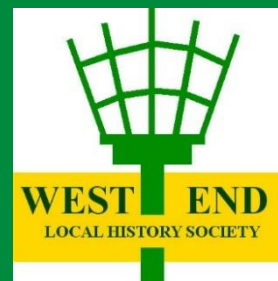


WESTENDER

Newsletter of the West End Local History Society
Autumn 2026



CHAIRMAN CURRENTLY VACANT
TREASURER & MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY Nigel Edwards
SECRETARY Lin Dowdell
MINUTES SECRETARY Sue Ballard

WEBMASTER Peter Wallace
RESEARCHERS Pauline Berry & Paula Downer
EDITOR Sue Ballard
MUSEUM TEAM: Sue Ballard, Lisette Edwards, Nigel Edwards

Membership fees £15 per annum. Payment may be made by bank transfer:

Account Name: West End Local History Society

Sort Code: 30-13-95

Account Number: 00834027

Please ensure you provide your full name.



Outside West End Model Bakery G.E. May c.1900

WELHS ... Preserving our past for your future ...

West End Local History Society is sponsored by



**WEST END
PARISH
COUNCIL**



FOR EVENTS & PUBLICATIONS
VISIT OUR WEBSITE
www.westendlhs.co.uk
CONTACT
email: westendlhs@aol.com

Wagga Wagga to West End – Part One

By Peter Sillence

The tale of the Tichborne claimant is one I first heard as a child, from my father, while he drove the family to Alresford for a day out. This story concerns Roger Tichborne the heir to a baronetcy, disappointed in love and who is then lost at sea. He then allegedly appears more than a decade later, from the Australian outback, claiming to be the missing heir. The civil and criminal trials which followed held the record as the longest court case in British legal history until the mid-1990s. For the months on end that the civil and criminal trials were in progress, full-page reports ran daily in newspapers across Britain, the United States and Australia. Wilkie Collins, George Eliot, Mark Twain and members of the royal family were among the notables who vied for seats in the court's public gallery. It's a local Hampshire story, but it is of extra interest to us, as the Claimant's wife Mary lived for the greater part of her life enclosed in the South Stoneham Union Workhouse, later Moorgreen Hospital and now Henman House.

At a time before forensic science and when passports were not always required, very few people owned any form of personal documentation. The case centred on the difficulty of proving identity in a court of law. The country was divided, with the Establishment opposing the Claimant but many ordinary people supporting a man who they regarded as being deprived of his rightful inheritance; at one point it was feared that the case might even cause a revolution or civil war.

The Tichbornes were devout Catholics which, until the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829, meant that they could neither stand for Parliament nor become officers in the armed forces. Like other Catholic families therefore, the Tichbornes lived the lives of wealthy country gentlemen, hunting, shooting and amassing land and wealth. Their main home was at Tichborne Park near Alresford, although they also had an estate near Poole and property in London.

Roger Tichborne was born in 1829, the eldest son of Sir James and Henriette Felicite Tichborne. His mother, Henriette, an illegitimate member of the French royal family, was spoiled, highly strung and loathed England and the rural life with a passion. Henriette took Roger to Paris as a child and he didn't return until he was 16, first to boarding school at Stonyhurst, and later into the army. His holidays were spent with his uncle and aunt, Sir Edward and Lady Doughty, and their daughter Katherine, known in the family as Katty. Roger and Katty fell in love, but the match was bitterly opposed by both families, not least because they were first cousins. Finally, it was agreed that Roger should travel abroad for three years and that if they still wished to marry when he returned, then the family would raise no objection.

Roger went first to South America in 1853. He travelled widely for over a year around Chile, Peru and Brazil. He had two daguerreotype photographs taken of himself whilst travelling and sent letters and objects he had collected home. During this time, his cousin Katty married Percival Pickford Radcliffe, member of a wealthy Yorkshire Catholic family. Roger decided to sail for the West Indies in the spring of 1854, and managed to take a last-minute passage on board the 'Bella' from Rio de Janeiro. Soon afterwards, the longboat from the 'Bella' was found floating in the sea, and Roger Tichborne was presumed dead. Although the 'Bella' had been officially declared lost, Roger's mother was convinced that he was still alive, and placed advertisements in the national and international press seeking information about her missing son.



Roger Charles Doughty-Tichborne
by London Stereoscopic & Photographic Company, after
Thomas Helsby
albumen carte-de-visite, circa 1873 (1854)
NPG Ax28421
© National Portrait Gallery, London

Roger's younger brother, Alfred, had in the meantime become the 11th Baronet, though his excessive drinking and profligate habits led to his early death at the age of 27, leaving his wife, Theresa, pregnant with their first child. Eventually, in 1866, after more than a decade, Lady Henriette Tichborne received the letter she had been hoping for. A man known as Tom Castro, claiming to be Roger Tichborne, wrote from Wagga Wagga, in Australia, with a story of having been picked up from the wreck of the *Bella* and taken to Australia, where he had become a butcher and postman. His story, however unlikely, was given credence because he suffered from the same genital malformation as Roger Tichborne. Lady Tichborne lost no time and invited the man she believed to be her son, together with his wife Mary and child, back to England. However, because Roger had been declared officially dead, and because Alfred's wife had given birth to a son, the Tichborne Claimant had to prove his identity in a court of law.

The first civil trial, in 1871, opened at the Court of Common Pleas in Westminster and was intended to prove whether the man from Wagga Wagga was in fact Roger Tichborne. In March 1868, before the case started, Lady Tichborne died and his main support was lost, for, as she said, 'how would a mother not know her own son?' In order to raise funds for his legal fees, the Claimant began selling 'Tichborne Bonds'; effectively a gamble on the outcome of the trial, which although they sold for between £40 and £60, were worth £100 out of the Tichborne estate if the case was won. Here is where we have another interesting West End connection. In his book 'My Life My Trees', Richard St Barbe Baker reports that his mother's father, Squire Purrott, became bankrupt by investing unwisely in Tichborne bonds and a failed railway company. She had previously refused an offer of marriage from Richard's father, John, but changed her mind when her father lost his money! You could say that the "Man of Trees" might not have been born if it wasn't for the Tichborne Claimant.

Costs in the case were considerable, with commissioners being sent both to South America and Australia to find witnesses who might be able to identify the Claimant. During these investigations, one name kept appearing; not Roger Tichborne but Arthur Orton of Wapping; son of a butcher and ship's victualler who had been sent on a long sea voyage in the hope that it would cure him of a nervous condition.

During the trial, the Claimant was asked about the contents of a sealed package that had been entrusted to Vincent Gosford, the estate steward and close friend of Roger Tichborne, before Roger's departure for South America. In his reply, the Claimant alleged that he had had intimate relations with his cousin Katty at Cheriton Mill, and that the package contained instructions for her possible confinement. Such a slur on a lady's reputation caused an outcry amongst the Establishment, and this, together with the sale of Tichborne Bonds, turned the upper classes into his most bitter enemies. In Court, the jury was shown evidence that the Claimant was in fact Arthur Orton. The trial ended in March 1872 when the Claimant lost the case, was arrested and charged with perjury for impersonating Roger Tichborne. He was taken to Newgate prison where he stayed until bail was obtained by his supporters, all still convinced of his identity as Roger.

A committee was formed for the aid of the Claimant. He had a strong backing growing amongst the working classes, who believed he had been poorly treated. He was taken on a tour of the country gathering money and support. In May, he came to Alresford and 3 weeks later he was speaking to a crowd of over 3000 in Southampton, a stronghold of his followers. A petition was sent soon after from Southampton affirming support and asking for fair treatment.



Arthur Orton
by Maull & Co
albumen carte-de-visite, 1871
NPG Ax30397
© National Portrait Gallery, London

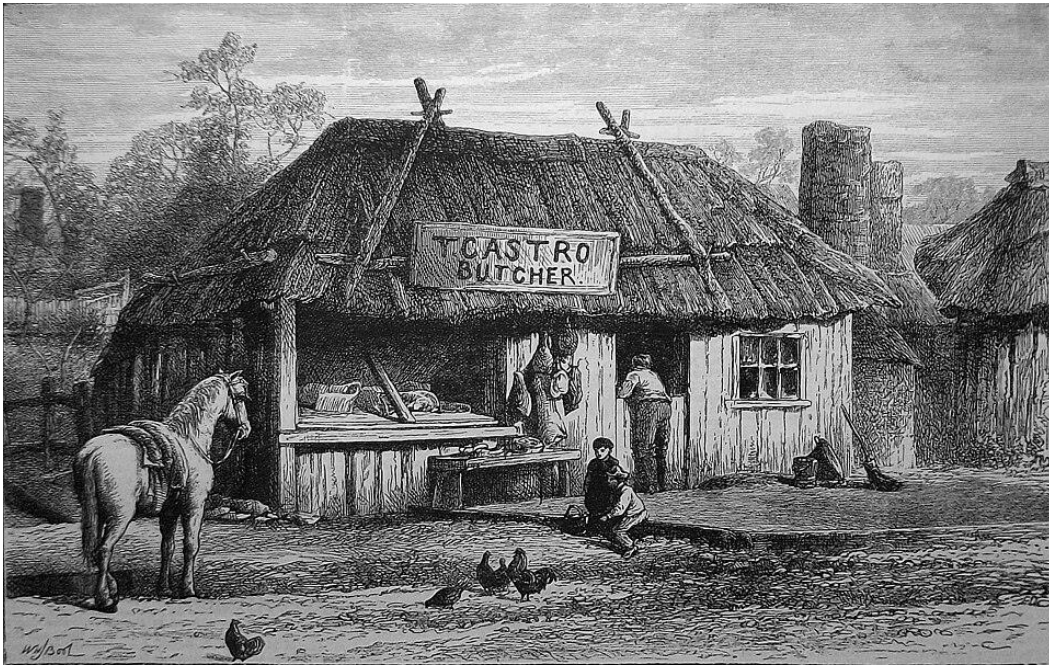
Whilst on bail, the Tichborne Claimant began to do the round of the music halls, travelling by rail and addressing huge crowds. Photographs of the Claimant and his family, and of the Tichbornes were collected by many people in much the same way as football cards are today, and these show the Claimant posing as a man of substance and fashion. Even during the second, criminal trial, the Claimant was a popular guest at dinners and parties and received 'fan mail' from ladies who found him particularly attractive.

The second trial started in April 1873 and lasted until February 1874. It was presided over by Sir Alexander Cockburn, Lord Chief Justice of England, and tried the Claimant on 32 separate counts of perjury. The case became a national sensation, with newspapers bringing out special editions with news of the latest events in the court. Sentenced to 14 years hard labour, the Tichborne Claimant served 10 years and 4 months. Initially locked in Millbank Prison, London for a probationary period, he spent the bulk of his sentence in Dartmoor. Shortly before his release he was transferred to Portsea Prison near Portsmouth. He was photographed in his prison uniform at one point, and support for his cause actually increased while he was inside.

On his release, the Claimant spent two more years on the music hall circuit, but gradually interest in the case began to wane, and he travelled to America to try his luck there. The venture was not a success, and he returned to London where he married Lily Enever, a music hall artiste. There is no evidence, however, that he had divorced his Australian wife, Mary. Arthur and Lily had four children, all of whom died in infancy, and lived in desperate poverty in London where, on the morning of April 1st 1898, the Tichborne Claimant died in his sleep. The costs of a moderate funeral were borne by the undertaker, and 5,000 people went to the cemetery, with many more lining the route to pay their respects. The Claimant was buried in a pauper's grave, without a headstone, but the coffin carried, with the permission of the Tichborne family, a plate which read 'Sir Roger Charles Doughty Tichborne'.

Returning to his wife Mary, I will attempt to give you an idea of her sad and strange life. Mary Bryant was probably born in 1846 in Goulburn near Sydney in Australia, one of 7 children. The family was Catholic, her mother Irish, her father a 2nd generation Australian bricklayer who died when she was 6 years old. She was probably forced into work at an early age and by 1863 she was secretly pregnant and working as a domestic servant in the Black Swan Inn in Wagga Wagga, a small town in New South Wales. Here, at the age of about 17, she met Tom Castro, an affable but bulky and bewhiskered butcher at least 13 years her senior. He had worked on cattle stations in the bush but had moved to Wagga and settled in a shack on the edge of town, opening a butcher's shop.

Tom had taken a fall from a horse and was nursed by Mary in the Black Horse whilst he recovered. Mary had her illegitimate child Annie in the spring of 1864 but by Christmas she was betrothed, Tom being happy to take on Annie and to marry Mary.



Sketch of Thomas Castro's (Arthur Orton) butcher shop in Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, Australia, which may have been sketched before or during the Tichborne Case.

Artist Unknown (Digitised by Bidgee) Source: Museum of the Riverina Collection

Wikimedia Commons – This image is of Australian origin and is now in the public domain because its term of copyright has expired.

In January 1865, they were married by a Wesleyan minister, (they were both Catholic but there was no priest in Wagga.) They moved into Tom's shack and at first seemed happy enough. Tom continued his butcher's business, which did not thrive, and Mary looked after Annie and took in washing. She also used skills learnt from her father to build a brick chimney for the wooden shack they lived in. She became pregnant again and in March 1866 their daughter Teresa was born.

Meanwhile Tom, who was fond of a drink and a story, had dropped hints to his friends that he was due to inherit some money and had once been shipwrecked. A local solicitor called Gibbs heard the rumours and passed them on to Arthur Cubitt, an Agent from Sydney engaged by Lady Henriette Tichborne. They met with Tom and became convinced he was in fact Roger Tichborne. They wrote to Roger's mother Lady Henriette saying he had been found and advanced Tom some money. He took advantage of this and moved with Mary and family to Sydney.

Roger's mother was overjoyed and sent money for her son to return to England. While Tom was in Sydney, he was introduced to Andrew Bogle, an Afro-Caribbean who had been a servant of Sir Edward Tichborne and, retiring with a pension from the family, had moved to Australia with his sons. Bogle recognised Tom as Roger, adding to the certainty of Gibbs and Cubitt. Eventually, the money from Lady Henriette arrived in Sydney and Tom decided to return to England and claim his birthright. Before they left, Tom and Mary remarried as Roger and Mary Tichborne at Goulburn in the Catholic church; they also left Annie with Mary's mother.

Part Two continues in the Winter 2026 Issue

Chalk On Chalk Hill

By Paula Downer

I was curious to know when South Road in West End, South Stoneham, became Chalk Hill. The 1881 Census Returns for England, South Stoneham, shows the road as South Road, in 1891 it is identified by the enumerator as 'Rugged Road' then in 1901 it became Chalk Hill. A map in the local history museum which was surveyed in 1865 and subsequently revised in 1895 shows the road marked as Chalk Hill. This suggests that the change must have happened sometime between 1881 and 1895. A local postcard shows the road as South Road in c.1907, suggesting that it was still locally known as South Road; this must have caused much confusion for the postman! Hoping for a definitive answer, I searched the Rural District Council (Highway) Minutes in the Hampshire Archives, only to find that road names were not identified apart from Westend Hill and that it was mostly concerned with the maintenance of these roads and the laying of gravel. The corner of Chalk Hill and Swaythling Road was referred to as the land opposite the New Inn! Consequently, I have not managed to find out when the name change happened.

With respect to why this road became Chalk Hill, we need to be acquainted with the surrounding geological structure. The village of West End, lying north east of Southampton and within the Wessex basin of Southern England, is surrounded by chalk downs in the north on the Hampshire and Berkshire borders. The geology of mid Hampshire is mainly Palaeogene deposits with a few chalk outcrops. The Palaeogene deposits consist of sands, clays and silt which formed after the Cretaceous period; Creta = Latin for chalk. The chalk stream of the nearby River Itchen flows south west from near Cheriton in mid Hampshire through Winchester, Bishopstoke and Mansbridge towards Southampton Water. The chalky hills of the South Downs National Park can be seen to the east of Winchester and onwards to Eastbourne in East Sussex.

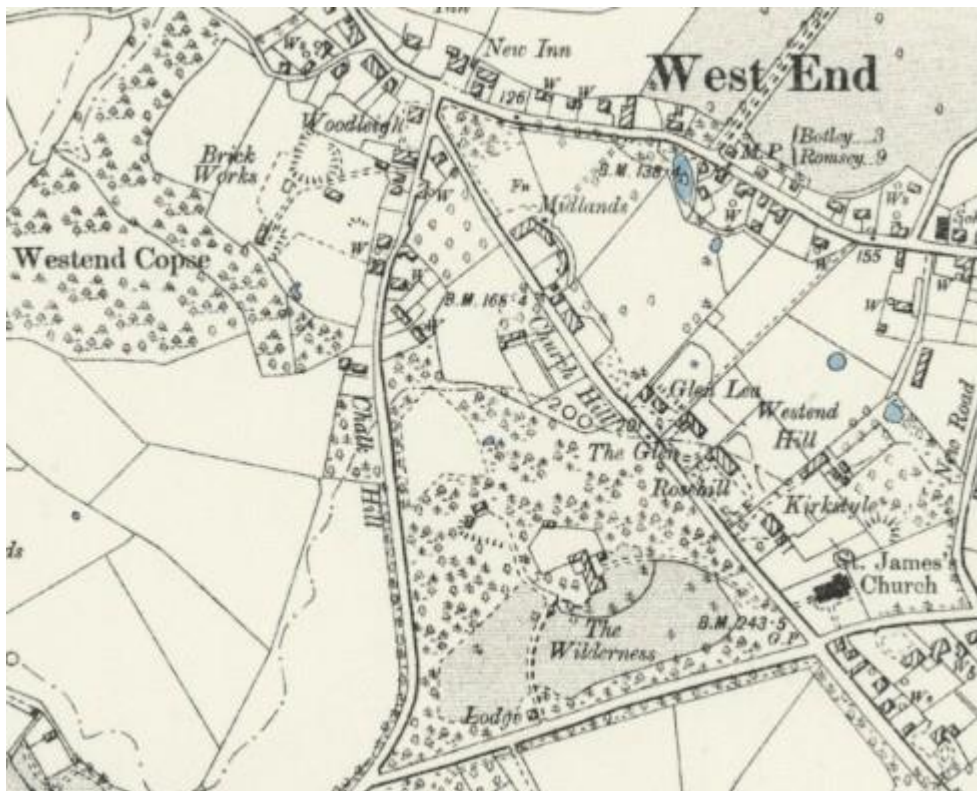
There is chalk at the top of Chalk Hill, as my late husband Mike discovered when he was digging the foundations to extend his garage workshop. This chalk is not shown on a geology map as it is lying underneath the more recent Palaeogene geological deposits and is therefore not defined as a chalk outcrop.



Mike hits solid chalk!

'Rugged Road' suggests a rough, uneven gravelly surface so it was probably just a lane from West End Road at the top of Chalk Hill to Swaythling Road at the bottom. Much of the land around West End Village was dedicated to agriculture, farming and market gardening. There was a Brickyard near the bottom of Chalk Hill, behind a large house called 'Woodleigh'; according to Sales Particulars of 1890, the clay was close to the surface, could be worked to a considerable depth (apparently over 20 feet!) and very suitable for the manufacturer of terracotta and glazed goods. Cottages and tenements extended halfway up the hill.

The Census Returns of 1881, 1891, 1901 for South Road/Chalk Hill show occupations such as Brickyard Foreman ('Jubilee Cottage'), Brickmaker, Brickmaking labourer, Bricklayer labourer, Agricultural/Farm labourer, Market Gardener, Miller, Baker, Carpenter, Shoe Maker, Letter Carrier, Policeman, Coachman, Groom, Domestic Servant, Cook. Only the large houses such as 'Woodleigh' have been identified, until 1901, when the enumerator began to identify cottages e.g. 'Walnut Cottage', 'Jubilee Cottage', otherwise they were just numbered.



Extract of OS 6-inch 1888-1915 map showing location of Chalk Hill and Brick Works
 (from the National Library of Scotland's Historic Map Collection)
 Reproduced with the permission of National Library of Scotland
 Map images - National Library of Scotland (nls.uk)

The thatched cottage(s) towards the bottom of the hill, known as 'Thatched' and 'Myrtle' Cottage were originally built as one property then it was converted into a double tenement. In 1851, one of them was occupied by a William Smith and his wife Martha. William was a Carpenter and Wheelwright employing 2 men. Next door was their son Stephen Smith, also a Wheelwright, and his wife Hannah; they had one son, Owen William Smith. A shed close to the property was used as a Wheelwright's shop. Sarah Smith is next door to William's family, shown as 'owner of houses'. William Smith died in 1866 leaving his messuage and tenement to his grandson Owen William Smith to be inherited when he reached the age of 21. Consequently, the 1881 Census shows the double tenement let out to tenants. The 1808 Sales Particulars for Townhill, the Seat of the late Nathaniel Middleton, shows members of the Smith family as tenants.

The next owner, William Hallett, via his Trustee William Throckmorton of Lincolns Inn, sold the Wheelwrights cottage to Thomas Smith in 1813 with Sarah Smith being given a life interest. The South Stoneham Tithe Map of 1845 shows Stephen Smith as owner of House and Garden and Sarah Smith as owner of Arable land, House, Yard, Garden in an area bounded by Chalk Hill, Church Hill and West End Road. Some of the Smith family graves can be seen in St. James' Churchyard and the Old Burial Ground in West End.

Henry John Webster (see 'Westender' Winter 2025) was the Letter Carrier mentioned above, having moved to Chalk Hill from Shirley, during the time when it was called 'Rugged Road'. I just wonder if Henry Webster pursued the placement of the revised name plate of Chalk Hill to end the confusion?

Chalk Hill was laid with asphalt (tarmac) in the late 1950s.

WEST END LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWS

West End Local History Society ran the coconut shy at West End Parish Council's Family Fun Day on 13th June, raising £80 for our Society's funds. Thank you to those members who helped on the day.

Sad News

Lesley Kinley 1936-2026. We regret to announce that Leslie Kinley died on 19th June. He passed away at home surrounded by his loved ones, including his wife Delphine, our former Membership Secretary. Leslie had been a member of the Society for many years and will be missed by many.



Donations can be made in memory of Leslie to Mountbatten Hampshire:

<https://www.mountbatten-hampshire.org.uk/inmemoryof/leslie-kinley>



FORTHCOMING LOCAL EVENTS

All information is correct at time of publication. Please contact event organisers for up-to-date information.

Heritage Open Day – Archives and Special Collections, University of Southampton

“We will be hosting a talk by Mac Ince of the Sholing Valleys Study Centre on **heritage apple varieties in Southampton**”.

Hartley Library Conference Room

Monday 14 September from 6pm - 7.30pm

Online booking. Tickets and more information can be found [here](#).

“We will also be offering **behind the scenes tours of the archives** which will include an opportunity to explore our upcoming exhibition titled 'Earth, Sea and Sky'.

The tour will consist of an hour-long session at the University of Southampton Archives and Special Collections and will include a guided “behind the scenes” tour of the department to our specialist storage area and Conservation studio with time to explore our Earth, Sea and Sky exhibition.

Mon 14 September 11am-12pm

Tues 15 September 11am-12pm & 2pm-3pm

If you are booking for more than one person, please state the names of all people you are booking for. We will send you a booking confirmation, followed by joining instructions closer to the date of your tour.

Online booking. More information on the tours can be found [here](#).

Portsmouth International Kite Festival, Southsea Common

Sat 12th & Sun 13th Sept 10am-5pm

FREE

“To mark the centenary of Portsmouth getting city status, the 2026 event will have the theme: 100 Kites to celebrate 100 years. The event features beautiful and awe-inspiring kites, flown by some of the world’s most internationally renowned flyers. There's so much for visitors to enjoy and admire. The festival has amazing demonstrations showcasing the art of kite flying and making, which will see UK and European champions flying multi-line kites to music - performing tricks and ballet routines. There will also be a host of activities available, including craft stalls and local amusements, whilst dedicated kite traders will be on hand with a wide range of equipment to browse and buy. Don't miss the enchanting displays - featuring beautiful single line kites (intricately appliquéd or painted with magnificent designs), amazing cellular kites (flying miracles of structural engineering), and stunning 3D soft kites in a range of shapes and sizes.”

<https://www.portsmouthkitefestival.org.uk/>

Hamble Food Festivals, Foreshore Car Park

Sat 3rd Oct 10 am – 3 pm

FREE

**Crafty Me Craft Fair at HSDC South Downs College, PO7 8AA
College Road, Havant**

Locally run monthly craft fairs on the 1st Sunday of the month (except January & June)

Sun 4th Oct 11am-3 pm

Sun 1st Nov 11am-3 pm

FREE

“Join us this month for a vibrant showcase of local artisans, crafters, and makers offering everything from stunning jewellery and home décor to delicious treats and personalized gifts. Whether you're shopping for something special or just love browsing creative stalls, there's something for everyone!”

New Forest Festival for Readers, Writers and Lovers of Words

22nd-28th Oct

“A lively programme of events and activities for all ages centred around the written word, including popular events such as the Local Writer Showcase at St. Barbe, the Play on Words Open Mic at Forest Arts and the Sci Fi and Fantasy Quiz at Vibrant Forest, hosted by the Imaginarium Bookshop.”
For more information go to www.playonwords.org.uk

APPEAL TO ALL KNITTERS

East Boldre Hedgehog Rescue sell little knitted hedgehogs to raise funds for the rescue centre that helps sick, injured and orphaned hedgehogs. If you would like to help, you can pick up a free knitting pattern at the offices of The Herald in Hythe.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

The Museum Team has received the following request for information from Michael Barfoot:

“I am currently writing a book called “Berrywood”. I would appreciate some info on the Winslowe Camp, Allington Lane, where I was born. We were squatters in the camp that was an ex American army base. My mother Sheila Pragnell was in the Moorgreen Merrymakers who performed for the troops in old village hall. Thank you.”

If anyone has any stories or photos that they are willing to share, please contact the editor and I will pass them on.

WEST END LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Unless stated otherwise, all events take place at West End Parish Centre, Chapel Road SO30 3FE and begin at 7.30 p.m.

Members free. Visitors welcome (£3 per person per meeting, including tea/coffee).

Programme of Talks 2026

Wed. 2 nd September	PLUTO: Pipeline under the ocean by Rob Eldridge
Wed. 7 th October	Roman Southampton by Andy Skinner
Wed. 4 th November	“Don’t delay, Enrol today”: The Women’s Land Army in Hampshire by John Lander
Wed. 2 nd December	CHRISTMAS SOCIAL EVENING

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 Winter issue: 4th November 2026.