NEWSLETTER of the WEST END LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

WESTENDER

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2010 VOLUME 7 NUMBER 3

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WEST END FIRE BRIGADE (1)



The photograph above kindly donated by Mary Hallifax, shows a very young Rodney Whale in fireman's uniform presenting a bouquet to Mrs Pearson in 1938.
The occasion appears to have been the acquisition of West End's first "fire engine", which in fact was a converted lorry with seating fitted and provision for a towed pump and ladder rack.
Prior to this, West End had a hand cart (seen in the background, right of centre) on which to place the hoses etc.. A wooden shed located behind the vehicle in this picture was used as a "fire station" to house the equipment.

West End Local History Society & Westender is sponsored by

WEST END PARISH COUNCIL

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NOTES FROM A CONSTABLE'S POCKET BOOK - 4

By Roy Andrews

An arrest means detaining someone from their liberty i.e taking away their freedom to do as they wish, and to signify this I was taught in one of the very first classes I took at Police Training School, a constable should take hold of the miscreant usually by the arm. And that is what I forgot the very first time my class carried out a practical demonstration of how to carry out an arrest

Over time these demonstrations were used to give we trainees as near as possible examples of all aspects of police work with tutor sergeants playing the parts of villains and on this particular occasion I had the misfortune to be chosen as the constable making the arrest. The offence was drunk in charge of a bicycle but having told the 'drunk' he was being arrested and not having taken hold of him he was able to distract me and then run off through the extensive grounds of the school with me in hot pursuit and the laughter of the rest of the class ringing in my ears.

We were also taught that if a prisoner would not come quietly we were permitted to use as much force, and no more, than was necessary to apprehend a prisoner. The more violent a prisoner the more physical effort we were permitted to put into carrying out the arrest. What we could not do was kill a person we were attempting to arrest and that is what I thought I had managed to do early one morning.

Early turn was always my least favourite shift, having to crawl out of bed at 4.30am I did not feel was civilised. Anyway on this particular morning I had paraded at 5.45am and been given all of the latest crime information so that by 6.0am I was out of the Southampton Civic Centre Police Station heading for a newsagents in Bedford Place, which was part of my beat for that day, where I knew a pot of tea would be brewing.

It was winter time still very dark and so I decided to take the back roads through the Polygon area, which was and still is a residential area, to get to Bedford Place. At the end of one of the roads as I reached the junction with the next I came upon a male person with his back to me writing with chalk on a six feet high garden wall a slogan appertaining to 'The Saints' football club. I hurriedly turned off my police radio, not wishing to alert the individual to my presence by it suddenly broadcasting, which might mean him running off before I could get to him and that would mean me then having to chase him and it was far too early for that sort of thing!

I tiptoed across the road and managed to get right up behind him undetected. I leaned over his right shoulder and said quietly in his ear, "What do you think you're doing?" He glanced round at my face six inches from his, saw my helmet and promptly collapsed onto the pavement. My immediate thought was the shock/fright of me appearing from nowhere had given him a heart attack, he was dead and how did I explain that away. However on closer examination I found that he had fainted and I was soon able to bring him round.

He was arrested and taken to the Police Station where I could question him as to why he felt the need to deface other people's property. The reason he gave, he was once engaged to be married but the girl called it off and ever since he had devoted his life to supporting 'The Saints'.

Later I back tracked from where I had arrested him along the probable route he would have taken from his home address and found two more examples of his handy work on walls of houses one of which I established belonged to a Southampton Magistrate. This happy news I was able to divulge to him when I charged him with Criminal Damage.

FIRST TIME IN SOCIETY'S HISTORY WE MISS A MEETING



Our January meeting on the 6th was billed as "My Life in the 17th Century" with Yvonne and Keith Hoskins, due to the extremely inclement weather and icy conditions, we had to cancel at the last moment. This is in fact the first time in the Society's history this has happened (and we hope the last!). We contacted as many people as possible and in view of conditions hope no one had a wasted journey. We will of course look to have Yvonne and Keith back in the future, possibly next year.

THE DECEMBER MEETING

A Review by Stan Waight









It was bitterly cold for the 2008 December meeting. In 2009 it was milder, but very wet. Nevertheless, forty members attended and brought a massive amount of food with them. Our annual pre-Christmas party was, as usual, a great success. It was good to see that Rose, the Committee's minute-taker, was able to come, and that newer members were able to see that 'local history' didn't mean 'stuffy'.

No slide show this time, and we got down to the quizzes straight away. The question-master was Nigel, and he and Lin did us proud with five (or was it six?) of them. Hearty congratulations go to the winning table for the questions weren't that easy, whatever Nigel might have said. Despite a poor performance last year, the team known as 'Stan's Babes' - Est. 2003 - managed a 100% success in one of the quizzes, and it's pity that the prize was for a cumulative total of points rather than individual results for they failed miserably in one of the others!

Delphine circulated widely selling raffle tickets, and twenty-five prizes were up for grabs. That works out better than one for every two members present, so it was well worth a small investment.

A call to 'come and get it' was issued at the halfway stage. There was a marvellous selection of savouries, but rather too many mince-pies .- Pauline will have to make a request for moderation again next year (but I'll bring my own to be on the safe side). As usual, the Committee provided the wine and soft drinks. Our thanks go to Neville and his Committee not only for arranging such a pleasant evening but also for serving us so well during the past year.

Once again, we have had some excellent speakers and events in 2009 and, on a personal note, I hope my reports have been of interest to those who couldn't attend meetings and of some small value to those who could. May I also extend my Best Wishes for 2010 to all our members.

MEMORIES OF WORLD WAR TWO

by Pauline Berry

The following short interviews were taken at a party in the Parish Centre in 1995 by Pauline Berry on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of World War 2....

Mrs Sainsbury - Lived at 23 Southern Road since the age of seven. She went to social evenings and dances at the Parish Hall, and stayed on, even though sirens were sounding. She walked home even when the guns from the ack-ack site were firing. She recalled doodle-bugs (V1) whizzing over Eastleigh and a barrage balloon situated in the Woodland Mews area when the RAF occupied the big house 'Duncaple' there. Incendiary bombs landed on Dog Kennel Farm where the 'Land Army' girls lived, growing fruit and vegetables. Dug-out shelters were used in Telegraph Road.

Mrs W. Dumbleton (nee Cantell) - She lived at 4 Orchards Way after her marriage in the late 1930's. She remembered two 'big bertha' guns on Hatch Farm (the ack-ack site near Quob Lane). She also remembers six guns were wheeled into Orchards Way by the Army base, sometimes when sirens went off. She had incendiaries dropped in the hedge of her front garden. She was on fire-watch duty too. She remembered the bombing of Ford's factory and a 1,000 lb bomb which fell in Dummer's Copse - it's a pond now. She also remembers when the bodies of five German airmen who died in the Heinkel III crash where put in a temporary hut behind the old Parish Hall (this building was used as a temporary morgue).

Mr Flood - Recalls the ack-ack site and the Army camp site in Quob Lane in two fields opposite each other on the lane opposite Winslowe House, past today's motorway. There was another camp at 'The Wilderness'. It was a British and American transit camp with many huts. After the war squatters took the site over. There were several camps along the A27, near Lady's Walk too, leading to Thornhill Park Road.

Mrs B. Baker - Lived in Rose Cottage in Lower New Road, near the Chapel which was just around the corner. Her aunt was an invalid until she was bombed, whereupon she got up and walked!

Mrs J. Matthews - Was a nurse who when on duty, lived in Allington House, part of Moorgreen Hospital. She remembered putting out incendiaries in the grounds. She lost a lot of sleep when the sirens went off because tin helmets and gas masks had to be put on. Then the elderly (private) patients had to be moved quickly. Some patients who could not move had to be carried piggy-back style and put under the stairs, day or night-time. They all coped and cheered up patients when necessary.

Mrs D. Rooke (nee Freemantle) - Lived in Orchards Way between 1939 to 1952 (she lived at Barnsland when the interview took place). She attended the VE-Day party in Orchards Way which Mrs Dumbleton also remembered. A photograph exists of everyone enjoying sandwiches and cakes. In 1944 lorries were parked in Orchards Way in the build-up to D-Day. Her mother, Mrs Freemantle, made her husband a fruit cake, but the soldiers ate it first!

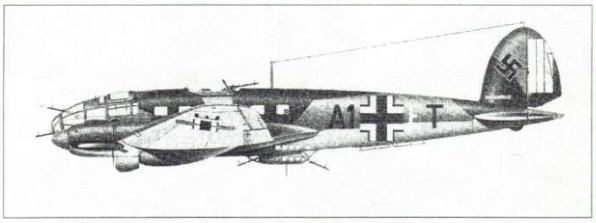


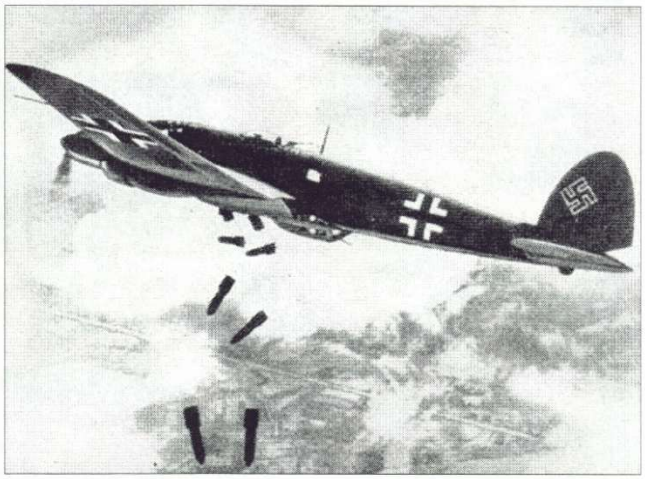
VE-DAY STREET PARTY AND BONFIRE IN ORCHARDS WAY - MAY 1945

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Mr R. Rooke (husband) - Remembers the Heinkel III that crashed in Allington Lane and seeing the debris the day after. There was no crater and all the crew died. He and his brother (11 and 13 years old) carried a machine-gun from the crash-site past the Army camp in Quob Lane. They threw it into a Quob Farm pond, out of plain fear! Where is it now? The Italian POW's had many huts on Hatch Farm, on the field behind Megan Road (now Barbe Baker Avenue). He recalls the Barrage Balloon at Barnsland and the dog-tag he found in a garden there.





THE GERMAN LUFTWAFFE
HEINKEL III BOMBER
SIMILAR TO THE ONE THAT CRASHED IN
WEST END IN WORLD WAR 2

Mrs Louisa Stevens - Lived at 3 Chapel Road. She recalled Mr Frederick, who worked for a wine merchant, living in the first thatched cottage on the right. Rent went to Commander Thurlow (then owner of Hatch Grange) in 1932. She lived in Chapel Road when ahe married in 1937. She worked for the Admiralty in Southampton making submarine nets. During air-raids she and other residents used the make-shift dug-out shelter on Hatch Grange, behind Chapel Close. The shelter was next to trees and covered with a corrugated iron roof. They experienced very little trouble there during the war. She spent VE-Day in Southsea, celebrating with neighbours.

Mr Alan Daw - Still lives in Southern Road, where he has lived all his life. He recalled the ack-ack site in Quob Lane/Allington Lane area. *"A most frightening noise from the guns"*, and he recalled incendiaries, and doodle-bugs (V-1) passing overhead, and parachute bombs etc.. A big bomb fell at Dummer's Copse and the crater created a pond, later used by local children searching for souvenirs. In the run-up to D-Day, there were vehicles parked all around Beacon Road, Southern Road etc.. Vehicles were parked on West End Road, on special road markings and on verges etc.. The land on the corner of Southern/Western Road was a testing place for the water-proofing of many amphibious vehicles. They were driven through a water tank set in the ground and some evidence of it still exists!
There were huts and tents mainly for American troops in Bacon Hill Copse. When VE-Day came there were gatherings of girl guides and scouts in Telegraph Woods.

NB. Sadly since these memories were recorded some of the interviewees have passed away. Ed.

WEST END CARNIVAL DATE ANNOUNCED

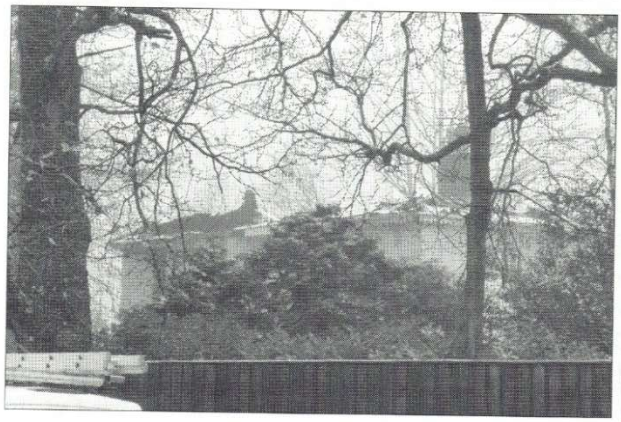
The date for West End Carnival 2010 has been announced, it will be Saturday 19th June and the theme this year will be The English Civil War. The Carnival Committee would welcome any helpers on the day and if you would like to assist please contact Steve Broomfield at the Parish Centre on 02380 694830.
WELHS once again hope to have a stall on Hatch Grange selling a range of local history books, so please support this local event.

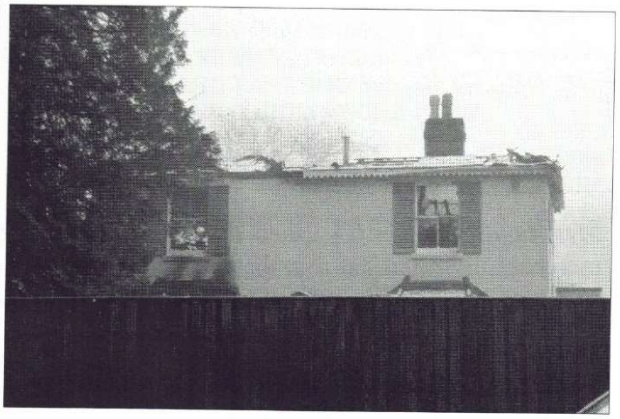
DEVASTATING FIRE AT MOORHILL HOUSE

By Pauline Berry









TOP LEFT: THE HOUSE IN 2000. THE OTHER THREE PHOTO'S SHOW THE HOUSE JUST AFTER THE FIRE.

You have probably seen the sad sight of the old 'Moorhill House' decimated by fire, on the edge of Telegraph Woods on Moorhill Road (A27). This Victorian residence was originally named 'Fir Cottage' but was renamed Moorhill House following the demolition of the first Moorhill House, a large mansion next door, in the 1960's. Unfortunately the Southern Daily Echo report confused the two houses by incorrectly stating that the fire-damaged house had famously accommodated young Basque refugee children escaping the Spanish Civil War in 1937. In reality, this was in the aforementioned mansion next door, now the site of a reservoir.

Fire broke out and devastated the empty Moorhill House (number two) shortly after 5.45pm on Sunday 20th December 2009 and its cause is not yet known, although an investigation has taken place. Fire crews blocking the A27, came from Hightown, Botley and Hamble, as well as specialised equipment from St. Mary's and an aerial platform ladder from Redbridge. A second blaze flared up again at 1.00am the following morning when the roof caught fire with devastating consequences as our pictures show.

Our research reveals that this square-fronted two storey house was originally named 'Fir Cottage' and was constructed about 1870. Insurance premiums were paid to Harry Haines, the local agent for the Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society by the Hon. Isabella Fiennes of Bassenden, Bournemouth in 1888, who may have been the owner.

During the 1880's the property was a Convalescent Home until the turn of the 20th century. Miss Matilda Shoosmith was one of several matrons or 'lady superintendents' of this abode. One can only assume that 'Fir Cottage' was in a desirable rural situation, being 'higher' and 'healthier', at a time when tuberculosis

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was a killer in Britain.

By the arrival of the 20th century, 'Fir Cottage' had become a private home and was referred to in Richard St. Barbe Baker's book, 'I Planted Trees'. A friend of his family, a Mr George Grose, a retired merchant and beekeeper moved in. Richard was fascinated by the bees and although still a child, insisted on keeping several bee-hives at his home 'The Firs' and producing much honey.

After Mr Grose's death there were several occupants of the cottage including Comdr. J.L. Kimber in the 1920's, a Thomas H. Brown in the 1930's and Arthur Ashton in the 1940's.

Let us hope that the old house is not lost forever, for West End has precious few left, and that there is still a possibility of restoring it to its former healthy state. Have you noticed that the giant fir tree and tiny tree house in the front garden have somehow managed to survive the fire?





ABOVE: REFURBISHMENT STARTED AFTER THE FIRE IN JANUARY

POSTSCRIPT: *Fortunately work has begun to repair and refurbish Moorhill as seen from the pictures shown above. We trust work will be completed successfully and the building restored sympathetically. Ed.*

NEW PICTURE OF HAREFIELD HOUSE



This view of Harefield House was taken in 1907 seen from the entrance driveway leading to the house from the South/Lower Lodge. Our thanks to Keith Marsh of BLHS for the image. Ed.

MORE FROM THE PARISH CHURCH MAGAZINE ARCHIVE....

A PAROCHIAL

GARDEN FÊTE

WILL BE HELD IN THE

VICARAGE GROUNDS,

WESTEND,

ON

Wednesday, July 13th, 1927, at 3 p.m.

Variety of Competitions.

Bowling for the Pig. Treasure Hunt.
Fish Pond. Egg and Spoon Race.
Buried Treasure, etc.

(Prizes include Pig, Chickens, Rabbits, Leg of Mutton, etc.

White Elephant Stall. Sweets and Fruit Stall.
Ice Creams, etc.

TEA AND REFRESHMENTS from 4 p.m.

GIPSY FORTUNE TELLER.

DANCING from 8 till 10.

Admission: Adults, 6d.; Children, 2d.

Proceeds for Parochial Funds.

G. F. Wilson & Co., Ltd., Printers, Southampton.

S. James' Church, Westend

Special Notice

INSTITUTION AND INDUCTION
OF
THE REV. LEONARD COULSHAW

C.B., M.C., F.K.C.

Chaplain of the Fleet (Retired,) formerly Archdeacon of the Fleet and Honorary Chaplain to His Late Majesty King George VI

* * * * *

The Institution by the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Winchester and the Induction by the Rural Dean, the Rev. Canon H. D. Caesar, M.A., of the Rev. Leonard Coulshaw as Vicar of S. James', Westend will take place

in the PARISH CHURCH

on

Saturday afternoon, 13th September, 1952

at 3 o'clock

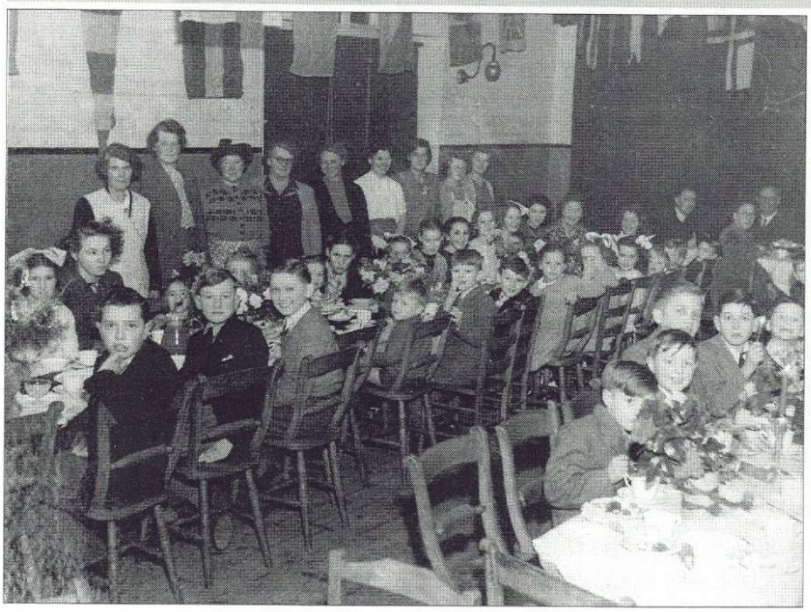
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There will be a special "Social Evening" on Wednesday 17th September, 1952, in the Church Hall at 7-30 p.m. when ALL Parishioners are invited to extend a hearty welcome to the REV. and MRS. COULSHAW

H. V. W. HARRIS, R. F. FRAY } *Churchwardens*

G. F. WILSON & CO. LTD., EASTGATE PRINTING WORKS, SOUTHAMPTON

FROM OUR PHOTO ARCHIVE.....



Illustrated at the left is a photograph kindly donated to our archive by Mary Hallifax.

It shows local children at a Christmas Party in the old Parish Hall on the corner of High Street and Chapel Road in 1947.

The party was organised by the West End Branch of the Royal British Legion, unfortunately the branch has more recently closed and the banner lodged at the museum where it can be seen.

If you have any old photo's of West End, it's people, buildings, events etc.. Why not donate them or lend them to us for copying for our archive.

SOUTHAMPTON RAILWAY TUNNEL

By Roy Andrews



LEFT: The BBC Television Studios in Southampton

RIGHT: Railway Tunnel Entrance



Over the recent Christmas period the media carried several stories about the closure of the railway tunnel just to the east of Southampton Central Station so that the track bed could be lowered to enable higher container trains from the docks to use it. Several stories mentioned that the tunnel had originally been built as a canal tunnel for the Southampton to Salisbury Canal. This was not quite true as the canal tunnel was a separate entity following much the same route as the railway tunnel but crossing it about half way along somewhere under the parks.

The canal had been authorised by an Act of Parliament in 1795 and built around 1802-1803, however by 1808 the canal had fallen into disuse. The tunnel entrances were filled in and it was largely forgotten until the railway tunnel was built 50 years later when that tunnel where it crossed the line of the canal tunnel required the builders to fill in the canal tunnel at each side of theirs. Again the canal was forgotten about apart from the odd conjecture as to the exact route of the tunnel.

Where the BBC Studios now stand opposite the Civic Centre used to stand the original building of the King Edwards Grammar School until it moved to Hill Lane. In January 1975 the building now known as Marlands Building was being used as Juvenile Courts and when the staff arrived one morning they found that the floor of the kitchen at the rear of the building had disappeared into a deep hole. Examined by engineers they found that the floor had collapsed into the old canal tunnel below.

A few days later, on a weekend, I was a Police Constable on duty when I found that some of the hoarding around the site had either been blown over or pushed over by vandals. So I went into the site to ensure that no youngsters were in there playing and found there before me was the shored up hole with a ladder going down into the depths. I could not resist the chance of having a look at something which had not been seen for a 150 years and so climbed down the ladder. I found a brick lined tunnel with a footpath running along the railway side of the tunnel and surprisingly there was still water in the eight feet wide canal. Without a torch I could not travel beyond the ring of light coming from above but have always been pleased I had that peek..

The decision was soon taken to fill in the entire length of the tunnel to prevent any further collapse which was carried out and today that hole would be where the BBC car park is at the rear of the studios. The tunnel route had been confirmed and the experts also decided that a bungalow at the side of the railway and always believed to have been built by the railway was in fact part of the canal and built as a Tunnel Keeper's Cottage.

Across the parks at the eastern end of the railway tunnel and a few feet south of it in the grass bank at the side of Palmerston Road is a small bricked up archway which I believe is the eastern entrance of the canal tunnel.

While on the subject of the railway tunnel if the chance arises to watch the 1937 Will Hay film 'Oh Mister Porter' the film running behind the opening captions, and repeated twice, shows a drivers eye view of the line through Northam , the tunnel and just a glimpse of the clock tower at the old central station and the power station opposite.

ON THIS DAY.....

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

1399 John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, fourth son of Edward III and father of King Henry IV, died.

1809 Felix Mendelssohn, German composer and pianist, born at Hamburg, the son of a banker.

1811 Horace Greeley, American newspaper editor and founder of 'The New York Tribune', born at Amherst in New Hampshire.

1919 The League of Nations held its first meeting, in Paris, with Woodrow Wilson as chairman.

1928 Frankie Vaughan, English singer and entertainer, born in Liverpool as Frank Abelson.

1929 Val Doonican, Irish singer and entertainer, born at Waterford in the republic of Ireland.

1960 Harold MacMillan made his 'wind of change' speech at Cape Town in South Africa.

1966 The first 'soft' landing on the Moon was made by Russia's Luna IX, in the area of the Ocean of Storms.

1969 Boris Karloff, London-born American actor, best known for horror-film roles, died aged 81.

WEST END CARNIVAL SPRING FAIR ANNOUNCED

As part of the list of fund raising events to be organised by the Carnival Committee, there will be a Table Top Spring Fair held at the Parish Centre in Chapel Road on Saturday 20th March 2010.
Local groups and organisations are invited to participate, they can contact Steve Broomfield (Carnival Chairman) at the Parish Office on 02380 694830 to book a table.
The Fair will start at 11.00 am and refreshments will be available. The projected cost of a table (with power if required) will be £15 for a 6 foot table.
Please support this local event and contact Steve now to book a table.

THE NEXT MEETINGS ARE.....

March 3
FAMOUS HAMPSHIRE CONNECTIONS
Jill Daniels

April 7
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
plus
LIVING ON A BOAT ON THE RIVER HAMBLE IN THE 50's
Katie Bewes

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