THE WEST END LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

WESTENDER

NOVEMBER 2001 – DECEMBER 2001 VOLUME 3 NUMBER 2

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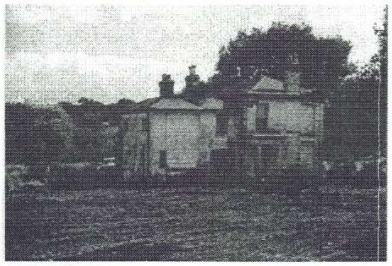
FINAL DEMISE OF MOORGREEN HOUSE







From top to bottom the final phases showing the demise of Moorgreen House. The house in the 1970's, last year and in October 2001. New houses and a bungalow to rise soon from the rubble seen in the last picture.

The loss of any old building nowadays is such a pity, but in the case of old Moorgreen House in Moorgreen Road next to the M27 there was very little left after so many years of total neglect to restore, as can be seen from the sequence of pictures at the left.

We are unsure of its date of origin but the house as seen in the top picture probably dated from late Georgian to early Victorian times, around 1820-1840. On the now levelled site, builders are busy at work to construct five new houses and a bungalow. The new road to service these homes looks likely to be **James Jukes Close,** a name suggested by WELHS to commemorate the Moorgreen seaman who lost his life when in 1912 RMS 'Titanic' sank with such a heavy loss of life. It is altogether fitting that this name should be used as James Jukes actually lived at Camlens House (a small holding) just adjacent to old Moorgreen House. If this name is adopted both the Builders and the Local Parish Council are to be congratulated on choosing such an appropriate name connected as it is to our local heritage.

As a spin-off from all this, the builders through their Site Agent have very kindly donated the original house name plate which was found in the undergrowth when the site was being cleared, along with some of the original bricks and paviors used in the house construction, with the aid of these and the photographs and maps that we have we hope to be able to put together a small display to remember the old house by. If the readers of this newsletter have anything which came from Moorgreen House (anything small that is) which they would like to donate to this display, we at the Museum would be pleased to accept. **Ed.**

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West End Local History Society is sponsored by

WEST END PARISH COUNCIL

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NEW LEASE OF LIFE FOR "MIZPAH VILLA'S"



MIZPAH VILLAS IN MAY THIS YEAR & BELOW MORE RECENTLY

It is with great pleasure that I can let you know that the pair of Victorian semi-detached villas known as "Mizpah Villas" along the Botley Road in West End are NOT being demolished as was at first thought, but in fact are being very sympathetically restored and refurbished, in fact, a front doorway to the left hand house that previously had been blocked up and altered to a window, has been restored to a matching doorway complete with mock stone archway. The later single storey addition on the left as you will see from the picture at the left has been demolished to make way for the roadway in to the housing development in what was once the very long rear garden. As you will see from the left hand photo below, the builders have made good the wall and generally apart from new uPVC windows the houses look better than they ever did in recent years! Shame about the extremely high wall on the left of the site but I understand it was necessary for planning permission – although not very nice to look out your front door on to. **Ed.**





MIZPAH VILLAS ABOVE PHOTOGRAPHED THE OTHER MONTH - WORK WAS WELL UNDER WAY WITH THE SITE CLEARING AND THE ROAD WAY IN BY THE SIDE OF THE HOUSE

WEST END POLICE STATION DISAPPEARS



Once upon a time.....West End had a Police Station, up by the War Memorial on the corner of West End Road (previously known as Cemetery Road) and High Street. Well not only do we hardly ever see a "Bobby on the Beat" nowadays (which would I am sure act as a deterent against the ever increasing amount of vandalism we are experiencing in the village) but for some years we have not had a Police Station. The building that was the local "Cop Shop", has stood empty and uncared for, and has now been virtually demolished and converted as you will see by the picture at the left to another purpose, presumably a house!!!

LOOKING BACK 100 YEARS

The Story of a West End Family

SUSAN MONCRIEFF

Remember the item in the July/August newsletter about the lady from Scotland who was making enquiries about her family connections in West End? Well she came down here in due course and was at least partially successful in what she was able to find 'on the spot', guided of course by our information! A letter of thanks has now arrived, complete with a resume of family history and a hand drafted 'family tree'. The article that follows is that family history.....

Over a number of years my husband, John, and I have been looking into the story of some of the most interesting of my ancestors, the Bonesetters of Anglesey. I shall set the scene by telling you something of their origins. The family is descended from the survivor of a shipwreck in 1745 off the north-west coast of Anglesey, a young boy who was washed ashore on a raft. He and his brother, who lived only a few weeks after the ordeal, were the only ones to reach land and, although no one understood them, they were thought to be Spanish. The gift of bonesetting, which manifested itself in this child as he grew up, was passed down the generations. By the middle of the nineteenth century a member of one branch of the family, Evan Thomas, a grandson of the original survivor, had moved to Liverpool to work amongst the seafarers and dockers, but he was finding that the practice of bonesetting, however successful as a treatment, was causing him to be brought to court. There was much jealousy on the part of the orthodox practitioners in the city and, although he never lost a case, he resolved that his sons should train and qualify as doctors, which is what all five of them did.

The eldest of these brothers, Dr. Hugh Owen Thomas, returned from studying in Edinburgh to practise in Liverpool and came to be regarded as the founder of orthopaedic surgery. His 'Thomas Splint', with which some readers may be familiar, was introduced to the battlefields of the First World War by his nephew, Sir Robert Jones, and was credited with cutting the death rate from compound fractures from eighty per cent to twenty per cent.

Having given some of the background to the family, I must introduce the member who interests us as far as St. James Church, West End is concerned. This is my great-grandfather, Dr. John Lewis Thomas, who was born in 1845, the youngest of the four brothers of Hugh Owen Thomas. I have often wondered what caused him to settle in Southampton, so far from his native Liverpool. Perhaps he was attracted by another city which also had a great port and busy docks. Perhaps his wife, who was from Nottingham, had connections there. He practised at Above Bar (in his day Anglesea Place) and later at Cumberland Place, was honorary Physician to the Royal South Hants Hospital and served as a Justice of the Peace. In the year 1884 he was left a widower with four young children, two boys and two girls, having been married for just seven years. On his remarriage in 1901 the family connection with the parish of St. James began.

Dr. Thomas' second wife was herself a widow, Fanny Louisa Jones (nee White), who had been the wife of Edwin Jones, the founder of the department store and owner of Harefield House, a fine mansion set in a large estate. The Thomas family therefore moved out to Harefield and became accustomed to life in the country.

My grandmother, Mary Thomas, always known in the family as May, was married at St. James on 26th November 1903 to Captain Claude Buist Martin, RAMC, and they began their life together at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley, where my father, Rupert Claude Martin, was born. He was baptised at St. James on 31st July 1905. Another winter wedding followed on 6th January 1909 when Clara Lucy Elizabeth Thomas, the youngest of Dr. Thomas' four children, married Captain Patrick Stanislaus O'Reilly, RAMC.

The next family entry in the church registers is, sadly, a tragic death. Dr. Thomas was in the habit of gathering wild flowers from the Harefield estate on a Sunday afternoon to take to the hospital the following day. On 8th June 1913 he was standing at the edge of a stream, cutting foxgloves, when the bank collapsed and he fell on top of the knife he was using. My father and aunt, aged seven and six, were present at the time, along with an older member of the family, and could recall the details many years later. Dr. Thomas died two days later from the injury which he had sustained. His funeral was held on 13th June and he lies in the Old Burial Ground, which at the time was known as West End Cemetery.

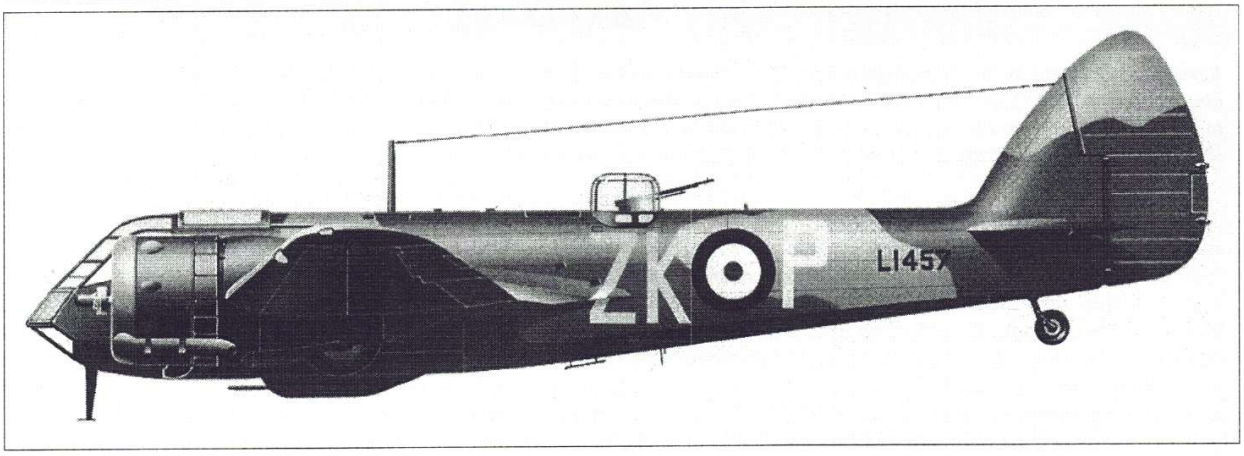
In June 2001, John and I travelled from our home in Scotland to a family wedding at Bentley and afterwards we took the opportunity to visit St. James and the Old Burial Ground. We were able, thanks to the Vicar, to see the inside of the church and this brings me to the next stage in the story of the family. A feature which was of particular interest to us was the memorial window and plaque commemorating the fallen of the First World War. My grandmother's two older brothers both lost their lives during the Great War, at the ages of 37 and 39. Neither had followed the family tradition of medicine; both had seen adventurous careers as soldiers. Captain Owen Richard Thomas served with The Welsh Horse and survived the Gallipoli campaign but died in Gaza on 21st August 1917. We have twice been on pilgrimage to the Holy Land but have not yet been able to visit his grave owing to the political situation. Major Henry Evan Thomas, the leader of the brothers by just ten months, was a member of the Suffolk Regiment and was killed in action in Flanders on 18th April 1918. He is buried in the Churchyard Extension at Westoutre, a village seven miles south-west of Ypres.

To be continued.....

This article will be concluded in the next issue of "Westender" in January/February 2002 – be sure to get your copy. Ed.

A TRAGEDY IN ALLINGTON LANE

From an eye-witness account by Joe Molloy and a report by M.G.Young - Written by Pauline Berry



A BRISTOL BLENHEIM – similar to the one that crashed in Allington Lane in 1940

Early in the morning of 26th August 1940, a British Blenheim L8870 bomber was returning from a night-time sortie over St. Malo, France. It was heading back to its base at West Raynham, Surrey, when unfortunately it collided with the cable of a British barrage balloon in the Southampton area (possibly the one at the edge of Southampton Common, near Highfield).

A sharp-eyed policeman, none other than Joe Molloy, was just leaving Portswood Police Station having completed his night duty. It was soon after 6.00am, all was quiet with no air-raid siren for once when Joe suddenly became aware of the Blenheim's presence in the early morning sky. The noise of the plane's engine initially attracted his attention and he realised that the bomber was flying unusually low over the Bassett, Chilworth area, heading towards Swaythling.

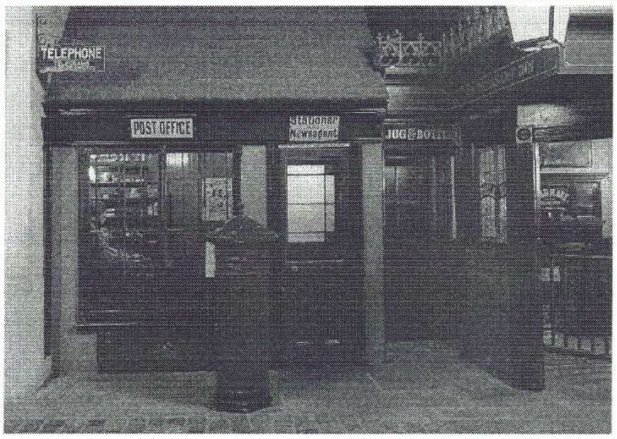
There was also a sudden, awful change in the engine's tone indicating imminent danger, having hit the cable of the barrage balloon. The Blenheim was now in its death throes and heading rapidly downwards in the direction of West End, when Joe spotted a huge flash as the plane crashed at about 6.20am.

Knowing West End like the back of his hand, Joe hopped onto his usual transport, his bicycle, and headed off rapidly in that direction. He took a route via Cutbush Lane into Allington Lane (now Romill Close), cycling furiously up past the Quob Lane junction and round the next bend. There in a field to his right, a large pile of earth surrounding the new crater and glowing embers, were all that remained of the plane. To Joe's surprise, no one else had yet arrived at this sad scene.

There was very little debris from the crashed bomber and only short furrows, he noticed, had been created in the surface of the field. The Blenheim had crash-dived at such an angle that it made a fairly clean, deep crater. Tragically it was too late to be of any use, for the crew of three British airmen were beyond help. Sergeants Balmer, Corker and Cranston must have died instantly in this West End field, so near and yet so far from their home base in Surrey.

Note: *Do you have any memories of any of the other plane crashes, known to have been in the Allington Lane area during the Second World War? There were others, including that of a Heinkel 111 which crashed in January 1941. Please contact us and let the author know.* *Ed.*

VISIT TO FLAMBARD'S VICTORIAN VILLAGE Nigel Wood



My partner and I were on holiday in Cornwall recently staying at Mullion Cove. One of the days was extremely wet and miserable, and so we decided initially against our better judgement to visit ***Flambards*** at Helston near the RNAS Station, simply because it was under cover. Well! What a pleasant surprise awaited us in the shape of the ***Victorian Village***. Some 50 buildings, along with associated streets and wonderful lighting effects gave such a realistic feel for the late Victorian period. They even introduced aroma's, so that when you went to the Bakery you smelt freshly baked bread etc..You were able to enter the interior of some of the buildings, go upstairs and look out onto the street. If you have been to Milestones at Basingstoke...then you should really make the effort to see Flambards Victorian Village its bigger, better, and more realistic and there's also "The Blitz Experience" as well.

ACCOLADES FOR THE WEBSITE

We have so far had a great initial response to the WELHS Website from all around the world, New Zealand, Canada, America as well as England – here are just a couple we have received recently:

Karl Parkinson from Canada writes... *"Just a quick email to say what a great site you have. I was born in West End and moved to Canada in 1988. Its nice to visit your site with my kids and show where I lived for 21 years. Keep up the great work. Karl"*

Len Payne from Canada writes... *" Just logged on to have a quick look. Boy you blew me away with those great pictures of the village. Every place was recognizable to me, the pictures of Hatch Grange especially brought back memories of some 63 years ago... "*. It just goes to prove a picture speaks a thousand words, well, we hope to have more in place before long. A great big thank-you is due to our Webmaster Ray Niblett for all the hard work and expertise he and his wife Doreen have put in to make our site one of the foremost Local History Society sites in the country. Any comments or suggestions regarding the website are welcome at **westendlhs@aol.com** ***Ed.***

"ON THE VERGES" Derek Amey

You must admit that it's a novel reason for the local authority not taking over (or 'adopting') an unmade road, but one that was in fact quoted by the speaker at our October meeting. It was a rather special road in that it had been given, at the request of the architect who designed the adjacent houses, a grass verge to separate the pavement from the gravel road. 'We are not taking on the maintenance of a grass verge as well', said the Council, so Ethelbert Avenue in Southampton stayed as a gravel track! This was just one aspect of the character of the architect Herbert Collins, one more instance of great attention to detail that went into all the houses he designed as well as their surroundings. Robert Williams (*author of a book on Collins which is now out of print, but we have managed to get our hands on a few copies!)* told of what was something of a family saga of the Collins who provided a contractor, a builder and an architect to put their stamp on buildings throughout Southern England. But it was Herbert who built widely in this area of Hampshire, being especially noted for the houses at Highfield in Southampton, the extensive estate of low rent houses at Mansbridge, and our very own mini-estate here in West End in the shape of Orchards Way, right alongside the Museum.

He was very much a proponent of the 'Garden Cities' movement, one which looked to the provision of housing which was well separated from industrial premises, and which would provide plenty of green space, not just in the shape of grass verges but with 'squares' and 'greens' built in as well. He even specified that estate roads should be curved instead of straight wherever possible. Robert Williams comprehensively illustrated talk gave us many examples of the detailing inside Collins' houses – he would even claim that Herbert invented the modern concept of built-in kitchen units, as opposed to the traditional dresser.
We are planning to publish an Occasional Paper on 'Herbert Collins and West End' based on minutes recently discovered in the archive of Swaythling Housing Society at Mansbridge which chronicle the work of the *'Hampshire Rural Cottage Improvement Society'* (HRCIS), a mini-housing society initially dedicated to refurbishing labourers' cottages in places like Botley and Bishops Waltham that had fallen into disuse following the drift from the land to the towns. HRCIS went on to build those new Collins designed 'cottages' at Orchards Way, West End.

Our thanks to Robert Williams for telling us so much about a man who developed a very individual style, something of a contrast perhaps to today's more mass-produced approach to house design. He was also a dedicated worker for peace, being a keen supporter of the fledgling League of Nations – you must get the book to have the full story (we also have a copy in the Museum Library). ***Another good idea for a Christmas present?***

On this day (December 5th) in.....

1697 The first Sunday service was held in the new St. Paul's Cathedral.

1766 Christie's, famous auctioneers of London, held their first sale.

1839 George Armstrong Custer, American cavalry commander in the West, born in Harrison County in Ohio.

1872 "Marie Celeste", an American brig, captained by Benjamin Briggs, was found by the "Dei Gratia" abandoned in the Atlantic on its way to Genoa with a cargo of alcohol.

1901 Walt Disney, American cartoon film producer, born at Chicago in Illinois.

1958 The first motorway in Britain, the $8^1/_2$ mile Preston by-pass section of the M6, was opened by the then Prime Minister Harold MacMillan.

CAN YOU HEAR ME?

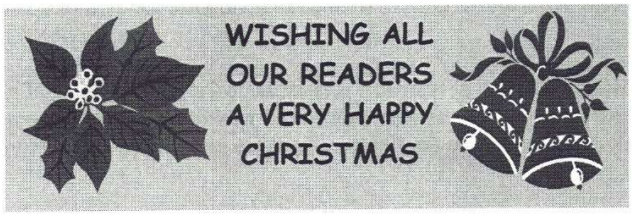
Some complaints recently that speakers at our monthly meetings were not all that audible! So we have invested in a portable P/A system that we hope will improve matters – we introduced it at the November meeting, but our speaker who is well known to us, could be heard well enough, so on this occasion it was not required...but it is there ready if needed.

THE NEXT MEETINGS

January 2
FROM THE FOUNDRY TO THE GRAVE
(CAST IRON GRAVESTONES)
Tony Yoward

February 6
"CHEERS EVERYONE!"
(OLD PORTSMOUTH PUBS)
Madeleine Selby

March 6
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



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 (reduced price)* **£5.99**

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 – unfortunately out of print, a 2nd edition is planned)

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

NEW OUT AND NOW AVAILABLE

"Sister Kate Oram 1879-1918
A Personal Portrait. *By Pauline Berry* **£4.99**

AVAILABLE AT THE MUSEUM SHOP

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