THE WEST END LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

WESTENDER

MARCH 2003 – APRIL 2003 VOLUME 3 NUMBER 10

BARBE BAKER MEMORIAL UNVEILED IN WEST END



Cllr. Martin Kyrle with the sculptress Jill Tweed and memorial



Some of the people watching the unveiling

Dr. Richard St.Barbe Baker, OBE
1889 – 1982

Your Society was well represented at a brief ceremony held in West End's shopping centre on the corner of Chapel Road and High Street on Friday 28th March when Councillor Martin Kyrle unveiled a memorial to a man who was in many ways the prototype of the ecologists who now inform our thinking about this planet. Sculpted by Jill Tweed, it consists of a bronze bas-relief portrait of this unique native of West End, a portrait surmounting a column of Portland stone topped by granite. If you are familiar with Jill's "Railwayman Statue" in Eastleigh's Town Centre, you will know that she produces some very attractive work. West End has been given, with the support of Eastleigh Borough Council, a very welcome addition to our village scene. As to Barbe Baker's lifetime work .... well, he founded the "Men of the Trees" (now the International Tree Foundation), was passionate on reafforestation, helped to turn back the desert ..... the list goes on and on. Check him out in the Museum!

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West End Local History Society is sponsored by

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GHUZNEE – A MYSTERY HOUSE

PETER ANDREWS





When I came to West End in 1955, being in a new bungalow, (I used to come up to see it being built in my lunch hour) there was a great deal of work to do, apart from decorating, the gardens – front and back, looked like the Somme battlefield, so it was some time before I could take more interest in my surroundings. One of the old houses that caught my eye was "Ghuznee Cottage", or, as I thought like many others "Chuznee" and the date "1851". (*you are in good company Peter, one of the compilers of Kellys Street Directory also misread the name one year and put it down as "Chuznee"! Ed.)* Much later I learnt the true spelling and as it sounded like an Indian word I did a bit of investigating, coming up with Afghanistan!

The Victorians were very fond of naming their houses after battles – but only if they won, so I called on my neighbour who is a numismatist, no, not another foreigner, he collects medals. As soon as I mentioned *Ghuznee* he came up with the date 1839, when it was besieged by the British who ousted the Shah (who was inclined to favour the Russians) and installed their own choice.

From 1841 until 1842 further fighting took place, each campaign earned a medal, of which my neighbour had both, plus two others belonging to a Major Sotheby, but he didn't live in West End. The Major did, however, reside in Grosvenor Square in London. When my neighbour obtains medals he likes to acquire all the paperwork appertaining to the recipient.

So, did the first occupier of *Ghuznee Cottage,* West End fight in those battles, or was it a whim of the builder? Perhaps one of our members could trace back using the box of magic tricks in the Museum, or do Kellys Directories go back to 1851?

PS. We were ever fearful of the Russians slipping in the back door and taking over India during Queen Victoria's reign, hence our constant expeditions into Afghanistan until we virtually gave up and stood guard at the Khyber Pass.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:
Well Peter, an interesting project – to find out the history of one of our villages oldest houses, and yes, Kelly's Street Directories go back to at least 1848, I have checked and "Ghuznee Cottage" does appear in a much later edition as "Chuznee". In those days insertion in the Directory was by subscription and only the better off people could afford an entry – hence many houses and names are missing. If anyone has any information regarding the cottage please contact me at the address shown on the front cover. Many thanks.

ARE FAMILY HISTORIANS REALLY THE POOR RELATIONS?

Review by Pauline Berry

The reasons for this cryptic title was soon explained by our enthusiastic speaker Stan Waight on 5th February. It apparently reflects the gulf he has observed between the two groups of researchers in any County Record Office. On one side the academic researchers, on the other the family historians (genealogists) out in force!

Stan's lively talk concerned his passion for researching his family tree and that of his wife Margaret, over a period of many years. Enough information to paper one of his walls he said! His slide show obviously interested not only the amateur genealogists in the audience but also those who could barely cover their door knob with their research. He showed us many of his own documental discoveries and explained his many sources which took their families back to the 17th century.

After 1837, the registration system of birth, marriage and death certificates is a huge source of information including maiden names, jobs, ages, addresses etc... Official Censuses recorded in this country every 10 years, started in 1841 and affords more names, places of birth etc.. After a delay, the 1901 Census has recently appeared to the eager anticipation of many. Stan reminded us that allowances must be made for errors discovered in records owing to poor spelling, bad memories, local dialect etc. causing name changes over the centuries.

Researching the years before 1837/41, however, involves even more hard work and foot slogging. Visiting County Record Offices, churches, war memorials, websites are the order of the day. Apprentice indentures, wills, Parish Poor "lists" and military records should also be followed up. Above all, listen and record what your older relatives have to say!

Following Stan's enthusiastic talk I wonder if any members, like me, went straight home and took up the cudgels again to make further enquiries into their family past? I know myself how quickly the passion for research "grabs" you and how frustrating it can be over that elusive date or certificate. An open mind is essential and be prepared for the unexpected skeleton in the cupboard!

WEST END LESS THAN THIRTY YEARS AGO....



Its difficult to believe, but less than 30 odd years separate this lovely image of West Ends "Lamp & Mantle" pub to the ruin awaiting demolition today. The photograph is believed to have been taken around the late 70's/ early 80's just after the name change from the "New Inn" to the "Lamp & Mantle" - you can see the "Freezer Store" to the right and I have to admit how well tended and cared for it all looks. At this stage the acid etched bow fronted pub windows were still in place – not the later plain replacements.

THE FREEMASONS IN WEST END

INDEPENDENT ORDER OF ODDFELLOWS.
MANCHESTER UNITY FRIENDLY SOCIETY.

LOYAL JUBILEE LODGE,

WESTEND.

Support the Local Branch which is a self-governing unit, managing its own affairs with the guarantee of the whole Society behind it.

The Jubilee Lodge, like other Branches, will still continue to provide Adult (Men and Women) and Juvenile Benefits, and it is fair to say whatever the State may provide in the future it will not be sufficient to meet the needs of sickness.

The Social and Educational advantages open to regular attendants are worth consideration.

All persons desirous of making additional provisions against sickness should apply for information from the Secretaries:—

A. E. DIBBENS, Dorincourt, Hatley Road, Bitterne.

R. H. WILTSHIRE, Swaythling Road, West End.

We are looking for any pictures, documents or information that you might have concerning The Independent Order of Oddfellows local branch in West End. The photo shown below was kindly lent to us by Mrs Dorothy Sign, it shows her father Mr Leslie Mills and his brother standing at the side of the float. The occasion was the annual West End Carnival (we think in the 1930's) and the location was The Wilderness, off West End Road. We would like to increase our information and knowledge about the local branch which used to hold their meetings above the old New Inn. Ed



Above: Carnival Day at The Wilderness – Oddfellows float with Leslie Mills holding reins – circa 1930's
Left: Advertisement which appeared in the St. James', Westend Parish Magazine of February 1949



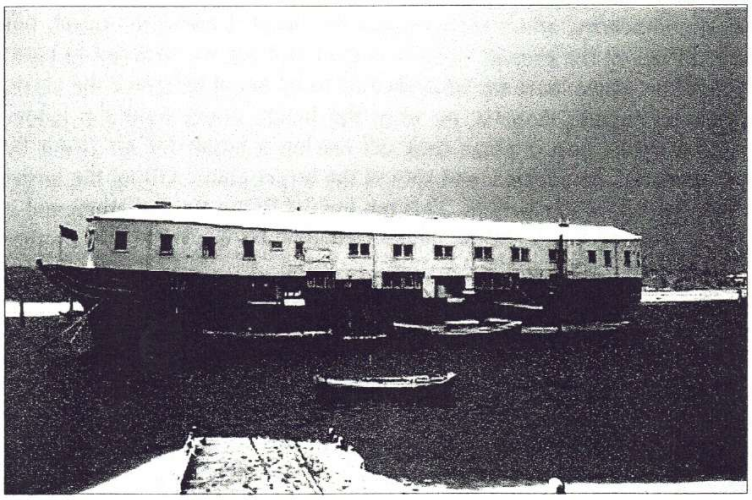
Above: Freemasons', villagers and band outside the old "New Inn" at West End in the early part of the 20th century

REVIEW OF THE MARCH MEETING

Stan Waight

The first, and quite short, part of the evening was taken up by the Annual General Meeting. Chairman Neville skipped nimbly through the Agenda, and the Officers and Committee were re-elected almost *en-bloc*. Despite the need to increase the subs to cover the increased cost of the hall, it is clear that the Society is in good shape. The Museum is going from strength to strength, but Secretary Pauline again had to stress the need for volunteers to man it.

The annual proceedings over, we were treated to a potted history of the Training Ship Mercury at Hamble by old-boy David Muffet. The school was founded in 1865 by wealthy socialite and keen sportsman Charles Hoare to train 12 to 15 year-old boys for a sea-going career (the rakish character is said to have done so as a penance for his past misdemeanours). His interest in cricket, which he played at county level, brought him into contact with our local hero the penniless C.B. Fry, and David gave us some broad hints about the strange triangle with Hoare's mistress 'Beatie' Sumner. 'Beatie' subsequently married Fry, apparently with Hoare's financial backing, and continued to run "Mercury" after Hoare's death in 1908.



TS 'Mercury' at Hamble 1967-68 *(Photograph by Richard Briggs)*



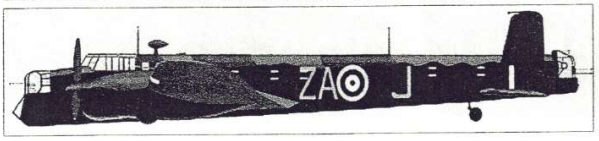
CHARLES BURGESS (C.B.) FRY

The trainees lived aboard the old "Mercury" in conditions that were spartan to say the least. Bare feet were the order of every day. Coaling the ship was an arduous task that brought little relief, for the boiler was ineffective; the only comfort for the younger ones was that their hammocks were slung in the old engine-room, which was marginally less cold than the other decks. Despite iron discipline and harsh conditions there was a certain pride among the boys – perhaps it was all they could hold on to – and "Mercury's" band was a favourite for local carnivals and fetes!

Ironically, having endured all the privations at Hamble and having risen to become "Captain" of his year, David Muffet dutifully followed his father into the family business and never did get to sea in a professional capacity. Nevertheless, he remains a loyal supporter of the establishment and dedicated small-boat sailor.

"Mercury" finally closed in 1968. In more recent years David has been prominent in the fund-raising necessary for her restoration, which is currently being carried out at Chatham under her original name, 'HMS Gannet'.

***Excellent "TS Mercury" website by Richard Briggs* – http://members.aol.com/scrambag/index.html**



FIRST FLIGHT 1942

Peter Andrews

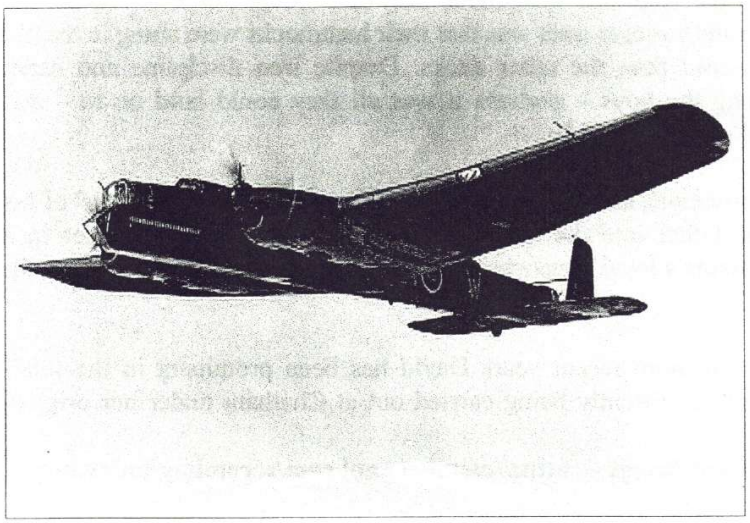
I was reading of the Whitley bomber which was "hoisted by its own petard", so to speak, and came to grief in West End, also of the late lamented Jimmy Edwards, who was brought down in the Bay of Biscay, early in World War 2.

Although I'd been in the RAF for two years I'd never flown before, but on being posted to RAF Gosport, which at the time was a Fleet Air Arm Maintenance Unit, we dealt with a hodge-podge of out-of-date aircraft. One sunny August day we'd finished a major inspection on a Whitley and it had trundled off for a test flight. However, it was held up as the pilot had omitted to sign the acceptance form, so I was sent out with it. Going up to the nose, avoiding the propellers, which were turning, a wooden ladder was lowered and up I scuttled and got the pilots signature. About to leave, I instead pulled up the ladder, closed the hatch and crawled into the bomb-aimers position in the nose where I lay full length on my stomach.

The pilot revved up the engines and off we went. A peculiarity of this plane is that it takes off and flies nose down, as it increased speed the nose got lower, and mine, so it appeared to be about a foot off the ground – very off-putting! Once we were well up I crawled out and got into the nose turret, where I had a good view over the surrounding area, from beyond Portsmouth the whole of the Isle of Wight and beyond Bournemouth. The turret had a single gas operated machine-gun, using a magazine containing 60 rounds of .303 cal.bullets, rate of fire about 700 a minute, then it had to be changed for another stored nearby, others were outside the turret. I tested the turret, but not the gun, and found a fault which had to be rectified on the ground. After less than an hour we returned to base. Down I went into the nose assuming the prone position. Once more my nose seemed to be about to scrape the earth, it was worse than take-off! Back at the hangars the engines stopped, up went the hatch, down went the ladder followed by me clutching the signed form. A few weeks later a plane took off towing a target for air firing by fighters, out over the Channel a German fighter appeared, he cheated, and shot at the target plane, killing the target operator. The pilot managed to bet back and crash landed on the airfield. This put me off flying for sometime and it wasn't until 1944 that I flew down from Iceland to Scotland in a Catalina with a Canadian crew – but that's another story!

The Whitley was so slow, under-armed and carried a small bomb load that it was withdrawn from bombing on the Continent and relegated to Coastal Command, which was what Jim was in when shot down in the Bay of Biscay, his pilot possibly strayed too near the coast and came within range of a German fighter with tragic results. Later models of Whitleys were fitted with a new front turret containing two belt fed Brownings of almost 1,000 rounds each, rate of fire 1,700 rounds a minute! We lost many of these planes early in the war in France, but being so short of aircraft had to use what came to hand. I was talking to Jim's daughter on the 8th of this month and she's going to look out photographs up in her loft, of Jim in the RAF, for copying, which should make a good display in the Museum.

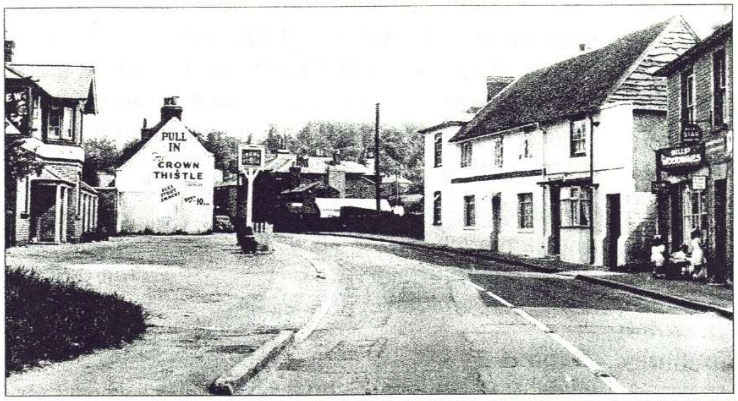
The RAF developed a device called a cable cutter, fitted to leading edges of aircraft the idea being that should a balloon cable strike the wing it would be drawn into the cable cutter, tripping a trigger firing what was a short one inch wide chisel. Alright in theory, but I never heard of one working. Perhaps they didn't in the case of the West End Whitley or they weren't fitted. About 20 years after the war I was at a Reunion and tearnt that one of our group had been killed in a crash virtually on the same date as my first flight. He was at St.Eval, Cornwall and went up on a test flight in Whitley which crashed on landing killing all on board. It may have been from the same squadron as Jim's – on this sombre note, I'll close.



Right

An RAF Whitley bomber in flight

WEST END'S FIRST POST OFFICE...OR WAS IT?



Lewis Hatley was Westend's first *Receiver of Mail* (Postmaster in todays terms) between 1834 and 1859 and occupied the buildings (which still stand today) on the right of the picture. This picture was taken c.1950 at which time the premises were still known as No.1 High Street, West End, but as the centre of the village moved towards the Moorgreen end the address changed to No.27 Swaythling Road. Ed.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

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In these days of flashy modern advertisements its interesting to look back at village advertising of the past. The examples shown on this page come from the St. James', West End Parish Magazine of February 1949 (*a copy of which has recently been deposited in the Museum Archives*). The question arises.. "How many of these business's have survived the passage of time and are still around today?" Well, the answer for the West End business's is only ONE!! - Beales Hairdressers although under different ownership is still going strong.

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Botley Road Westend

Tel. Westend 67474

On this day (April 2nd) in.....

1725 Giovanni Casanova, Italian adventurer, born at Venice.

1801 The naval Battle of Copenhagen took place, in the course of which Nelson, aboard the "Elephant", put the telescope to his blind eye and so "did not see" Admiral Parker's signal to break off the fight – the Danish fleet was destroyed.

1805 Hans Christian Andersen, Danish writer of fairy tales, born at Odense, the son of a shoemaker.

1872 Samuel Morse, American inventor of the telegraphic Morse Code, died in New York City aged 80.

1946 The Royal Military Academy was established at Sandhurst in Berkshire, having been at Woolwich since 1741.

1982 Argentinian forces invaded and occupied the British Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic.

THE NEXT MEETINGS ARE ....

April 2
PURPLE, WHITE & GREEN
The Suffragette Movement
Jean Cook

May 7
TITCHFIELD – Town or Village?
Madeline Selby

June 4
THE MOUNT, BISHOPSTOKE
Joan Simmonds

July 2
CONDUCTED WALK AROUND BISHOPSTOKE – Start 7.00pm
Joan Simmonds

NO MEETING IN AUGUST

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 # 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**

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

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

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

"The Mackay-Bennett...the Funeral Ship at the Titanic Disaster". ** *By John G.Avery* **£2.50**
*** This is a new enlarged edition*

"The Cholera Years...an Account of the Cholera Outbreaks in our ports, towns and villages".
By John G.Avery **£6.00**

A varied selection of postcards is also available – check for details and prices

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