THE WEST END LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

WESTENDER

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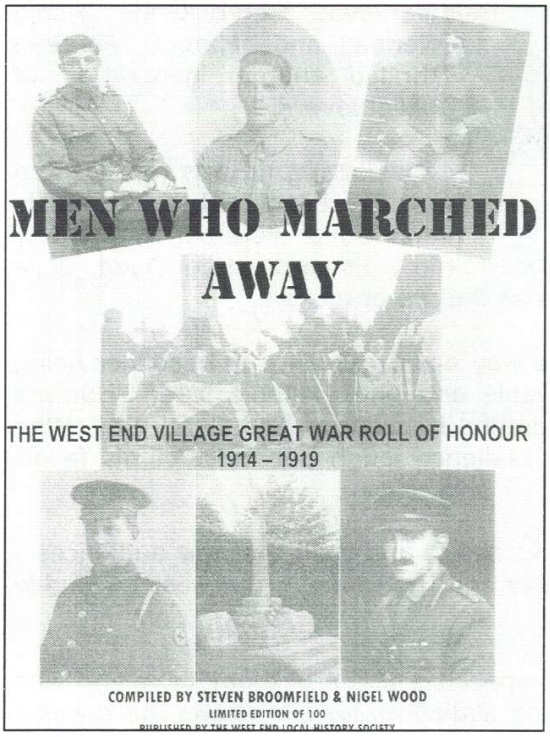
SOCIETY PUBLISHES WAR RECORD BOOK



COVER OF THE NEW BOOK

After more than two years research and work by two West End Local History Society members, their efforts have at last been put into print. **Men Who Marched Away** is more than a Great War Roll of Honour, it traces the events of the Great War in which West End men fought and died. Hitherto untold details of service of such local heroes as Brig. General Gater and Wing Commander Bigsworth (who was used as a role model for **Biggles** by author W.E.Johns) have been included. Steve Broomfield and Nigel Wood, both members of the Western Front Association, believed that the story of West Ends Great War heroes should be told and that they should have some form of lasting memorial in print. With this in mind a limited edition of 100 numbered copies of this book have been produced. Eastleigh Museum is showing a display at present entitled **When West End Was A Village....**and as part of the West End War Memorial display in the museum on the anniversary of Armistice Day (Saturday 11th November) the book will be launched, with a personal signing session by the authors.

The book which has taken one of the authors as far afield as France and Belgium to record details, contains information about the war cemeteries and memorials around the world where West End men are remembered, including details of how to find them. In addition, there is at last, a complete Roll of Honour including all service personnel from West End, details about the men who fell and their families etc.. Many photographs have been kindly supplied by members of the families involved and these have been published for the first time in this work. It is a sobering thought to consider that after the sacrifice that these men made for their country between the years 1914 and 1919 that arguments and petty mindedness at home almost stopped West End from having a War Memorial (full details are in the book) and if it had not been for a local family, grateful for the return of their sons from the War, providing the finance, we would not have. Perhaps a sobering thought!

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West End Local History Society is sponsored by

WEST END PARISH COUNCIL

EASTLEIGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

THEATRE PROGRAMMES ACQUIRED Part 2 continued

Featuring "THE GAUMONT" theatre by BILL WHITE



Also in 1950 big time theatre returned with stage production of "Annie Get Your Gun" and then came a period when films and live shows became popular at this venue. Laurel and Hardy appeared as part of a variety bill and the dancing of Alicia Markova, Beryl Gray, Nadia Nerina and Margot Fonteyn thrilled another generation of ballet lovers.

The Jazz world was represented by Ella Fitzgerald, Count Basie and Oscar Peterson and many others, the last being Buddy Rich. Tony Hancock, Jimmy Edwards, Ken Dodd, Julie Andrews and others appeared here and not always at the top of the bill.

Morecombe & Wise on 14th November 1955 were way down the bill, the headliner being Alma Cogan. The pantomimes were most enjoyable and one example listed "Humpty Dumpty" starred Tommy Cooper, Petula Clark, Edmund Hockeridge and Derek Roy. Who can forget Les Dawson who not only made the audience laugh but most of his fellow actors too.

Opera, Boxing, Wrestling and Royal Gala's all entertained, and then the new audiences - the teenagers shouting and screaming to Bill Halley and the Comets, the Beatles, Buddy Holley and Cliff Richards.

The fifty years of the theatre was celebrated with speeches and a birthday cake and who better to top the bill "The Two Ronnies". With falling audiences for film shows there was a period when only the circle was used and with only 670 seats this was quite a small number for this type of theatre. There was an idea to change to Bingo but the Gaumont closed in 1986.

The last production was "Carousel" put on by the Music Society who had contributed at the theatre and the last rainy night seemed to be the end of the buildings history.
With a change of management and a complete refurbishment at a cost of £4 million the theatre re-opened with a new name, the "Mayflower". This was chosen after a public competition suggesting names. There are only stage productions presented now, the last films being shown in 1993 as part of a "Rock Movies" theme and the projectors were sold in 1995.

The building is now listed by the Department of the Environment as a *"Building of Architectural Interest"* and we hope this will safeguard it's future and provide us with still the finest theatre in the South.

Our selection of programmes covers many types of the shows produced there; Variety with Harry Secombe and Beryl Reid, David Whitfield with Jon Pertwee, Terry Thomas with Bernard Miles and Frankie Howard all with supporting artists.

Singers Al Martino, Frankie Vaughan, Dickie Valentine topped the bill and "White Horse Inn" and "Puss In Boots" were two of the Ice Shows. Billy Cotton Band Show was popular with a Christmas show and variety performances.

As well as the information about the artists, the adverts and the forthcoming attractions these programmes still make fascinating reading.

OUT AND ABOUT WITH DEREK AMEY

You might like to know that we were recently invited to give a talk at Countess Mountbatten about the Society and its activities.

To quote from their letter... *"At present, patients from the community and the in-patient Unit attend Day Care sessions ..... each week. It is our policy to invite a guest (speaker). These sessions are of enormous benefit to our patients .... diverting them from their anxieties ..... providing topics of conversation .... Increasing confidence and social skills during and after long spells of ill health."*

I was pleased to be able to go along to one of the Day Care Sessions and talk to a group of some 12 people about the Society and the Museum, using some of our new display boards and other assorted material. Well received (or perhaps they were just being polite!)

On a different note, I am very pleased to report that the book on Moorgreen Hospital ("Half a Loaf" .... by Eric Raffo) is to be published soon. Watch this space for further information as we get it.

Editors note: Since receiving Dereks copy, I have received information that the Friends of Moorgreen Hospital have stumped up the money to publish the book - as yet we do not have a price for the book or its format etc..

NEW SOCIETY BROCHURE

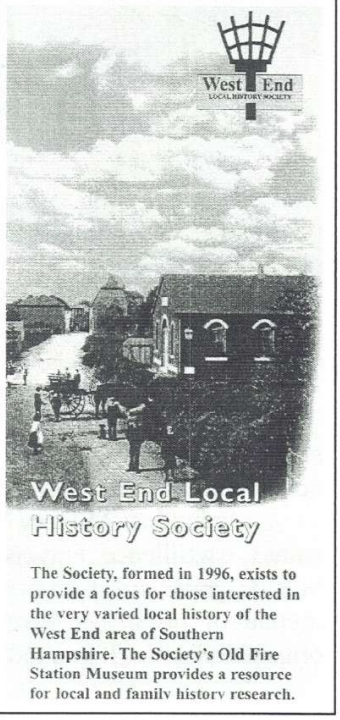
After going through several reprints our promotional gatefold leaflet which has been printed in literally thousands, has been replaced by a newly designed version. This includes an application for membership form which should be very useful as it fulfils two jobs and saves us having to print TWO forms.

The design and production for this excellent leaflet was carried out by one of our members Doreen Niblett. I might say it is nice to have someone else helping with the design and printing requirements of the Society and my grateful thanks go out to Doreen for her help and very professional look of the leaflet.

If you know of anyone who would be interested in joining the Society please pass one of these leaflets on to them - they are available from Committee members or at the Museum on Saturdays.

The leaflets will also be available at various other places, including Eastleigh Museum, the Parish Centre etc..

If you are able to help with any of the work undertaken by the Society, ranging from helping out at the Museum to distributing leaflets and a myriad of other jobs please contact any Committee member or myself. Ed.



A FRESH LOOK AT THE OLD BURIAL GROUND

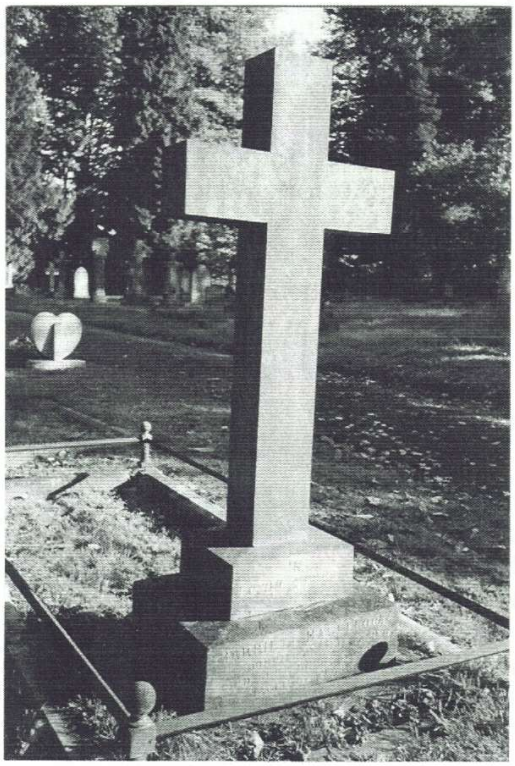
PAULINE BERRY

Some people might think that I spend an unhealthy length of time at West End's Old Burial Ground, near the High Street. The fact is the more I visit it to learn about West End's past, the more fascinating it becomes. Originally opened for Church burials between 1880 and 1890, it is now officially "full" (with exceptions) and is maintained by West End Parish Council. Individual graves are still the responsibility of relatives, though many will have moved far away or are long gone themselves.

My attention was first drawn to the burial ground when shown the family plot of the Fletcher family who owned Hatch Grange Estate for over fifty years. The later discovery of an old photo showed it to have originally had ornate wrought iron railings around the plot. Suggestions that the railings were removed for the War Effort proved wrong when I discovered that they simply rusted away in the 1950's or later.

Later came the full significance of the simple grave where lie the late Captain Sir A.H.Rostron and his wife Minnie. The role he and his ship the "Carpathia" played in the rescue of the "Titanic" survivors was only added to the inscription many years later. The flowers which our Society place there on the grave every April 15th are presently paid for by his daughter, Mrs Margaret Howman.

The oldest part of the burial ground is at the top, to the south of the gravel path. Here the inscriptions on the headstones are rapidly being eroded by time and the weather. Several former Ministers of St. James Church lie there, as does the late Mr Edwin Jones (died 1896) of Harefield Estate and Department Store fame, as well as having been a benefactor to several worthy causes in Victorian Southampton. His inscription is almost illegible now. Any offers or suggestions?



HARRIET HASELFOOT'S GRAVE

Some older graves do exist lower down near the High Street. Recently Miss Joyce Barfoot showed me the three headstones of the family plot of the St.Barbe Baker family. Here, three of Richard St.Barbe Baker's sisters lie, as do his parents John and Charlotte. The 'Man of the Trees' himself died in Canada.

I have also become acquainted with the grassy green mound of Joe Molloy's aunt Kate Oram who died in 1918. She trained as a nurse at the beginning of the twentieth century and became sick-nurse to not only the aged Florence Nightingale but also to the militant suffragette Lady Constance Lytton who retired from her active life following a severe stroke. A simple horizontal cross marks the spot.

Close to the main pathway a tall cross marks the grave of another member of the 'gentry', Mrs Harriet Haselfoot. The owner of the house 'Moorhill', where the reservoir is located now, she not only founded and supported the Infants School in Moorgreen (1871-1904), since demolished around 1985 and now Old School Gardens, but was a principal benefactoress of the newly built St.James Church over a hundred years ago.

Individual Military War Graves peacefully co-exist with the many resting places of local family names, e.g.Sillence, Fray, Moody, Othen, Barfoot etc. All now equal with the gentlefolk in this pleasant hillside graveyard. Conservation has its place now and the northern area of grass is not cut until the myriad of primroses have stopped blooming. You leave, as you entered, by the heavy Victorian ornamental gates, if you too decide to join me 'browsing' around our fascinating old burial ground.



THE St.BARBE BAKER FAMILY GRAVESTONES IN THE OLD BURIAL GROUND

Note from the Editor:
The Society are shortly hoping to start listing and logging all the known grave sites and headstones in the Old Burial Ground at West End. Unfortunately, over the years the 'official' records appear to have been lost and it is left to us to make good this deficit. Not only for local historians but also for family historians it would be immensly useful for this and future generations to have this information written down and to that end we will be looking around for volunteers in the New Year to note down the inscriptions on the grave stones, to map out the graveyard into sectors etc.. Any and all volunteers will be made welcome and should contact either the Secretary, Pauline Berry or the Editor, Nigel Wood in due course.

THE STORY BEHIND THE PARISH LOGO

Pauline Berry

Having overheard various theories about the origin of the symbols on the West End Parish Council logo, I felt the time is right for me to put pen to paper. It was in the early 1990's that the Parish Council discussed the fact that there was no Parish Chairman's badge or logo in existence. Since West End was no longer a village but a settlement of 10,000 plus population, and also reaching its first Parish Council centenary (1994), the time seemed seemed ripe to find a suitable logo. So being on the Parish Council at the time, yours truly plunged in and decided to have a stab at a suitable design.

After discussion with the then Parish Chairman Cllr. Dudley Kirk, I drew up a couple of preliminary designs based on an oval design, before the final design was approved by the Parish Council. The four symbols in the four quarters, represent different aspects of West End past and present. Starting in the top right hand corner:

(a) The glowing beacon on present day Hatch Grange, placed there by Eastleigh Borough Council in 1988 to celebrate the 400th. Anniversary of the sighting of the Spanish Armada. The original one is sited in Telegraph Woods although of different design

(b) The ear of wheat representing our farming past, mainly arable and pasture, once extensive across the lower plains in the northern part of West End.

(c) The water wheel, long gone, once an integral part of Gater's Mill (once known as Upmill, South Stoneham Mill and even West End Mill) which during centuries of high activity, produced mainly paper or flour.

(d) Finally the oak leaf and acorn representing the huge woods which once covered most of the higher parts of West End and also the ancient boundary banks of oaks which were believed to have separated the Tithings of Shamblehurst and Allington.

The whole logo is mounted on a background of green since our Parish is still predominantly lush and verdant in the north. Finally gold is the highlight to 'lift' the design. Could that represent our rich vein of history which some might deny until they know better?

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

(WHAT'S HAPPENING AT WEST END LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY MEETINGS)

Nov 1st **ITCHEN NAVIGATION (Canal)**
Ashley Watt

Dec 6th **CHRISTMAS BUFFET AND RAFFLE + QUIZ**
(members only)

2001

Jan 3rd TO BE ADVISED

WANTED

The Museum would like photographs of any of the following: HARRIET HASELFOOT; MOORHILL HOUSE (the original one); THE LODGE (Moorhill Road) ***Ed.***

DONATION TO MUSEUM

At the last meeting Ray Upson handed over a brass dedication and remembrance plaque from the old (sadly now demolished) Methodist Chapel in the Swaythling Road. This was a very kind donation from the Church to be housed in our Museum. Those of you who are local or who have read the reprinted booklet ***The Swaythling Road Methodist Church" written by Marjorie Bodman***, will know all about the history of the church and the part it played in the community until 1989. Built in 1900, according to the information on the plaque it had been completely paid for by 1920 - quite an achievement!

We would like to officially express our sincere thanks to the Church for this gift.

For those of you who visit the Museum, it is now on display. Ed.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

As some of you will know, I am researching the old shutter telegraph which once stood here in West End during the Napoleonic Wars (1806-1814).

I am particularly anxious to find out any information about a West End resident by the name of Lieutenant James Hallum. He was a Royal Marine, commissioned in 1808 and according to the Street Directories in the 1850's occupied the *Telegraph*. If you have any information either about the Telegraph or Hallum please contact **Nigel Wood** on **023 8047 1886** or by e-mail at **woodng@aol.com** or at meetings. Any information will be appreciated. Ed

MUSEUM SHOP

The Society publications 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 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

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

Paper # 5
The Swaythling Road Methodist Church
Written by Marjorie Bodman £2.50

Plus the following books:

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**

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

NEW BOOK AVAILABLE FROM 11th November 2000

MEN WHO MARCHED AWAY
The West End Village Great War Roll of Honour
1914-1919
Steve Broomfield & Nigel Wood **£4.99**
(THIS IS A LIMITED PRODUCTION OF 100 NUMBERED COPIES - FIRST COME FIRST SERVED)

AVAILABLE AT THE MUSEUM SHOP

THANK YOU

This is a little thank you to all the people, both members and members of the public who continue to contribute photographic material and printed ephemera to our Museum. Ed.