgians’ – with the God’s House Tower Guides. Starting at God’s House Tower

Jane Austen’s Southampton was a multicultural society, not only the plantation families and their black servants, there were also black soldiers who served with Wellington, black sailors who served with Nelson, as well as abolitionists, actors, writers. Find out more about Southampton’s Hidden History. www.godshousetower.org.uk

Self-Guided Tours – Jane Austen Trail Leaflet, an updating of the popular guide produced for the 2017 celebrations and sponsored by Go Southampton available at various sites around the old town.

WEST END LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY FORTHCOMING EVENTS

All events take place at West End Parish Centre, Chapel Road SO30 3FE and begin at 7.30 p.m.
Members free. Visitors welcome (£2 per person per meeting). Membership £12 per year.

Programme of Talks 2025

January	NO MEETING
February 5 th	“Murder Mayhem, Pillage & Plunder” – Dr. Cheryl Butler
March 5 th	“Southampton and the Second 100 Years’ War” – Andy Skinner
April 2 nd	A.G.M. – plus “From the Solent to Howard’s Way: a brief history of Southampton Water – Stephen Hoadley
May 7 th	“The Mysterious Disappearance of the Irish Crown Jewels” – Steve Herra
June 4 th	“Royal Victoria Hospital / Netley Abbey Village” – Ursula Pearce
July 2 nd	“Lepe Beach: the D-Day Mulberry Harbour Construction Site – Dr. Henry Goodall NONFA
August 6 th	“The Pilgrim Fathers and Southampton” – Jake Simpkin
Sept. 3 rd	“Southampton’s Missing Vikings” – Andy Skinner
Oct. 1 st	“Southampton, Water, Slaughter & Trade” – Andrew Negus
Nov. 5 th	“Vietnam Veterans Remembrance Wall” – Jeremy Prescott
Dec. 3 rd	SOCIAL EVENING – raffle, drinks provided, bring your own plate of food – plus “Shopping in the High Street in the 1940s and 50s – John Pitman

Articles for Westender

You don’t have to be a historian to write for Westender. We would love to hear your memories of growing up in the village.

email: suballard@yahoo.co.uk

or leave hard copies at the museum addressed to Sue Ballard, please.

Closing Date for contributions to Summer Issue: 12th May 2025.