NEWSLETTER of the WEST END LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

WESTENDER

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WEST END FIRE BRIGADE (2)



Our front cover photograph in this issue shows the Westend Fire Engine in the car-park of the old Parish Hall (former National School) on the corner of High Street and Chapel Road around the late 1950's. In the picture can be seen the old handcart originally used to transport the fire hoses prior to the acquisition of motor transport! The Fire Engine in the picture is the long serving Dennis New World appliance in service since the construction of the Fire Station in Orchards Way in 1939. Also seen on the extreme left of the picture is the "shed" that prior to WW2 served as the "Fire Station" before being replaced in 1939-40 .

West End Local History Society & Westender is sponsored by

WEST END PARISH COUNCIL

EASTLEIGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

FEBRUARY MEETING REPORT

Review by Stan Waight



The Fog Gun station on the seaward side of the lighthouse at Flamborough Head

The January meeting was cancelled because of the extreme weather conditions. 'My Life in the 17th Century' will be rescheduled for 2011.

Our meetings are becoming ever more popular, and there was an attendance of almost 70 at the February meeting, when Keith Morton addressed us on 'Lighthouses'. Although he was never a lighthouse keeper himself, Keith is a prominent member of the Association of Lighthouse Keepers (ALK). His talk, which was quite technical at times, was marred for some by his rather quiet delivery, but his slides were good. His subjects were not confined to Trinity House lights in England and a trip to see those in Estonia had obviously made a deep impression on him. His interest in the subject started when he and his father came across the Anvil Point lighthouse in Dorset and he began by describing the construction of its tower and the technicalities of the lamps and lenses. Towers in exposed positions were usually built of granite, but brick was also used and even cast iron, and I was surprised to learn how small the modern light sources can be. The ALK has opened a museum at Hurst Castle and he cordially invited us to go there.

Apart from the obvious reason that they warn of dangerous rocks and headlands, lighthouses can act as prominent daymarks by which mariners can fix their positions and ships can be guided into harbour at night by a combination of high and low leading lights. Generally speaking, towers are tall so that the range of the beam is greater, but low orographic cloud can be a particular problem where there are cliffs and is counteracted by building shorter towers at sea level. The curvature of the earth also has the effect increasing the range of the beam by 'bending' it, and each lighthouse has a specific flashing sequence that identifies it from others. Early lights were powered by candles, which could be seen over long distances in an unpolluted atmosphere, and later ones were successively powered by fire, oil, acetylene, electricity and modern-day LED. Keith described all of these in detail. All lighthouses in England are now automated and controlled centrally from Harwich, and funding is by the collection of Light Dues, payable when ships arrive in port.

Despite the fact that we could not hear every word, Keith is to be congratulated upon a well-presented, informative and entertaining talk. The more so because it was all 'off the cuff'.

Forgive me for ending the report on a very personal note, for my family has had a close association with Trinity House. Several of the men were employed by the Corporation, my mother was born in the lighthouse complex at Flamborough Head in Yorkshire, and I myself worked as a very junior clerk at the East Cowes depot during the latter part of WW2. I was therefore a little disappointed that Keith hardly mentioned fog ..... When a lighthouse is shrouded by fog the light has to be replaced by an audible warning, and Trinity House introduced Fog Guns at a number of sites during the late 1800s. These fired maroons at fixed intervals and Grandad was a gunner at Flamborough for part of his service (the rest was spent on light-vessels such as the one in Southampton's Ocean Village and he ended up as Master). The maroons were subsequently replaced by fog horns such as 'Moaning Minnie' at St Catherines, and anyone who has heard one will never forget its mournful note.

FRIENDS OF HATCH GRANGE WORK DAY



THIS IS WHAT 10 TONNES OF GRAVEL LOOKS LIKE AFTER DELIVERY IN CHAPEL CLOSE



SOME OF THE VOLUNTEERS WORKING ON THE NEW PATHWAY



VOLUNTEERS DIGGING UP SELF SEEDING SAPLINGS - A BACK BREAKING JOB!



ALISON AND PARISH CHAIRMAN NEVILLE DICKINSON WORKING WITH THE VOLUNTEERS



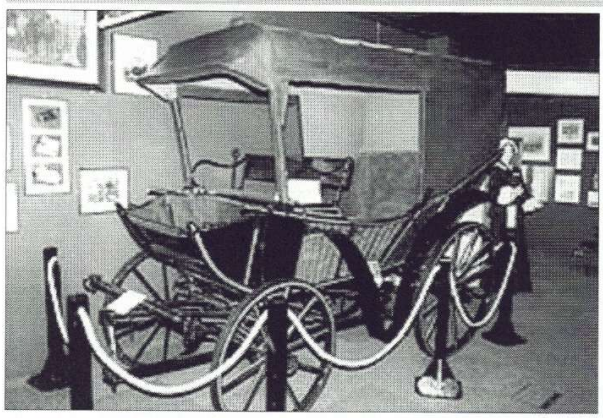
THE COMPLETED GRAVEL PATHWAY ON HATCH GRANGE

(Photographs courtesy of tLaura Cooke and "Ditch" Johns)

This event took place on Saturday, 27th February 2010 and was well attended on what was not the driest of days. Ten tonnes of gravel was shifted to form a new pathway from Chapel Close providing a level access onto Hatch Grange. It was then a case of pulling up self-seeding saplings and a general tidy up. After a strenuous morning of hard work, all volunteers retired to the Parish Centre where soup and hot dogs were made available. Thanks go to all the ladies who helped prepare lunch and also to all those who were involved in the work itself. The next Work Day is expected to be in the early autumn, so if you would like to be involved in this worthwhile community activity keep an eye open on the Parish noticeboards or check with the Parish Office for further details.

FAMOUS HAMPSHIRE CONNECTIONS

A Review by Stan Waight



'FLORRIE'S LORRY' AT THE AMS MUSEUM



JANE AUSTEN

Almost fifty members and visitors heard Jill Daniels give what was, to my mind, a brilliant talk at our March meeting. 'Brilliant' because it was delivered so fluently, clearly and completely off the cuff. Jill's words were accompanied by some excellent slides, projected onto the new screen purchased courtesy of a generous donation from the Borough Council. The theme was 'Famous Hampshire Connections', and Jill took eight notable figures from Hampshire's past and wove them into eight engaging stories. This report can only provide the sketchiest of commentaries on her presentation.

Charles Dickens was an obvious candidate. He was born in Portsmouth and, although he only lived in the town for the first three years of his life, it was the background for much of his literary work and he later returned to research 'Nicholas Nickleby'. His father worked in the Admiralty pay office there but was transferred to Chatham, where he fell into debt and was committed to the debtors' prison. Charles's first job was in a dreadful blacking factory but he later worked for the newspaper that published *Pickwick Papers* in serial form and set him on the road to fame. He drew heavily on his often-sordid experiences as material for his novels.

Edwina Ashley, godchild of Edward VII, and her sister were, in their time, the two richest women in Britain. Her connection with Hampshire was Broadlands, near Romsey, which she inherited from her Ashley family. A great socialite, she married Lord Louis Mountbatten, moved in royal circles and ultimately became Vicereine of India, where she was reputed to have had an affair with prime-minister Nehru.

R. J. Mitchell was not a Hampshire man. Born in Stoke-on-Trent, he had a passion for aircraft that was first realised when he became personal assistant to the chairman of the Supermarine company while in his early twenties. He stayed in Hampshire for the rest of his life. Supermarine recognised his potential as a designer and he was responsible for the succession of Schneider Trophy seaplanes that ultimately led to the design of the *Spitfire*.

Daughter of the rector of Steventon, Jane Austen was born there in 1775 and lived there for the first 25 years of her life. Her brother Edward inherited a rich estate in Kent which Jane often visited, but she was essentially a country girl and had nothing in common with the society with whom she came into contact. For some years she mixed with more high society in Bath but returned to Hampshire in 1806 to stay with brother Frank in Southampton; it was a visit to Netley Abbey that is said to have provided a background for *Northanger Abbey*. Jane next moved to Chawton where she wrote three of her six novels. Her final move, still in Hampshire, was to Winchester in 1817, where she spent the last few weeks of her life.

Continued on page 5

Continued from page 4



R.J.MITCHELL



DUKE OF WELLINGTON



FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

The exploits of Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington, are well known, but his connection with Hampshire lay in the estate at Stratfield Saye. For me, the two points of interest that Jill Daniels made are that the saying 'my wife doesn't understand me' is attributed to him, and that his magnificent 'funeral cart' is still preserved at the great house.

Florence Nightingale was born in Italy (hence the Florence) but Embley Park, near Romsey, was bought by her father in 1825 as a winter retreat from the family estate in Derbyshire. A head-strong young woman, she took up nursing in spite of family disapproval and was head of a group of ladies ('nurses' had not yet been invented) that went off to the Crimean War. The group took charge of a derelict barracks in Scutari, Turkey, where the patients were kept in squalid conditions due to the lack of proper sanitation, and Florence toured her domain in the so-called *Florrie's Lorry*. On her return to England she settled in London, where she spent the rest of her life training nurses and campaigning for improvements in the lives of soldiers. The Hampshire connection was maintained, for she was buried at East Wellow.



Left

CHARLES DICKENS

Right

EDWINA MOUNTBATTEN



Continued from page 4

Continued from page 5



Left

EARL OF CARNARVON

Right

ISAMBARD KINGDOM BRUNEL



The Earl of Carnarvon would seem to have an unlikely association with Hampshire, but the family seat is at Highclere in the north of the county. The 5th earl is noted not so much for what he did but for what he enabled the archaeologist Howard Carter to do. Carnarvon was himself interested in archaeology and, as a part of the landed gentry, financed Carter in many unsuccessful excavations in Egypt. In November 1922, just as Carnarvon was on the point of withdrawing his funding, Carter finally came up with the find of the century - the tomb of Tutankhamun in the Valley of the Kings. But barely four months later Carnarvon was stung by a mosquito and died (much speculation about the *Curse of Tutankhamun*). His body was returned to England and buried on Beacon Hill near Burghclere.

The eighth celebrity of Jill's talk had a minimal link with Hampshire. Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the son of a French civil engineer, was born in Portsmouth but only lived there for six weeks before the family moved to London. In later life Brunel himself became a civil engineer and engaged in many ambitious schemes that required a lot of financial backing. With his father, he built the Rotherhithe Tunnel under the Thames, which still exists after early misfortunes. Other notable civil engineering projects included the Clifton Suspension Bridge and the Tamar Bridge. Brunel planned the route of the Great Western Railway but did so in wide gauge which had to be converted to conform to the standard gauge adopted elsewhere. He also designed great ships such as the *Great Western*, the *Great Britain* and, finally, the unsuccessful *Great Eastern*.

It was a most entertaining evening and we look forward to *Famous Hampshire Connections, Part II.*

NOTES FROM A CONSTABLES POCKETBOOK - 5

By Roy Andrews

How times change. Every day, on TV or in the newspapers, there are pictures of police officers walking around armed to the teeth with weaponry, making it part of the norm these days. Back in the 1960's, it was a much different story. A police officer could go the whole of his working life and never have need of a heavily armed colleague. When I joined I was the first generation that had never handled a gun. Before me, older officers had served in the armed forces during WW2 or had served their two years National Service in the military. Even when I joined, many of the older new recruits to the police had just left one of HM Forces but I was just too young by a couple of years to have been required to do National

Continued on page 7

Continued from page 6

Service and had joined the police when 19 years old.

It therefore came as something of a surprise one day when I was grabbed by the grizzled old Station Sergeant and told that the CID had received information that there was to be a bank robbery in the High Street and they required a uniformed officer to be armed and to patrol the area. I was to be that lucky individual and so I should go with him to get a weapon. My protestations that I had never seen a gun, let alone handled one, fell on deaf ears so I followed him into the front office, open to the public, of the enquiry office of the police station in the Southampton Civic Centre.

The sergeant went to the counter, across which members of the public leant, morning noon and night, to complain or air their grievances, and from underneath pulled out a cardboard box, inside which I could see an assortment of knives, axes, iron bars and knuckle dusters all of which had been seized from members of the public over the years. Amongst all of this were a couple of ancient revolvers and one of these, which seemed very large to me, he extracted. He then plunged his hand into the bottom of the box and after a quick search he removed a handful of bullets. These he assessed to see which ones would fit and having chosen the most likely ones, he proceeded to load the chamber.

He then handed me the gun which I very gingerly put into my raincoat pocket and set off to walk to the High Street. I had not gone far when I realised I was limping because I did not want to jar the gun in my pocket as for all I knew this would cause it to go off and blow my foot off. So I thought, "Concentrate Roy on what you have to do should the gun be needed". What did I know about guns? Only what I had learnt from a misspent youth watching too many cowboy films. A quick draw would be out of the question as the gun was amongst other bits and pieces in my pocket- cowboys always seemed to shoot from the hip without aiming and be able to hit a target at the other end of Main Street so perhaps it was that easy.

I arrived in the High Street, still with both feet intact, and spent the next couple of hours limping up and down, but of bank robbers there was never a sign, so I was able to return the revolver to its cardboard box under the counter without ever knowing how good my marksmanship would have been.

A few years later, by which time only authorised officers could carry guns, I volunteered to become one. I therefore attended a week long course, learning everything there was to know about the 9mm Browning pistols we used in those days and of course how to fire them and hit the target. It was stressed that we should forget what the cowboys did in films, shooting guns out of hands or shooting to disable but not kill. We would have a split second to stop someone so we should aim for the largest target, the torso, and what damage the bullets did was outside of our control.

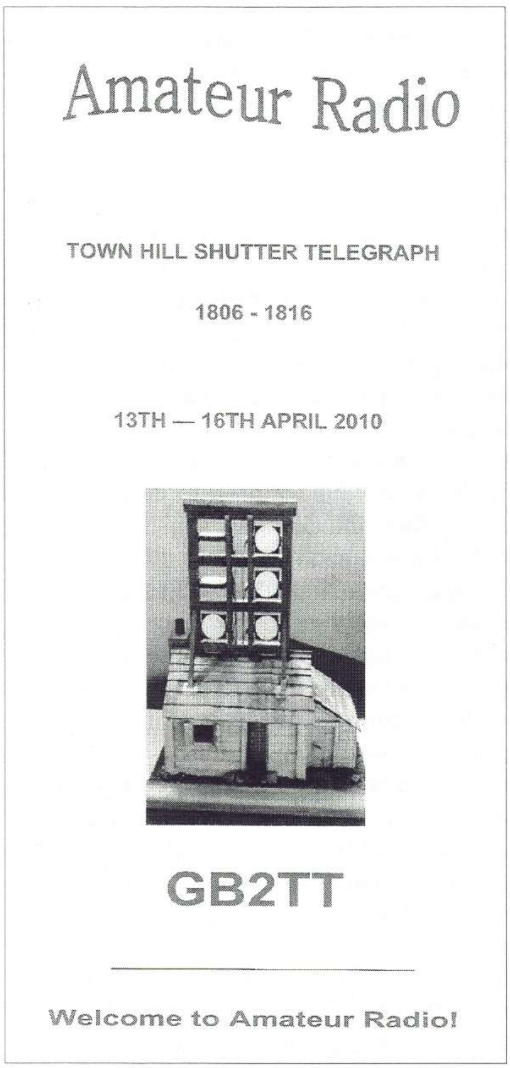
At the end of the course I managed to qualify, by hitting the target enough times, to become an authorised weapons user and thereafter had to re-qualify once a month. We also went on to be shown all the tricks of the trade, by personnel who had served in Ireland, on searching buildings and honing our reactions on making split second decisions as to whether somebody jumping out of a doorway in front of us was carrying a baby or was somebody armed with a gun which was pointed at us and about to be fired.

And should you ever find yourself in a position where you are carrying a gun and searching for a villain do not carry it as all the modern TV and film Cops and Spies do, they being the modern version of cowboys, by pointing it at the ceiling. A producer somewhere must have thought it looked good once so everybody else followed suit. When searching for the bad guy you point the gun at all times in the general direction of where you might have to fire it. The split second it takes to swing the gun through the 90 degrees from vertical to horizontal could be the difference between living or not. Hollywood does have a lot to answer for!

A BIG THANK YOU

We would like to express our thanks to Eastleigh Borough Councils HEWEB (Hedge End, West End & Botley) Local Area Group committee members and Jon Riddell for the recently received grant of £350. We urgently needed to replace our projector stand and screen used at our meetings, as the old ones were literally falling to pieces, and this grant has helped us to purchase replacements. The new screen which in fact was used at the last meeting is specially designed to be stable, lightweight, easily erected and for digital format which increasingly we are finding our speakers require and the stand provides a level and stable base for projectors, so thank you HEWEB.

WEST END ON THE AMATEUR RADIO MAP





As many readers will be aware Westend was once the site of an Admiralty Shutter Telegraph station, located near the bend in Southern Road and known as the Town Hill station. This telegraph station formed part of the extension line reaching down to Plymouth from the Admiralty in London. The site was surveyed in 1805 (the year of Trafalgar) and was operational by 1806. It was closed in 1816 with peace being declared after the defeat of Napoleon Buonaparte.

Amateur Radio enthusiast John Wakefield has arranged with The Rose Bowl to set up a temporary radio station there to commemorate the Townhill Shutter Telegraph station between 13th and 16th April this year. Full colour leaflets and QSL cards (as illustrated above) are available either from the Parish Office or from the Museum.

We also hope to produce an occasional paper on the subject in the near future.

WEST END CARNIVAL 2010 REMINDER

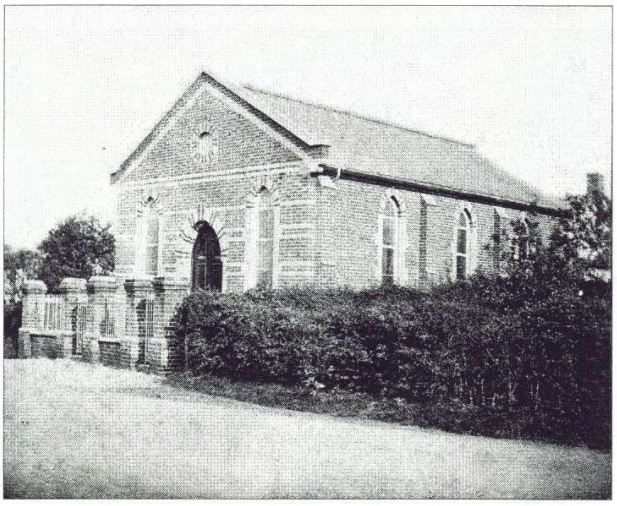
West End Carnival will be held on Saturday, 19th June. This year we are delighted to inform residents that the theme will be "English Civil War (Cavaliers and Roundheads)", and we will be having a Living History re-enactment by the Sealed Knot Society, spreading across to Sunday morning, where children will be encouraged to take part in recreating 17th century life.

A Walking Parade (no floats) has been organised for Carnival Day and there will be the usual events - pub quiz night, guided walks round the village, garden competition, etc. Further details will follow and will be available from the Parish Office.

If anyone can help out in the lead-up, as steward or marshal for the parade, or giving some time with organising events, we would be delighted to hear from them: the committee work hard all year round to produce the Carnival, so more hands would make lighter work for everyone.

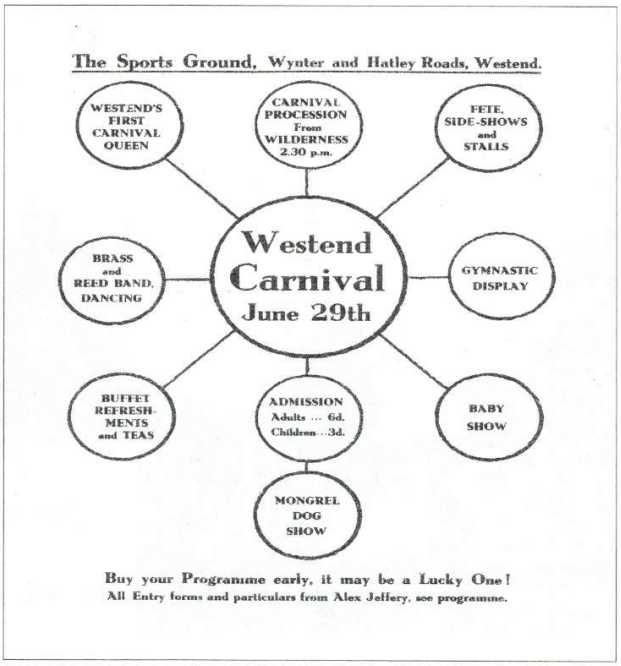
For further information please contact Steven Broomfield, Carnival Committee Chairman on 023 80694830 or the Parish Office on 023 80462371.

IMAGES FROM OUR ARCHIVE.....



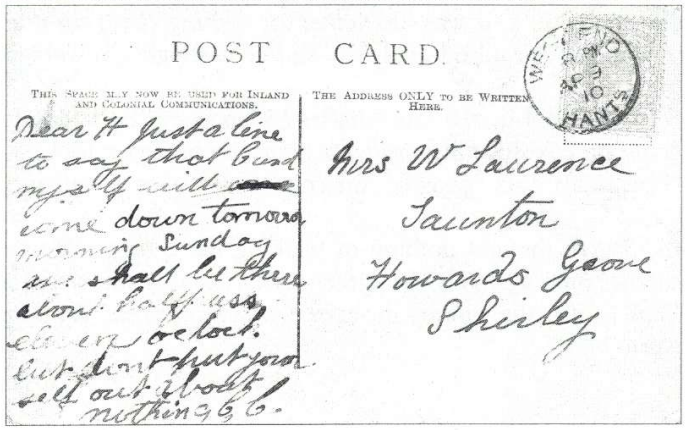
Above: METHODIST CHAPEL IN SWAYTHLING ROAD NOW THE SITE OF LINCOLN COURT TAKEN IN THE EARLY 1900's

Right: ADVERT FROM CHURCH MAGAZINE FOR JUNE 1935



DOES ANYONE KNOW WHERE THIS IS?





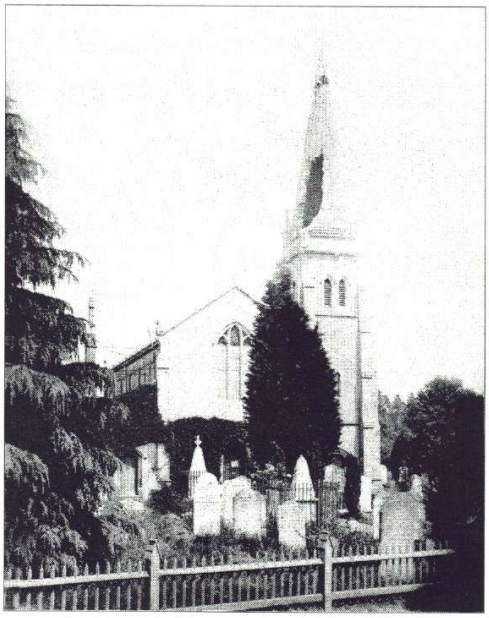
Does anyone out there know where this pair of cottages seen on the left were situated?

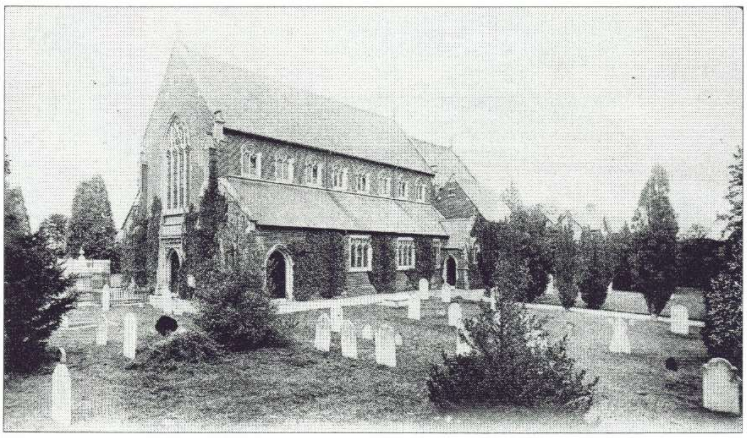
The picture appears on a postcard purchased many years ago at a Fair and shows a lady in the front garden of the cottages, the reverse of the postcard shown below indicates it was sent from Westend on April 9th 1910 at 8pm to a Mrs W. Laurence at Shirley.

Cards such as this were sent in lieu of making a phone call as we do today, the message indicates the writer will be visiting the following day and for the recipient not to put herself out on their behalf. Almost certainly the card would have been bought in Westend, probably from the post office in the village, so it is fairly safe to assume the picture could be of Westend. I am sure the cottages are probably now demolished and no longer exist, but someone might just remember them, they appear to be a pair of semi-detached double fronted cottages. Please contact the editor on 02380 471886 if you have any information. Many thanks.

BRITAIN'S OLDEST NEWSAGENT?

By Pauline Berry





LEFT:
The original St. James' Church after lightning strike in 1875

ABOVE:
The 'new' rebuilt St. James' Church - photographed around 1910

On browsing through Bitterne Local History Society's book 'Bitterne before the Bypass', I came across a copy of an 'Echo' newspaper cutting dated 1933. In it, a Mrs Martha (Molly) Godwin had been interviewed because she was still running her little newsagent and sweet shop at the grand age of 97 years! You may recall it, in the Red Lion Cut behind the Red Lion Public House in Bitterne, before all the major development took place in 1982. With good eyesight and hearing, which belied her age, she recounted some of her memories to the Daily Echo reporter. She was the daughter of Joseph and Maria Burch. Her father was a tailor and in the 1840's he lived with his wife and family in Moorgreen, close to the boundary with Fair Oak. Martha was born in December 1836 and William, Victor, Edwin and George were just four of her siblings. Their cottage, owned by Sarah Waters, was amongst several others at the end of Burnetts Lane, forming part of the Moorgreen community which had its own Chapel, Post Office and Public House nearby.

Martha's earliest recollection was, as a small child, standing on the foundation stone of the first St. James' Church, built in 1838. This church was soon outgrown by West End's rapidly growing population and its fate was sealed after its spire was struck by lightning in 1875. The present church was completed in 1890.

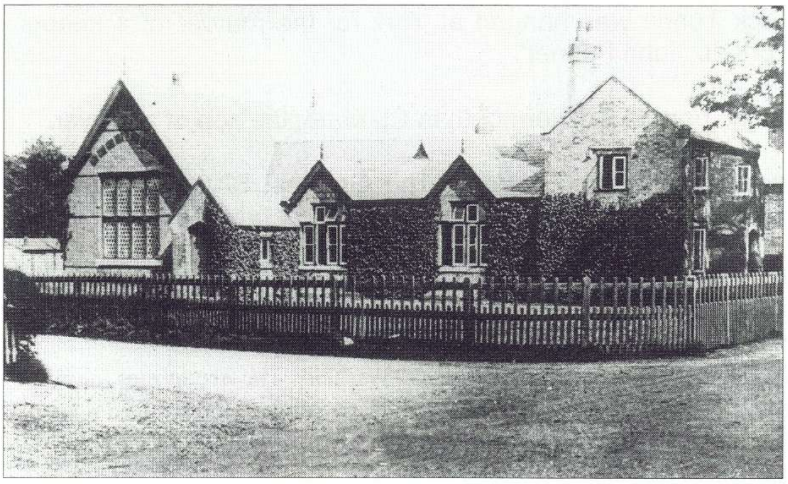
She recalled the popular visits of a troupe of mummers, dressed all over in paper ribbons, which called on the village during the Christmas festivities. This was probably centred on the original New Inn (now Rosemount Court) which was the hub of West End in the 1800's. It was the venue for visiting fairs, circuses, bands and bare-knuckle fighters long before the centre of West End gradually shifted eastwards to where it is situated today.

Mrs Godwin also told of a ghost story, not unlike that told by the late Charles Sillence and Bob Moody, concerning a strange figure which used to jump out on unsuspecting residents returning home on foot, late at night, at Chalk Pit Corner (Chalk Hill?). Eventually this 'ghostly' mischief-maker was caught and ducked in a nearby pond as a punishment.

Like many villagers of long ago, young 'Molly' Burch thought nothing of walking the 5 miles into the lights and attractions of Southampton, then walking home again to Moorgreen. After leaving the National School, on the corner of Chapel Road and the High Street, she worked in service, as a seamstress, for a big house and travelled extensively with her employers.

Continued on page 11

Continued from page 10



1915 photo of the old National School dating from 1838



Martha (Molly) Godwin

She married her husband, Henry Godwin, who was employed as a butler, also for the local gentry, in the mid 19th century and they eventually settled in Bitterne, bringing up eight children. When her husband later fell ill and died, Mrs Godwin decided to purchase a more secure future by acquiring her shop from a baker in the Red Lion Cut. There she stayed for close on 40 years and became a well-known figure selling newspapers, sweets and tobacco.

In 1917, the late Irene Pilson remembered it being known as Godwin's Cut and described the proprietor, now turned eighty, as a small, slim and pale faced lady. She always wore a widow's black attire, topped by a Victorian lace cap. Her little upright figure always served and weighed up sweets from jars for the local children using metal tongs. She finally gave up her occupation at the age of 98 and died at 101 years, having lived through four reigns. What a surprise to discover that this remarkable old lady was the great-grandmother of two of our members, Brian and Dennis Filce!



Early 20th century photograph of the 'New Inn'

ON THIS DAY.....

On this day (7th April) 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 at Cockermouth in Cumbria, the son of a lawyer.

1891 Phineas T. Barnum, American showman who created 'The Greatest Show on Earth' in 1871, died aged 80.

THE WEST END PARISH PLAN

In January 2008 the Parish Plan Steering Group was formed - "West End Wishes". The group met monthly to discuss the wishes of West End residents to produce a Parish Plan which will hopefully be used as supplementary planning guidance and as an introduction to West End.
The Steering group concentrated on the following issues:

- Street Scene
- Community Safety
- Biodiversity
- Heritage and Culture
- Traffic

The completed document was officially launched at the Parish Council meeting on Wednesday, 10th February 2010 and will have been distributed to all households in West End by the end of February.
If you have not received your copy, please contact the Parish Office on 023 80 462371 or call in.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the last edition of Westender (Jan/Feb) we showed a superb new picture of Harefield House taken from the entrance in West End Road. The acknowledgement indicated that it was received through the good offices of Keith Marsh at Bitterne Local History Society, which was true but didn't show that it was in fact Ian Abraham at BLHS who had purchased the original, and to whom we are most indebted for allowing us to reproduce it in Westender, please accept our apologies for this oversight. Ed.

THE NEXT MEETINGS ARE.....

May 5
MID HANTS RAILWAY "The Watercress Line"
Dave Yaldren

June 2
"SOUTHAMPTON 1609-1838: from economic decline to prosperous Spa town"
Jake Simpkin

July 7
"CHURCHES CONSERVATION TRUST IN HAMPSHIRE & SUSSEX"
Dr. Frances Hurd