THE WEST END LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

WESTENDER

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SIR ARTHUR ROSTRON'S GRAVE GETS A CLEAN-UP DEREK AMEY



THE FRESHLY CLEANED GRAVE IN THE OLD BURIAL GROUND

You will be pleased to know that the grave of Sir Arthur Henry Rostron in the Old Burial Ground in West End (see photo at left) has now been completely refurbished and is looking as good as new.

The work was jointly funded by the Royal Naval Reserve (who made a grant of £100) and West End Parish Council.

The assistance of the Royal Naval Reserve is especially appreciated, as Sir Arthur was, like all Merchant Navy officers of his rank, a *de facto* member of that Reserve and therefore one whose services could be called upon in time of war. There is, in fact, one further detail to be attended to on the grave. The integral vase holder on the front kerb has a crack in it which needs to be repaired, but the rest looks magnificent; easy to direct visitors to the site now as the whole thing just stands out! We as a Society will of course be placing flowers on the grave on the forthcoming anniversary in April, on behalf of his daughter, Mrs Margaret Howman.

ANNUAL "TITANIC" CONVENTION

And whilst on the theme of the Titanic (a subject very dear to our Chairman's heart!) it will soon be the anniversary of the sinking of that liner. As usual each year at this time the British Titanic Society will be holding their annual Convention at the Southampton Hilton Hotel. The Convention covers three days - Friday 6th, Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th April - although most of the events are only open to those who have pre-booked for the Convention, Saturdays are open to the public. There is usually plenty to see, exhibits, trade stands selling everything you could imagine relating to that great liner. Doors open 9.00am - 4.00pm, admission is £2 per adult, £1 per child. Well worth a visit!! Ed.

(If you need any more information about the Convention please phone the Editor on 023 8047 1886)

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WEST END PARISH COUNCIL

EASTLEIGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

NEW EXHIBITION OPENS AT NETLEY COUNTRY PARK



PART OF THE DISPLAY IN NETLEY'S CHAPEL

Last year I was approached by the much acclaimed author Philip Hoare, who was writing a book about the Royal Victoria Hospital at Netley on the shores on Southampton Water. He was interested in having access and the use of Lin Dowdell's collection of postcards of the Hospital. Since then, he has completed his book which is entitled ***SPIKE ISLAND..the Memory of a Military Hospital***, and included many of the images from our collection.

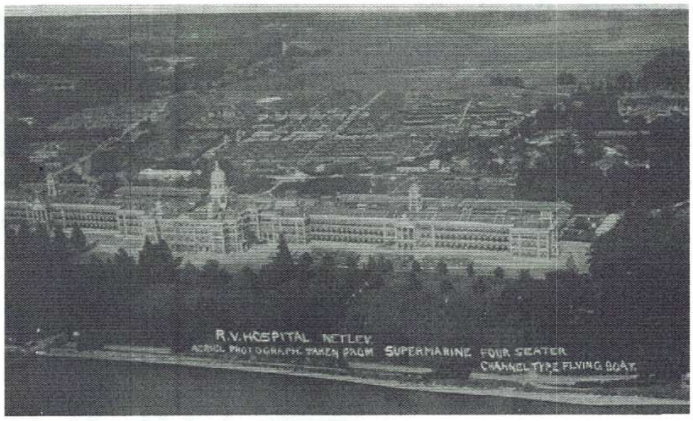
The launch of his book is due to take place in the Chapel at the Royal Victoria Country Park at Netley on Thursday 5th April, and to compliment the book an exhibition will be set up in the Chapel from 2nd April 2001, containing some of the more unusual images from our collection of the Hospital - the exhibition is entitled ***"From Empire to Armageddon...Images of Netley's Military Hospital"*** and is to run until the end of the season in September. To quote from the Press Release ..."This exhibition drawing on a hitherto-unseen private collection of several hundred original postcards, artefacts and embroideries, the exhibition presents a visual record of the hospital from its nineteenth-century heyday, when it received casualties from around the British Empire, to the Great War when its Red Cross "hutted hospital" and its military asylum treated thousands of soldiers, among them the war poet Wilfred Owen.

Concentrating on the sense of Netley's community, the exhibition will display rare images of the hospital's 200 acre site - virtually a town in its own right. From its fire brigade to its own post office, from draper's stores to engine rooms and stables; from operating theatres to convalescent wards, these photographs and artefacts portray day-to-day life at Netley during the late 19th and early 20th century, most notably in picture postcards which were often the product of local photographic studios. Their cameras recorded the visits of royalty and prime ministers, as well as the day-to-day routines of Netley's vast medical establishment. As the memory of the hospital itself, demolished in 1966, slips away, *From Empire to Armageddon* presents a unique view of a lost building, and the people who lived, worked, and died in it."

Those of you interested in visiting the exhibition, it will be open from Monday 2nd April 2001,in the Netley Chapel, Royal Victoria Country Park, Netley near Southampton. Open 12pm - 4.30pm Monday to Saturday, 11am - 4.30pm on Sundays. Admission is 70p Adults, 35p Children/Seniors. For more information telephone 023 8045 5157.

Also available from Thursday 5th April 2001 will be the book **"Spike Island - The Memory of a Military Hospital" by Philip Hoare**, published by Fourth Estate (Collins) at £17.99, it is well written and illustrated. 417 pages. Available at the Country Park bookshop or through all good bookshops, just quote the ISBN number below.
ISBN 1-84115-293-5.

If you have difficulty in obtaining a copy please contact me on 023 8047 1886. Ed



AERIAL VIEW OF NETLEY HOSPITAL *Photo courtesy of Lingwood Netley Hospital Archives*

"I WOULD BUILD A HOUSE AFTER MY OWN HEART"

A Tale of Two Houses by Derek Amey

One just down the road, the other in Bournemouth. ***Townhill House*** here in West End is already featured in our archives and in a video made by Alan Daw of Ralph Coney's talk to the Society in 1998. Now the archives also contain copies of "Country Life's" two Special Issues back in the 1920's featuring the House and its Gertrude Jeckyll designed garden, courtesy of Ralph. This was perhaps the typical weekend *'place in the country'* of a family which could trace its pedigree back quite some way.

On the other hand, what had you to show in the way of a *'family seat'* if you were *just* a happily married Victorian couple in the shape of Sir Merton Russell-Coates and his wife Annie, with a passion for travelling (Russia, China, to name but two) and collecting as you went. Simple really, you built a house to your own specification as both somewhere to live and as a suitable home for your growing collection. Which is why the **Russell-Coates Art Gallery and Museum** is to be found on Bournemouth's East Cliff.

Recently transformed with the help of a Heritage Lottery Fund grant, it has been restored to its former glory and, in a very effective move, is once again open (no charge!) "free from exhibits to show visitors the work that has been done so that they can have a greater enjoyment and understanding of the building itself".

The place is not by any means empty, but with many exhibits "missing", to be moved back in the year, you can really appreciate the sheer colour and style of this celebration of High Victorian extravagance, full of stained glass and fancy plasterwork, of dramatic paintings and their very own version of the Elgin Marbles, and a great deal more. Talking of "Awaydays" to other museums, how about a trip to this one? I would be happy to organise!

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE - The Lady with the Lamp **Pauline Berry**

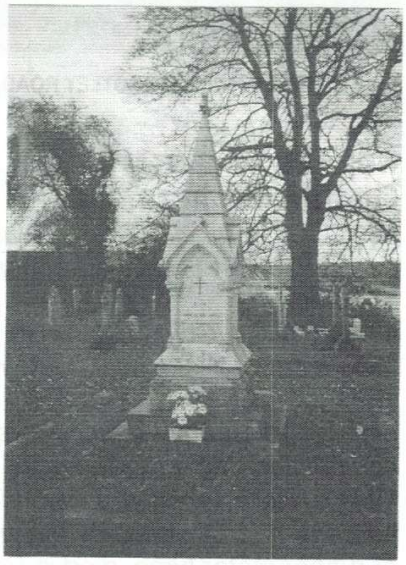
Having read so much about the famous Florence Nightingale whilst researching the life of our local nurse Sister Kate Oram, we decided to visit the Church of St.Margaret, East Wellow, where the Lady with the Lamp is buried. If you too go for the first time take a map for the site is not well sign-posted, possibly intentionally. After Romsey simply follow the signs for St.Margaret's Church, East Wellow which is in a quiet and remote country spot, compared to the hurly burly of city life.

It was a chilly December day; the sun low in the sky, when we finally turned into the little lane leading up to the Church. I felt a shiver of recognition of the same leafy lane shown in Press photographs taken at the famous funeral in August 1910. One photo had shown the funeral cortege arriving in this lane, having travelled from Romsey Station, the 'bearskins' of the hand-picked guardsmen looking strangely incongruous above the hedgerows.

Making our way through the same church gate we followed the path around the ancient church with its unusual 'dovecote' wooden belfry. Suddenly we found ourselves in the part of the churchyard which again I recognised from an old photo of the many mourners and numerous floral tributes sent which were spilling all over the older gravestones, since the church was full for the funeral.

The crowd of mourners (and sightseers) had upset the Trustee's of Florence Nightingale's will for she had specifically requested a 'simple funeral'. The inscription on the tall obelisk-type of tombstone was simple, however, reading:*'F.N. Born 12 May 1820. Died August 10 1910'.* She was buried with her parents at the Church where she often worshipped as a child and young woman.

The churchyard is now strangely quiet so a quick visit inside the empty church revealed a few fading photographs and memento's of the great lady on one window sill. A look around the small church dating from the thirteenth century, signing the visitors book and purchasing a postcard



FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE'S GRAVE

Continued from previous page.

sealed our rather down-key but worthwhile visit to a very famous grave-site.

ANOTHER BIT OF OLD WEST END SOON TO BE DEMOLISHED

"Mizpah Villas" on the Botley Road almost opposite Moorgreen Hospital, built well over a hundred years ago will soon be demolished so that a "developer" can make a profit, by cramming in "god knows how many new houses" on the site. A sign went up recently stating the house had been sold, and another one indicating (since confirmed) that the site was to be re-developed. So there you have it - we are still destroying Old West End, any building of character, with a bit of village history is "fair game" to the building speculators, to my knowledge no one even gives a damn! Certainly you would think by now that we had enough houses in the village, any more will help to destroy that "village feel" to the centre. So why is nobody doing anything to stop this ? Is it that people really don't care about history and old buildings (given that this one appears to be in better shape than many newer houses in the village)! **How many more nice old buildings have to go in the name of GREED?**



"MIZPAH VILLAS",BOTLEY ROAD, WEST END

Wednesday 4th April 2001

On this day in.....

1581...*Sir Francis Drake was knighted on board "Golden Hind" at Deptford, on the River Thames.*

1774...*Oliver Goldsmith, Irish writer, notably "The Vicar of Wakefield", died in London.*

1929...*Karl Benz, German engineer and pioneer of early motor cars with internal combustion engines, died aged 84.*

1941...*Andre Michelin, French industrialist who built the first factories for the mass production of rubber motor tyres, died in Paris.*

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

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)

NEW OUT AND NOW AVAILABLE
"Half a Loaf - The Care of the Sick and Poor of South Stoneham 1664-1948" by Eric Raffo **£9.50**

AVAILABLE AT THE MUSEUM SHOP

1949...*The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was created in a treaty signed at Washington.*

1968...*Martin Luther King, American Negro civil rights leader was assassinated at his motel at Memphis in Tennessee.*