THE WEST END LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

WESTENDER

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WEST END LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE ADDRESS

GOING, GOING, GONE!



DEMOLITION IN PROGRESS AT THE "LAMP & MANTLE" *Photograph courtesy of J.D.H.Chapman*

Local landmark the "Lamp & Mantle" pub has at last been demolished after standing empty for some considerable time, during which it was the target of continued vandalism as well as arson. The site has been purchased by Orchard Homes and is to be re-developed as flats. This marks the end of the site as a pub, previously known as the "New Inn", an earlier pub building on this site dated back to at least 1834 possibly earlier. This large area was once the centre of the old village of West End (known as Westend in those days) complete with a village pond on the large Green that once stood in the front, the scene of travelling fairs, village gatherings not to mention the bare-knuckle prize fights. So after well over a century and a half of service to the village we say good bye to "The Lamp".

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WEST END PARISH COUNCIL

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LETTER FROM AMERICA

Memories from a West Ender living in Virginia, America

The following are extracts from a letter received by our Secretary from Eric Fray (of the well known local Fray family) recounting some of his memories of old West End……

The small building in front of the Workhouse (now Moorgreen Hospital) *was used as a Headquarters for the Home Guard in the early 1940's. I was drafted into the Guard and I remember Peter Carne was also a member. I used to inspect an ammunition dump in a Nissen hut in Telegraph Road on the left in the woods when on duty and was very proud of my US .300 cal rifle with ten rounds, which I used to take home to "Merry Gardens". Also practised signalling with an Aldis lamp from an outdoor iron stairway to a confederate down Moorgreen at the railway bridge (we had permission).*

I remember the Parish Council of 1932 (see Westender October-November issue p.4) and of course Reuben Fray was my uncle. I have met Miss Acton of "The Jungle" - Peter Carne and I were a duo who went carol singing each year along Cemetery Road (now part of West End Road) - *we sometimes had pennies! Peter Carne and I are lifelong friends. We started at West End School the same day and went on to Hedge End Senior School, as it was then known.*

You asked about D-Day memories. I was overseas with the RAF at that time but vaguely remember US tanks head to tail along West End Road near the Church toward Bitterne when I came home on leave before D-Day.

I do have some memories of the old Parish Hall – not very good ones. Periodically it was used for dentistry on us unfortunate children at West End School. Just inside the front door was a "waiting room" and I can remember sitting there with my mother listening to screams coming from inside the hall. When I think of todays modern facilities this set-up was very crude and unhealthy, and after having five teeth extracted there once I was granted a half-day off from school! Receiving a red card at school meant some teeth pulling; a yellow a filling. We all dreaded seeing the man come in with these cards.

I always loved the "park" opposite my home (now known as Hatch Grange) , *I knew every stand of furze; where the nightingale rested; and watched at one time a family of foxes playing around the oak tree still growing close to the Recreation Centre. I remember the house on fire one Sunday very well and the Spitfire zooming up from "Eastleigh" airport from time to time. Chapel Road was gravel and us lads played football in the road. Just memories – but wonderful ones.*





left: "MERRY GARDENS" ERIC'S HOME BEFORE CHANGES. right: HATCH GRANGE IN THE SNOW 2004

A MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM THE BESIEGED TO THE BESIEGERS

Peter Andrews



VIEW SHOWING THE SHELLS PAINTED INSCRIPTION AND CONSTRUCTION



CLOSEUP SHOWING THE DE BEERS MINING COMPANY LOGO AND SHELL SIZE



CLOSEUP OF THE SHELL SHOWING THE INSCRIPTION , DATE OF MANUFACTURE AND THE DRIVING BAND

My two readers must be wondering what the Boer War has to do with West End. As Paul Daniels used to say "not a lot", in fact, tenuous in the extreme, on a par with Darwin who brought back Monkey Puzzle tree seeds to Britain, hence the house named "Araucaria" on the Swaythling Road. But I digress!

At Christmas during the sieges of Mafeking and Kimberley, the Boers fired same blank shells into the towns saying they were Christmas presents. We retaliated in a like vein, saying here are some Christmas Puddings for you! This (pictured above) is one of the shells recovered by an obscure relation of mine by marriage at that time. I took it over from a nephew of mine this Christmas as he was rather nervous of it; although it's perfectly safe (no fuse or explosive in it!). Incidently, he lives in a flat located in what was the Officers Mess at Netley Hospital.

This relic is now on display in the Royal Armouries at Fort Nelson Museum on Portsdown Hill. Probably its last resting place.

Editors note:

This 2.5 inch shell is marked from Kimberley, which was a De Beers mining town and where Cecil John Rhodes spent the siege. The shells were manufactured in the company workshops and suitably inscribed "Compliments of C.J.R." along with the company logo "DB in a diamond shape"

WEST END PRIOR TO D-DAY 6th JUNE 1944

Some memories from Dorothy Sign

West End already had an Artillery Camp in Quob Lane (see picture below), a Signals Camp at "The Wilderness" and a Barrage Balloon site in Allington Lane. In early spring 1944, three army tents appeared on the corner of Moorgreen Road (opposite "The Sportsman" pub, recently demolished) accomodating one British sergeant, three British privates and one American sergeant attached to the "Reconnaissance Corps". Their duties included directing the convoys which came through Moorgreen Road to parking bays which were marked out in yellow paint along West End Road from the cenotaph (War Memorial at the top of Shotters Hill) to Winter Road, and also in Upper New Road and Moorhill Road from St James Church to the roundabout.

Opposite the church was a re-fuelling station manned by Americans. Tents shot up like mushrooms just about everywhere! There were three Transit Camps in the wooded areas known as C1, C2 and C3. C1 was in Moorhill Road on the edge of Harefield Estate stretching from the church (St.James) up to opposite the turning for Telegraph Road. C2 ran from the Reservoir up to the roundabout and C3 was situated at Kanes Hill. Convoys built up for weeks and stayed a few days before moving on to be replaced by others. Villagers opened up their homes to the troops and many lasting friendships were formed. Social life was good with Dances and Social Evenings being held in the Old Parish Hall (originally the old National School dating from the 1830's) and the Church Hall as well as Concerts. A group of about 15 people were formed by Mrs Barbara Watson and we were known as "The Moorgreen Merry Makers Concert Party", we

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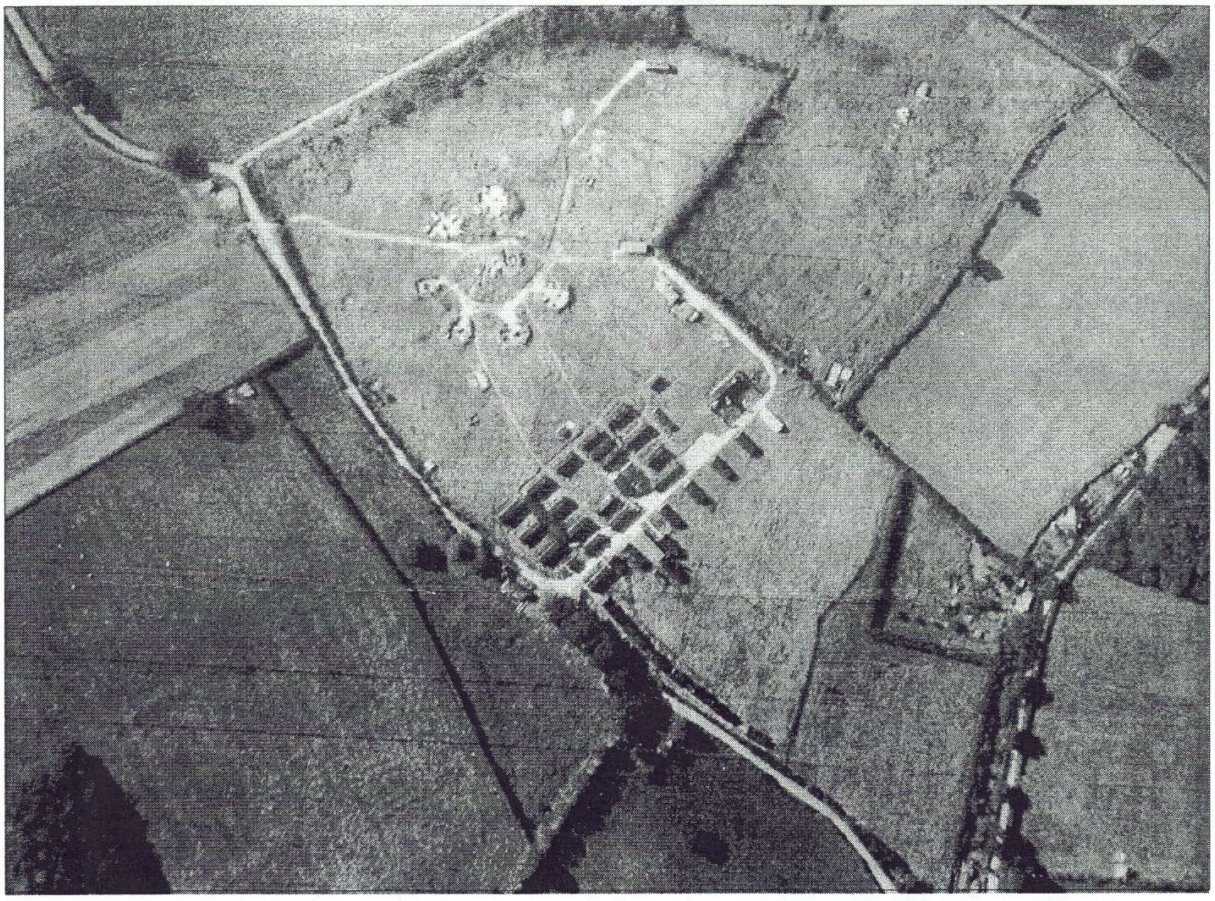

AERIAL VIEW OF THE QUOB LANE ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN SITE AND WINSLOWE BARRACKS

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danced, sang, did sketches and monologues – the entertainment always seemed welcome. One performance was actually held on stage in a marquee in Transit Camp C1. We felt quite important being escorted in and out of the Camp. West End was very much a Military Area leading up to D-Day and also for a long time afterwards.

A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

A big "thank you" to Dorothy, Eric and Len for sending in some of their memories of West End during the war and build-up to D-Day in 1944. This year will see the **60th Anniversary of D-Day,** a momentous time in our history and it seems only right and proper that we should record the memories of people who lived through them for the benefit of future generations. There are, I am sure, many of our members and readers of "Westender" who have similar memories – so please put pen to paper and send your memories to me, the Editor, at the address on the front cover, for inclusion in future copies of "Westender" throughout this year. **Thank you.**

WEST END ..... A WALKERS DELIGHT



A series of three gatefold leaflets available now from the Parish Centre illustrate a variety of interesting walks around West End. The three leaflets published by a combination of Eastleigh Borough Council, West End Parish Council, Friends of Hatch Grange, Itchen Hamble Countryside Project and The Conservation Foundation set out a series of walks around the village and include points of interest to look out for. "Megan Green" and "Hatch Grange", the two latest brochures produced in full colour complete with excellent maps are a mine of information for the walker. To enjoy these walks you don't have to be a "hard bitten" hiker, anyone can enjoy these relatively short walks, the ideal way to spend a balmy summers evening and get some healthy exercise into the bargain. So pick up a set of leaflets, turn off the television and start enjoying the great outdoors!

Another new leaflet produced by Eastleigh Borough Council and available from the Museum and Parish Centre is "Hamble Valley...the strawberry coast ... Reach For The Sky". This handy leaflet outlines the history of early aviation in the Eastleigh and Southern Parishes area has been produced to commemorate the centenary of powered flight on 17th December 1903. Amongst the many personalities mentioned is West End's very own Wing Commander Wellesley Bigsworth, a Great War air ace who became the role model for W.E.Johns hero "Biggles", find out more at the Museum in our extensive archive.

..... AND THE DOGS FOUND THEIR WAY HOME ON THEIR OWN

February meeting review by Stan Waight

I looked forward to hearing George Watts on Drove Roads at the February meeting and he didn't disappoint me. He spoke in his inimitable style, completely off-the-cuff, and illustrated his depth of knowledge with OHP transparencies. The subject centred on the 1700-1800s, and was introduced by comparing the 'then and now' importance of agriculture and movement of animals - we frequently use the phrase 'in droves' without giving thought to its origins.

We saw contemporary pictures of droves in progress, every one showing the drovers' 'uniform' - the short boots, the hose, the bum-length jacket, the floppy hat and the cheeky scarf - with the boss man on his horse. But droves were rather more than nostalgic subjects for art and we learned how they originated, from local movements within a parish, through the trips to regional markets to the long-distance droves to the big city centres. Hampshire's Weyhill was one of the biggest markets in Europe, and our attention was drawn briefly to the similarities of the American cattle drive.

Livestock farming is a feature of the western uplands, especially in Wales, and most of the routes came from that direction. Drove roads are characterised by several features including smithies (cattle were temporarily shod for long-distance droving), fords and multiple tracks across common land with 'funnels' on the boundaries. Drovers generated income and were always welcome. Enclosures, often in the shelter of woodland, were needed for overnight stops, and wayside inns, known as 'huts', provided refreshment. Several pubs are still called 'clump' or 'hut'.

More research is needed, and George speculated on what might be done in West End, which lies between the river crossings at Mansbridge and Botley.

Large sums of money were involved and drovers earned good wages. According to George, the boss man sold his horse at the end of the drove and went home by coach. The dogs, he said with a smile, found their own way home ..... if you believe that you'll believe anything!

FEEDBACK FROM OUR READERS

Just read the latest West End Newsletter (*Westender*) on line, another great issue. Saddened to read of the passing of Bob Moody, I remember him well from my days living in West End (1939-1966). The old photo's of Fray's shop and the Blacksmith Arm's (Oh the memories of the Blacksmiths), Ron Beale's Chemist and Barber shop, his Dad's before that, and Wiltshire's Newsagents, new to me, was always Frank Stubbs in the 40's, used to get my Dandy and Hotspur there. Can anyone remember the old Sportsman's Arms run by Bill Light prior to the war, the new Sportsman's built in the late 30's was not opened until after the war ended, it was used as a food storage depot during the war, another favourite watering hole by the local lads.... Happy Day's.

Len Payne, Vancouver, Canada

The motorcar shown on page 9 of the last issue of Westender with Frank Backhouse standing beside it outside the Freemantle Club in Southampton was a Crossley, fitted with wheel trims circa 1937.

Peter Andrews, West End

I found your Web site this afternoon while surfing the Web. I was very impressed with the now/then photographs. This device is very useful for illustrating how things change over time. Keep up the good work.

Stephen Taylor, Austin, TX, USA

LOCAL BEREAVEMENT

Former member of West End Local History Society **Vera Fray** passed away on 14th February 2004 aged 87 years, our thoughts and condolences go out to all members of her family. The Funeral Service was held at St. James Church, West End on 25th February 2004.

MEMORIES OF WEST END

Len Payne

West End of 1939 was a far cry from the village we see today. Gone are the cottages that fronted the north side of the High Street running from the old Parish Hall to The West End Brewery Inn. Gone also are the sedate and imposing homes that stood in their immaculate gardens on the south side of the High Street from Upper New Road up Shotter's Hill to the Cenotaph.

The newest housing estate in progress was Orchard's Way, now classified as a Heritage Site, little did Bunney Brothers realise they were building history in those days just prior to World War 2, then again they had their hands full keeping us young tear-a-way's off the scaffolding and from making den's out of bricks. The lime tubs used to make up the plaster for the ceilings had a particular attraction to us, we used to dig holes fill them with lime and cover them with sand, then wait for Bert Bunney or his brother Alf to step in them...great fun.

Hatch Grange, a wonderful place to play. I remember my first visit there with my dad, entering from Chapel Road after climbing the embankment, just past where Mr. Blake's the insurance man's house stood, about where the Community Centre now stands, as I recall it was a place of gently rolling grass covered low hillocks with clumps of hawthorn bushes, full of rabbit burrows and a wonderful row of beech trees. And butterflies by the hundreds, small, about one half inch wing span, cornflower blue, brown and gold.

If you entered Hatch Grange by way of the High Street you passed the "keeper's lodge" as we called it, then up the avenue flanked by those towering trees to where the old House stood prior to the fire. The remains of the gardens were still visible, flowers, once cultivated had run wild, daffodil, crocus, primrose, roses were in abundance; by the elevated tennis courts was a "bamboo forest" you could play hide and seek, make secret den's, all kinds of kids games. It wasn't until I was in my teens that I discovered other uses for that particular spot.

There was a mulberry tree, with luscious fruit, apples, pears, plums, raspberries and blackberries, hazel, beech and chestnut trees.

There was a wood sandwiched between Upper New Road and Orchards Way, a veritable wonderland for us kids, secret tunnels where you could hide from the local bobby, particularly PC's. Hiscock and Jacobs when the occasional window was broken, or some other heinous crime was committed, secret dens where you could lie low and turn a deaf ear to your mum or dad calling you in for the night. This wood was all that remained of a farm on part of which Orchards Way was built. Where the old farm house stood was the entrance to the "underground cellars" or so we thought, we would never venture more than a few feet into it for fear of falling prey to the pig sized rats we were told lived down there. Our dad's finally filled in the entrance before one of us was eaten!

As the prospect of war became inevitable the men and women of Orchard's Way embarked on a task of mammoth proportion in the woods behind Orchards Way, as a group they dug a series of trenches in the shape of the letter 'E' , with sloping entrances at each open end. This was to be a refuge in the event of air raid or invasion. A tremendous amount of earth had to be moved by hand using only garden tools such as picks, shovels and wheelbarrows. All this was accomplished in a short time by people who had only recently become neighbours. Luckily it was never put its original purpose, but it made a wonderful playground for us kids, in fact we won the war several times over before it was time for bed.

The village in those days according to us kids, was comprised of three separate areas, from St James Primary School to Moorgreen was Top Ender territory, from the Cenotaph down to Dunford's Garage was the Village Boys, and from the New Inn (Lamp and Mantle) to the old Allington Lane at the top of Gaiters Hill was Bottom Ender territory. You will note the definite no-mans-land between each territory.

In the 1940's/50's there used to be rival Test Matches in cricket or football between the rival groups. Fray's Stores, a haven of delicious smells, Knowlton's Bakery, where you could buy four bread rolls for a penny, Wiltshire the Butcher, Beale's Chemist, dreaded hair cuts and sweets, with old Mr. Beale and his wife, Ron had just entered the RAF. Stubb's the Newsagent, comics and sweets, until the unheard of sweet rationing was introduced, does anyone remember the day all chocolate bars came

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in a bluey coloured wrapper and bore the name "Ration". Hassell's Post Office and sixpenny savings stamps we stuck in our savings books. The Police Station.. George Rollins garage, with the flat roof we used to climb on to and play, endless rows of accumulators being refilled and charged for those homes sporting a radio, Bealing's Fish and Chip Shop, fish and chips, faggots and peas, rissoles, all cooked in whale oil.. .cholesterol !! never heard of it.

The Fire Station, the static water tank we used to float our boats in... ..until Mr. Butt chased us away. The big brass helmets that vanished overnight, gone to be replaced with tin hats, the old village ambulance that stood in the Parish Hall car park that became a secret clubhouse for the Village Boy's. Frank Browning's grocery store. Emman's Bakery, on the corner of Ivy Lane, with that fascinating prismatic sign that changed as you went by it, it read, Sunlight Soap - No Wear No Care No Tear - Lifebuoy Soap. Pure magic to us kids.

Then came the war in earnest, the village blacked out, endless convoys and troop transports, our beloved woods, off limits and filled with troops. School windows taped and painted, air raid shelters in the school grounds where we would be ushered in an air raid. Little did Mr. Harris the Headmaster realise that as the teachers were ushering us in the front door of the shelter, we were making a bee line for the escape hatch at the far end to sit on top of the shelter and watch the dog fights over Eastleigh and Southampton. The noise of the anti aircraft guns in Quob Lane, the whistle of shrapnel as it came down that became prized objects especially if it was still hot.

At School we played the endless game of "squeeze", that entailed a fight to be the one that won the coveted corner spot where the boy's toilet's and the girl's toilet's joined, just imagine a hundred or so 7 - 11 year old boy's fighting to win that spot, and the noise that ensued. And games of "Chummy Up", here you all sat on the wall that separated the playground from the Dining Hall and "chummied" along until you reached the end of the wall, then you ran to the start of the wall and began again.

The most feared man in the village was Mr. Peck. Who was Mr. Peck, well he wasn't a policeman, he wasn't a teacher, he wasn't the dreaded Truant Officer who called daily if you were missing from school. Mr. Peck was the Gas Mask Inspector, we were in fear of him, for no matter how new your gas mask was, he would find fault with it. I have lost count of the times I stood in front of the School Assembly with my head hung down in abject misery for losing my gas mask, listening to Mr. Peck describe in detail the agonising death I would suffer if a gas attack occurred.

Amongst the "characters" of the village, and we had our share, was Matty the Gas Man, whose job it was to empty to gas meters of their pennies. People said he had suffered shell shock in W.W.1, but us kids loved him and he was always followed by a gang of yelling youngsters as he made his rounds throughout the village on his bicycle, kicking one leg out sideways and yelling "Oi, Oi, Oi". Good old Matty, long gone now....and Bill Grant the milkman for Brown and Harrison's Dairy with his two horses, characters themselves, Duchess a bay mare and Monty, a huge black with a white blaze on his nose, many a time I became a stage coach driver while Bill enjoyed a well earned "cuppa" at our house.

Just some memories of growing up in West End.





VE-DAY CELEBRATIONS HELD IN ORCHARDS WAY IN WEST END 1945

THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING HOUSE

Pauline Berry



right:

WOODLEIGH OR SCAFFOLDING HOUSE (SGB) AS IT IS TODAY FRONT AND BACK



Left:

COUNCILLOR FRED WOOLLEY WHEN MAYOR IN 1932



Learning of the recent death of Mr George Woolley, son of the eminent Mr Fred Woolley, I looked out a copy of the letter he sent me in 1991 in which he expressed his hopes that one day a local road would be named after his father. This and more, can be found in our Museum's archive. Fred Woolley, a notable business man, was twice Mayor of Southampton, a magistrate, chairman of various committee's and also Secretary of the local Titanic Relief Fund in 1912, allocating pensions to widows and orphans of the disaster. His son George, wrote briefly of his father's life living at "Woodleigh" (now S.G.B. House) during the early 1900's (Street Directory 1915). This house which still exists, by the skin of its teeth, where the traffic lights now rule supremely on the A27 crossroads.

The land behind the white house, once known as "West End Villa" prior to 1880, held an extensive brickworks for many years. The brick-makers themselves used to live in the cottages in Chalk Hill (originally known as South Road), many of which still exist today. When brick-making finally ceased (date not known) they were let for 5 shillings per week, said George. To expand on this information I managed to find the Estate Agents particulars in the 1890 sale of "Woodleigh", the brickworks and five nearby cottages. Apparently "Woodleigh" then stood in its own "pleasant grounds" of nearly two acres. The house was approached by a short carriage drive and beyond the main door was an imposing entrance hall leading to three good sized reception rooms, a library, four bedrooms etc.. In addition to the outbuildings, stables and coach-house, there were piggeries (very common in West End at that time and later), "fowl and rabbit houses".

One needs a good imagination now to visualise "the pretty laid out grounds" comprising lawns, shrubberies, flower beds and walled vegetable and fruit gardens. There was also a vinery, and a 50 feet long hothouse and conservatory! All this for an annual rent of £50 before its sale in 1890. The brickworks were worthy of a mention too: *"The clay is close to the surface, can be worked to a considerable depth, and is very suitable for the manufacture of terra cotta and glazed goods"*. The literature stated that only one acre (a quarter) of the area had been already worked, with two kilns erected, capable of holding 50,000 and 29,000 bricks respectively. An area needing further research is mention of a wooden "assembly hall" (40' x 30') on the site. It was let to a religious body for £10 per annum. So next time you sit in a queue of traffic at the lights, think back to the time when the garden was below the tarmac and to the gracious days of the old house still nearby. What an unfortunate position the builder chose! And, no, there never has been a road named after Fred Woolley owing to a decision by the powers that be!

Footnote: The late Charles Sillence made reference in his book, "Tales of Old West End", to an interesting story of one "genteel" couple living in the house in the 1800's. They suddenly upped and vanished overnight, leaving a trail of large debts owed to the dismayed tradesmen of West End!

AFTER THE AGM.....

Review by Stan Waight

The March meeting was very well attended considering it was the AGM. Perhaps the members knew that the committee would be re-elected *en bloc* and just came for the talk. If so, they were conned!

It was billed as 'Hamwic – the Southampton origins', and I for one was expecting a lecture on the Anglo-Saxon period in Southampton's history. Not so!

I think we were a good five minutes into the talk before we even heard the word 'Hamwic'. We started with the man who carried out a survey of Southampton prostitutes and went on to the origins of words connected with drink, law and order (including prisons), Christmas and Lent. All this before there was even a mention of the new St. Marys Stadium and what the archaeologists had found there. And hardly had another minute gone by before we had left Hamwic for medieval Southampton with its Norman French, its churches and its Canterbury pilgrims.

But Genevieve Bailey was lovely! She is a great character, and Southampton's answer to the 'cheeky Cockney sparrow'.

A former publican turned radio and TV presenter and Southampton Town Guide, she treated us to an entertainment that set the hall buzzing and we won't see her like again (unless we ask her back of course). Although she may have strayed - just a little - from her billing, there is no doubt at all that she has spent innumerable hours in historical research, and has a wide-ranging fund of local knowledge. She is a truly extraordinary historian.

Thank you, Genevieve, for a most enjoyable evening.

THE NEXT MEETINGS ARE ....

May 5
MY GOD IT'S A WOMAN! (Early Aviators)
Jean Cook

June 2
I'LL SEE YOU IN NEW YORK!
(The story of Edith Haisman, survivor of the Titanic Disaster)
David Haisman

July 7
THE HISTORY OF SOUTHAMPTON AIRPORT
Eric Reed

NO MEETING IN AUGUST

September 1
GARDEN FINDS & TREASURE TROVE
(The Portable Antiquities Scheme)
Jodi McCrohan

October 6
THE WORK OF HANTS & IOW TRUST FOR MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY
Julie Satchell

On this day (April 7th) in.....

1739 The notorious highwayman Dick Turpin was hanged at York for the murder of a keeper from Epping – was buried at York as "John Palmer".

1770 William Wordsworth, English poet, born Cockermouth in Cumbria, the son of an lawyer.

1891 Phineas T. Barnum, American showman who created "The Greatest Show on Earth" in 1871, died aged 80.

1897 Walter Winchell, American gossip columnist and radio commentator, born in New York City.

1928 James Garner, American film actor, born at Norman in Oklahoma as James Baumgarner.

1947 Henry Ford, American motor car manufacturer, the father of "mass-production", died aged 83.

1948 WHO – the World Health Organisation – was established "with the aim of attaining the highest possible level of haelth for all people", with headquarters at Geneva.