THE WEST END LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

WESTENDER

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 7 DECEMBER 1999

WEST END
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

As we head towards Christmas and the New Year, indeed an especial one off Millennium New Year, can I on behalf of the Committee, wish you all a very Merry Christmas, a Prosperous New Year and best wishes for the coming historic year of 2000 AD.

Although our Parish system started just over one hundred years ago, booklets that the Society have on sale in the Heritage Centre and some little gems that Nigel, Steve, Derek and others are working on, will prove that our history did not start then but has been going on over the centuries. Tumuli, Beacons, Signal Station, Paper Mill, Transit Camps and a hospital are just a few of the many historical points of interest that members wish to research and publish. Besides the past and present Public Houses we had

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EDITOR
Nigel.G.Wood
PRODUCTION ADDRESS
40 Hatch Mead
West End
Southampton
SO30 3NE
Telephone: 01703 471886
E-mail: woodng@aol.com

CHRISTMAS FAIR A SUCCESS



Your Society, in conjunction with The Blue Cross, hired the whole of West End Parish Centre for a Christmas, Craft & Collectors Fair on 30th October. A wide range of stalls were present, selling everything from Dr Who ephemera, through the ubiquitous Beanie Babies to Christmas chocolates.

In all, there were 17 different stalls, ensuring that everyone had something to spend money on! Refreshments were provided by Lin Dowdell and her team of helpers, with Nigel Wood pulling out what little remained of his hair (!) doing the organising.

With well over 200 people coming through the door, a good day was had by all, with the Local History Society and The Blue Cross each making around £100.

As always, we were lucky with the weather – the rain held off until the doors had closed... and, boy, did it rain then.

Thanks are due to all who helped. They are too numerous to mention, so just "Thank You".

The only problem we are now left with is.....we have to do it again (and better) next year!

Steve Broomfield

THE MUSEUM SHOP

Some of the publications available from the Museum shop:

Tales of Old West End
C Sillence **£3.50**

I Remember,I Remember
Bob Moody **£4.00**

Hatch Grange..a stroll back in time *Pauline Berry* **£6.95**

Townhill Park House
Ralph Coney & Jim Brown **£3.00**

The first Society publications are now available for sale in the Museum – these are an ongoing series of Occasional Papers on things of local interest written by members and friends of the Society. We also have Christmas/Millennium cards and photo enlargements of local scenes.

Paper # 1
My Memories Of The Harefield Estate
(Oral History Project)
By Chris Boulton £1.50

Paper # 2
A New Church For The Parish
Written by Peter Baker £1.00

NEW ITEM
Paper # 3
West End National School 1863-1904
Written by John Collins £2.50

Specially produced WELHS Christmas/Millennium greetings cards complete with envelopes. *Pack of 5* £3.00

Various photo enlargements suitable for framing of village scenes taken from postcards.
£2.50 per print

AVAILABLE AT THE MUSEUM SHOP

ARMISTICE DAY NOTES

STEVE BROOMFIELD

As you may be aware, Nigel Wood and myself are working on a history of the men on West End's war memorials. Briefly, you might be interested to hear some of the 'work in progress'. West End men served in all theatres in the Great War. When we hold our Silence on 11th November, we will remember not only those left behind – the mothers, sisters, wives and sweethearts. The fathers, brothers and sons. For each life that was given, other lives were damaged, in some cases, destroyed. Our researches so far have uncovered some of these small tragedies: the Curtis family of Moorgreen who lost four sons in the war. Photographs exist of three of them. In the Museum is a family photograph. On the back is the information on one of the sons: 'Died on Royal Edward'. It is our aim to record this information, to preserve these men and their families for the community.

We have been busy tracking down information. Photographs of several of the Great War dead from the village, and of the troopship (The Royal Edward) on which so many men perished have been acquired. For all those who fell in the campaign on Gallipoli there is no known grave – only their names engraved on the Helles Memorial.

Some interesting names are coming up. Two of those named on the service Roll in the Parish Centre (behind the old double doors) - the names of those who served and survived – are famous. **Brigadier General G H Gater** received several mentions in the Official History of the war for his work in 1918. A General at the age of 31, he was a civilian at the outbreak of war, and returned to civilian life when it ended. An aviator – **Wellesley Bigsworth** – is famous too – for something very different. It is believed that he was the model for a fictional hero, sadly less well-known these days. Captain W E Johns is thought to have based **Biggles** on Bigsworth. Readers might remember that 'Biggles' full name was 'Bigglesworth'. We will keep you posted.

Siegfried Sassoon wrote, on seeing the Menin Gate of '...these intolerably nameless names.' It is our intention that the names on West End's memorials should have faces and families. The final result of our efforts should be available in the New Year.

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the Beer Houses licensed to combat "granny's ruin" which only cost one old penny a pint. The buying of it these days is more ruinous than the drinking so I told the wife to put in more tonic, ice and lemon and to go on holiday as often as possible. But that's another story and I digress.

A lot has gone on in and around West End. Slowly we are trying to retrieve our history for the future but this needs your help as I mentioned in the Newsletter last month. So during the long Christmas break take time between the gins and the Christmas pudd to look into the attic and the cupboards for any items which can be displayed in the museum or photocopied for posterity. Of interest to me at the moment are any maps that will show how the area has changed between 1999 and 1899 or 1899 and 1799 and even earlier. Are there any old Kelly's Directories you know of which can be donated to the Centre? When I was in business, I had them going back to 1957 and when I retired the new owners threw them all out – what a waste!

So, have a good time at the festive season and don't forget it is not an offence to enjoy too much of the good stuff. But it is if you want to drive. Take care, have fun and see you at the next meeting.

Neville Dickinson (CHAIRMAN)