THE WEST END LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

WESTENDER

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IT HAPPENED 53 YEARS AGO AT CHRISTMAS

500-YEAR-OLD COTTAGES DAMAGED

Fire at Westend "Show Places"

COTTAGES at Westend, Southampton, reputed to be about 500 years old, were seriously damaged by fire last night.

Originally four in number, the cottages were modernised and adapted as two dwellings some years ago, but oak beams and many other interesting features were carefully preserved, and the premises, known as "The Farmhouse," were regarded as a fine example of architectural restoration. They were show places of their kind and were visited by many people interested in the preservation of old buildings.

The cottages were near Gater's Mill, itself a building of considerable antiquity, which was gutted by fire some 20 years ago and subsequently rebuilt for industrial purposes.

The Farmhouse was occupied by two families—Mr George Woolley, a farmer, his wife and baby son, and Mr N Pearce, also a farmer, his wife and two grown-up sons.

SEEN BY FIRE-WATCHERS

Shortly after ten o'clock last night fire-watchers at the Mill saw that the thatch at the base of the chimneys of The Farmhouse was on fire. They ran to the cottages and warned the occupants, who were unaware of the fire. Efforts were made to extinguish the burning thatch with water from stirrup pumps but, fanned by a strong wind the flames rapidly obtained a firm hold.

SALVAGE EFFORTS

The occupants assisted by neighbours, workmen, police officers and others, therefore concentrated on saving the contents of the cottages. They removed most of the furniture to safety, but it was impossible to rescue some of Mrs Pearce's property.

National Fire Service pumps from Southampton, Eastleigh and Westend were quickly on the scene.

Water was pumped from the River Itchen, which flows at the foot of Gater's Hill. The combined efforts of the fire fighters resulted in the outbreak being extinguished, but by that time the thatched roof had fallen in and other damage done.

The occupants of the cottages spent the night with friends. Mr. Woolley, who is the son of Alderman F. Woolley, J.P., of Southampton, told an "Echo" reporter today that he was very grateful to everybody who helped to salvage his furniture.







FRONT PAGE "DAILY ECHO" DATED Saturday 23rd December 1950 AND AT RIGHT THE SAME BUILDING TODAY

A couple of days before Christmas 53 years ago a piece of West End heritage was nearly lost forever to fire after surviving 500 years of history. Today the Black Farm farmhouse, dating from around the 1600's, has been restored to its former glory but with a tiled instead of a thatched roof, hence the extra tall chimney stacks. This superb Jacobean period building has now been sub-divided into two homes although at various times it was a single farmhouse and then used as four labourers cottages. Ed.

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West End Local History Society is sponsored by

WEST END PARISH COUNCIL

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SHOTTERS HILL – an interesting part of West End

Rose Voller

The area from the mini roundabout by the War Memorial down the High Street to the Post Office has been known as Shotters Hill for many years. Charlie Sillence's article in the August 1985 West End News said he *"presumed the name was derived from Mr Charles Shotter who lived in the house (now demolished) according to the Hampshire 1859 Directory".*

A couple of years ago I received an enquiry about the Shotter family and subsequently learnt that Daniel Shotter born in 1773 was a Miller at West End from 1810 to 1834. His will dated 22nd February 1830 mentions *Messuages, Buildings, Land and Tenements.* He had created a Trust for his wife and eight children and appointed William Henry Gater (also a Miller) to be a Trustee.

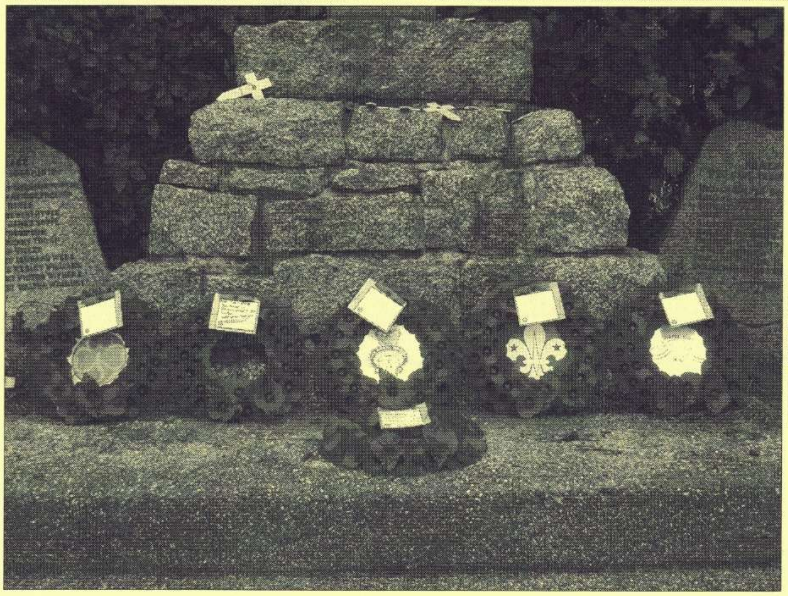
His son Charles Shotter (had no children) inherited the business until his death in January 1859. He also made a Will, described as a *Gentleman* and was living at Laurel House, West End in the Parish of South Stoneham. His wife Amelia inherited everything, but immediately on her death, "*such parts of his Estate etc.,*" was to be "*equally divided between my six sisters and my said wife's brother and sister, namely Priscilla Barter wife of William Barter, Tryphena Lawrence wife of William Henry Lawrence, Drusilla Butt wife of Timothy Butt, Tabitha Caws wife of James Caws, Amelia Hore wife of Jasper Hore, Kezia Smith wife of Abraham Smith, George Strugnell and Elizabeth Pounds wife of Thomas Pounds or such of them as shall be living at the time of the death of my (his) wife.* Charles kept the link with the Gater family by appointing John Gater to be Executor for his Will.

According to the 1851 Census – Charles Shotter 48 years, a "Gentleman" and Amelia, wife, 47 years, a *"Higler"* (which is a name for someone who bargains or haggles) were both living at Laurel House (where the old Police Station stood).

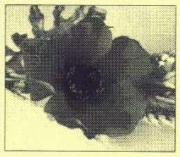
Interestingly the 1881 Census shows Harriett Baker, 57 years, Head, Widow, J.Richard St.Barbe Baker, 20 years, Son (the well known Richard St. Barbe Baker – man who founded "Men of the Trees" was his son), and Charlotte Spence, 22 years, Servant, living at the same Laurel House. In 1905 Sir Arthur Percy Fitzgerald Aylmer was resident at Laurel House then known as "Donadea". Sir Arthur's wife was Lady in Waiting to Queen Victoria. After World War 2 the tenants were the two Misses Prestons who according to Charlie Sillence gave much to the village of West End. Their only brother (not named) won the MC and was killed in the war.

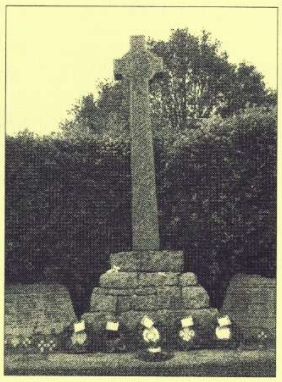
A surprising little bit of life's history covering over 150 years within a small area of our Village.

WEST END REMEMBERS....Lest we forget



Sunday 9th November 2003 and West End remembered those who gave their lives for our freedom in two World Wars and since. Wreaths were laid by the Parish Council, the Royal British Legion and others to mark Remembrance Day.





Pictures by J. D. H. Chapman

EXPLOSIONS FROM THE NEW FOREST!

Stan Waight

Was it coincidence or a stroke of genius on the part of our Secretary Pauline that Tony Yoward's talk was booked for Fireworks Night? It seemed appropriate that it should be frequently punctuated by the loud explosions and vivid flashes going on outside the hall.

Tony is the Archivist of the Industrial Archaeology Group, and had come to address our November meeting on the subject of the Gunpowder Factory at Fritham. I particularly enjoyed the technical content, but I'm like that, and Tony's delivery included just the right level of humour.

He opened, figuratively speaking, with a bang, by showing a slide of a mortar that was used to 'prove' black powder, but we heard little about the black stuff after that; the trouble was that it made so much smoke that the marksman didn't know whether he'd scored a hit, and couldn't see where to aim the next shot.

The original owner of the Fritham works was Henry Drayton, but he was a rather profligate character and had to sell out. It then became known as the Schultze Gunpowder Factory because it produced a smokeless, cellulose-based powder patented by a Prussian of that name. By 1874, however, a home-grown chemist by the name of Griffiths had made such improvements in the recipe that there was no need for further use of the patent; the enterprise was enlarged in 1880 as a result of the increased sales, and an associated vitriol works was opened at Redbridge. The finished powder was shipped first by horse and cart to the local station and thence distributed by rail (contrary to popular belief, the new road to the station was made to save the horses two steep pulls, and not to protect the inhabitants of Fritham!). The factory survived several complaints about pollution of the stream from which it drew its water, but eventually closed in 1920. There is now almost no sign of the existence of an undertaking that required numerous buildings and many Fritham houses incorporate used bricks from the site; some of the workers, of whom over 100 were employed in its heyday, were even accommodated on-site.

From the excellent slides he showed, Tony was able to demonstrate the strict adherence to health and safety regulations - from the massive walls but flimsy roofs of the production buildings to the heavy woollen protective clothing of the workers. The works had a good safety record, with just one fatality before 1874 and none thereafter.

It was a splendid, if noisy, meeting and I for one found Tony's talk rivetting.

REMINDERS AND REQUESTS

Next year sees the 60th Anniversary of D-Day, when the South Coast of England was one giant armed camp awaiting the Invasion of Europe. We would like to hear from anyone who has pictures, documents or memories and stories to tell about West End/Moorgreen at this time.

We are always looking for volunteers to man the Museum – if you could spare some time on a Saturday please contact our Secretary Pauline who runs the staffing schedule.

Please note that the Museum will be closed on Saturday 20th and 27th December for the Christmas period and will re-open again to the Public on Saturday 3rd January 2004.







A HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND JOYOUS NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS AND MEMBERS
FROM THE COMMITTEE OF WEST END LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY
THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED HELP AND SUPPORT DURING THE LAST YEAR
AND LOOKING FORWARD TO AN EVEN MORE SUCCESSFUL 2004!

On this day (December 3rd) in.....

1753 Samuel Crompton, English inventor of the spinning-mule, which substituted machinery for hand work in the cotton industry, born at Firwood near Bolton in Lancashire, the son of a farmer.

1795 Sir Rowland Hill, English educator and pioneer in postal services, born at Kidderminster in Worchestershire.

1894 Robert Louis Stevenson, Scottish novelist, author of "Treasure Island" and "Kidnapped", died on the island of Samoa in the Pacific.

1917 The Quebec Bridge, the world's longest cantilever, over the St. Lawrence river, was opened to traffic – 87 lives were lost during its construction.

1919 Pierre Auguste Renoir, French Impressionist painter, died at Cagnes-sur-Mer.

1930 Andy Williams, American singer and entertainer, born at Wall Lake in Iowa.

1967 Christiaan Barnard performed the first heart transplant operation – Louis Washansky received the heart of traffic victim Denise Darvali, at Groote Schuur Hospital at Cape Town, but died 18 days later.

1969 Marshal Voroshilov, Soviet political leader and Army marshal, died.

1980 Sir Oswald Mosley, English politician and leader of the British Union of Fascists, died in exile at his home near Paris.

THE NEXT MEETINGS ARE ....

January 7
THE HISTORY OF POSTCARDS
John Silman

February 4
DROVERS AND DROVE ROADS
George Watts

March 3
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
plus
HAMWIC – THE SOUTHAMPTON ORIGINS
Genevieve Bailey

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* **£6.50**
(new special low price)

"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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