NEWSLETTER of the WEST END LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

WESTENDER

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THE VILLAGE SHOP (2)





Above: K.E.MITCHELL'S NEWSAGENTS & TOBACCONIST SHOP ON THE CORNER OF HIGH STREET AND CHAPEL ROAD IN 1971
Left: THE SAME SHOP AROUND 1900

West End Local History Society & Westender is sponsored by

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AUGUST MEETING REPORT

A Review by Stan Waight









A Social Evening at the Museum ….. is how the August meeting was billed. And so it was. Although there were seats in a gazebo on the grass outside, most of those attending crammed into the museum itself. It was a tight squeeze because as many members and visitors turned up as we get on a good evening in the Parish Centre.

There's not a lot to report. Members and visitors alike looked interestedly at the exhibits, and there was general agreement that the display was a credit to Nigel and Peter. There were refreshments too, most capably laid on by Lin and Margaret, and I can say from personal experience that anyone who attended and didn't taste any of the cakes missed a treat. Delphine ran a raffle and masses of prizes were won by tickets drawn by Chairman Neville. It was good to see Rose there and I think Bill made up the rest of the Committee, to whom all thanks are due.

It was a most enjoyable evening and it is to be hoped that the membership will see that the Museum speaks for itself and doing a Saturday stint there need not be an arduous task.

MUSEUM MANNING

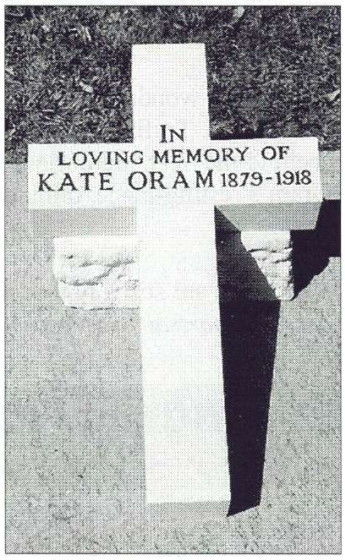
Please see Peter Wallace at the meeting or by phone on 01489 786521 and volunteer yourself for museum duty. Its not arduous, just a two hour shift once a month will make it that much easier to keep the museum open each Saturday. New volunteers will always be placed with regulars initially to see what has to be done, you will not be dropped in at the deep end. ***SO PLEASE VOLUNTEER TODAY!*** Ed.

A LOCAL LINK WITH FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

Written by Pauline Berry







SISTER KATE ORAM & THE NEW GRAVESTONE

It seems quite a coincidence that the centenary of Florence Nightingale's death, August 13th 1910, should fall at approximately the same time as the replacement of Sister Kate Oram's original grave stone cross in West End's Old Burial Ground. The Portland stone cross was badly damaged some years ago and her nephew, Joe Molloy was justifiably anxious to have it replaced by a similar cross of the same dimensions etc.. The Rev. Brian Pickett gave his kind permission for another which has been crafted by W. Cornish, Stonemasons, and is now in place. As for the coincidence, you may wonder, it was because Sister Kate Oram, with full qualifications and excellent references, was appointed as a 'sick nurse' to the famous nursing pioneer Florence Nightingale during the last months of the life of this ailing lady. Kate assisted in her care in her home in Mayfair, London. By then, bed-bound and nearly blind, the great 'Lady with the Lamp' died on August 13th 1910 aged 90 years. Kate received a prayer book with the inscription *"To Sister Oram, from Florence Nightingale, Aug. 5th 1910".*

Kate's family lived in West End for many years owing to her father, Daniel, working as a gardener on Hatch Grange Estate during the early years of the 20th century. She showed early promise as a kind and caring person with nursing talent and trained at the West Suffolk Hospital at Bury St. Edmunds from 1902-5. Following this she served two more years as a nursing sister at the Institution of Nursing Sisters (founded by Elizabeth Fry) in Bishopsgate, London.

Her nursing reputation was so highly regarded, that in 1912 Kate was employed to care for Lady Constance Lytton of Knebworth. This was another difficult task as her patient had been one of the leading Suffragettes who, having been imprisoned several times had suffered several strokes as a result of her already delicate health and harrowing hunger-strikes. Carer and patient became good friends, sharing a love of horticulture and animals. Lady Betty Balfour, the sister of Constance Lytton, wrote *"for the first six years of her invalid existence she (Constance Lytton) had the joy of a perfect nurse".* A frail Constance Lytton found the strength and motivation to write her own autobiography under Kate's care, but, unfortunately, Kate herself fell ill in 1918 and died in the Royal South Hants Hospital in Southampton, on September 29th, aged just 29 years.

Lady Constance wrote of her nurse, *"she helped me every way, strongly and gaily, yet with*

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intensive care. I had not known that particular kind of help. It was wonderful.....she was a consummate sick-nurse – having a fine tact and an intuitive feeling of how best to act. I shall always think of her (Kate) with reverence and gratitude as one of my most devoted friends".

No wonder our Joe Molloy, son of Kate's sister Ellen, is so proud of his aunt, who he just remembers. To find her new commemorative cross, walk through the main gates of the Old Burial Ground (behind the War Memorial), walk a few yards along the main path and then turn left. When you find Kate Oram's resting-place, think on her remarkable life cut short.

NB. There are still a few copies left in the Museum bookshop of Pauline's biography *'Sister Kate Oram – a personal portrait'* costing £5.00.

NOTES FROM A CONSTABLE'S POCKETBOOK - 8

By Roy Andrews

As with many organisations, longer serving officers in the police loved to play tricks on the new recruits e.g. send the apprentice to find a left handed screw driver. And so when Timothy arrived on my Section, fresh from training school, we, having overcome our awe at his posh accent, the fact that his father had been a very senior army officer, his family had a village named after them in Yorkshire and when he became engaged to be married the announcement was placed in The Times newspaper, quickly found him to be a very likeable person if a bit gullible. As a character I am reminded of him every time I see the London Mayor Boris Johnson on TV whom Timothy was like in many ways.

Around the time of Timothy's arrival in the late 1960's, the populace of southern England had awoken one morning to find that everything was covered in a very fine red dust. The Met. Office was able to explain that the dust came from the Sahara Desert, sucked into the atmosphere and deposited in rain over this country.

This gave us an idea. During the quieter moments of our shifts, a Telex (remember them, an early form of e-mail) was prepared purporting to come from the Police Forensic Laboratories at Aldermaston (they didn't only make H-bombs there) and explaining that the dust had in fact been sprayed from a Ministry of Defence plane flying over England to assess how radioactive clouds would spread across the country. It stated that at a given time and date, samples of earth, water and a living plant were required to be collected from certain map references to ascertain the spread of the dust.

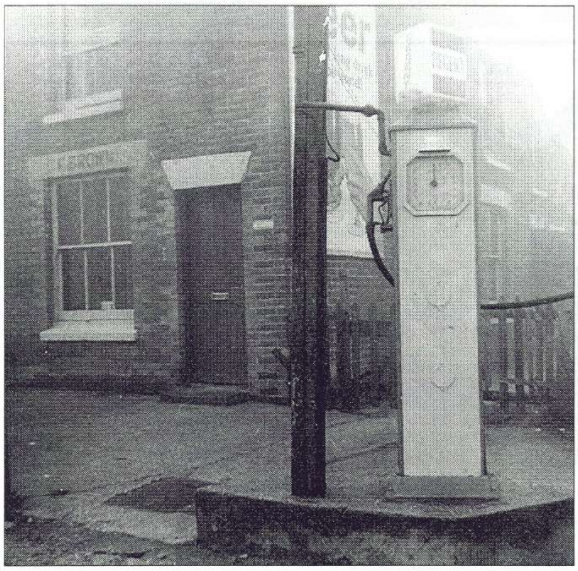
Needless to say the map locations were all to be found on a beat, in Southampton City centre, that Timothy would be directed to cover on the required date and time. This was explained to him by the duty inspector when Timothy was handed the Telex as we paraded for duty (the Inspector was in on the joke) on the given date.

Over the course of that eight hour duty, the rest of us had a good laugh as we heard Timothy called up on the radio regularly by Tom in the control room to check he was collecting the samples at the right time and being less than helpful with map reference locations.

However the last laugh was on the rest of us when, as we paraded for duty a week or so later, the Inspector read out a Telex (genuine) from Aldermaston asking why they had been sent a parcel containing a bottle of water, a bag of dirt and a withered bush branch. None of us had got around to telling Timothy it was a joke and so he had sent his samples off. An apologetic telephone call to the laboratory therefore had to be made.

Thirty years or so later, the Government announced that in the 1960s and 70s aircraft had flown over southern England spraying a chemical which was monitored on the ground to establish how radiation would be spread in the event of nuclear explosions. So fiction can be as strange as the truth.

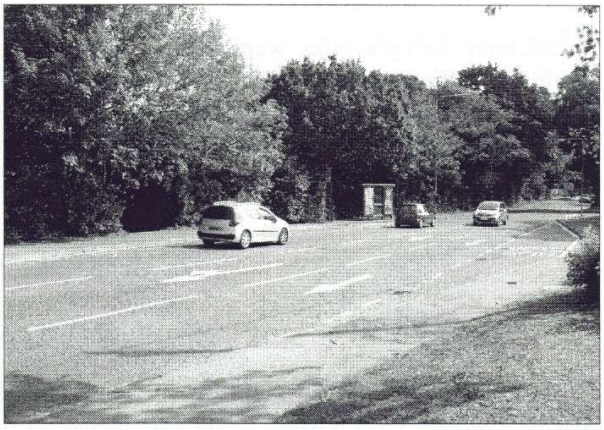
THE CAMERA RETURNS.....



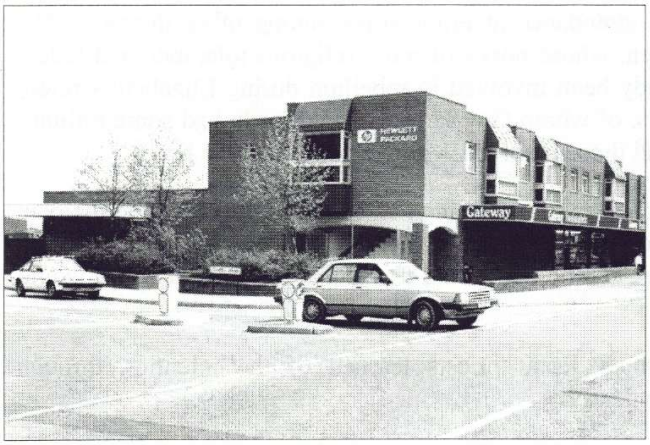


LEFT: The corner of Ivy Lane & Swaythling Road c.1950 - RIGHT: Same scene today 2010





LEFT: High Street with Geo. Wimpeys Regional Office on left c.1970 - RIGHT: In 2010





LEFT: The corner of High Street and Chapel Road 1970's - RIGHT: 2008

THE GUNPOWDER PLOT

A review by Stan Waight





ABOVE
Some of the members of the Gunpowder Plot
LEFT
Guy Fawkes and his signature

Madeleine Selby's talks were always great favourites for our meetings and it's a great pity that she decided to stop giving them. But she gave advance notice of her intention and we were fortunate that Ann Baxendall could fill the gap at the September meeting. There are very few ways in which the Gunpowder Plot could be illustrated, so, unusually, it was a talk without slides. Ann's well-researched script traced the origins of the plot, how it was discovered, what happened to the conspirators and what the results were.

Please to remember the fifth of November
Gunpowder, treason and plot.
I see no reason why gunpowder, treason
Should ever be forgot...

The origins of the plot of 1605 lay in Henry VIII's break with the Pope and the Roman Church and the conversion to Protestantism. Henry's successors were alternately Catholic and Protestant but by the early 17th century only a minority of dedicated Roman Catholics remained. The Reformation had introduced harsh treatment of those who openly professed Catholicism and, even under the more benevolent James I, they were barred from holding public office and attendance at universities among other things. The minority included a number of provincial gentlemen, whose hopes of more religious tolerance had faded. These included Sir Robert Catesby, who had already been involved in rebellion during Elizabeth's reign. Catesby gathered together twelve other conspirators, of whom Guy Fawkes had already had some military experience with gunpowder. Ann gave details of all those involved - too many to include here.

At this time, the House of Lords was convened in a hall in the rambling Palace of Westminster and the plan was to bring sufficient gunpowder into the cellar to blow it up and kill King James and the princes. The king's daughter, Elizabeth, was to be installed as a Catholic queen and it was also hoped that Spain would intervene if the plot was successful.

Meetings were held, followed by masses at which Jesuit priests learned of the intention through confession - knowledge that was to later cost them dearly.

Thirty six barrels of gunpowder, said to have been imported from Holland to avoid suspicion, were

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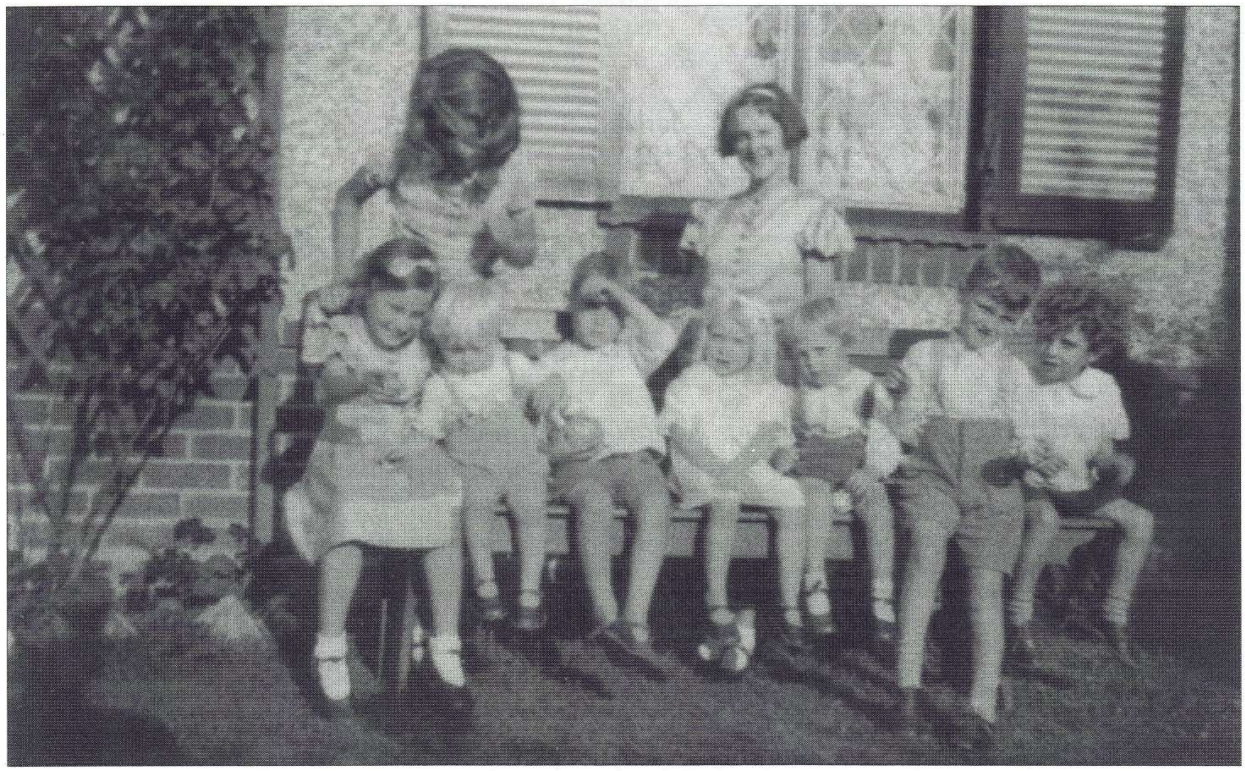
installed in the cellar ready for the opening of Parliament - the opening had been postponed until the 5th November, a date that is engraved on every Englishman/womans's heart. Fawkes was to set the fuse and then flee to the Continent.

But there was consternation among some of those involved, who were concerned that fellow members of their faith should be among the victims of the explosion. Catholic peer Lord Monteagle received a coded letter warning him not to attend and, not knowing quite what to do, passed it to Lord Salisbury, the leader of the MI6 of the day. Catesby got to know of the letter through one of Monteagle's servants but decided to press on. The letter was ultimately passed to the king, who ordered searches to be made. The first was unsuccessful but during the second the gunpowder was found under piles of logs.

Fawkes was also found, ready for flight and with fuses on his person. On hearing the news of the failure Catesby and some of the other plotters fled north where they had to stand and fight and were killed. Fawkes and the remaining conspirators were rounded up, tortured and brutally put to death.

Needless to say, the events resulted in a further tightening of anti-Catholic legislation and it was another 200 years before Catholics were fully emancipated and integrated into society.

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THESE CHILDREN?



This photograph was sent to Westender by member Hilary Gadsby (nee Buckle). She writes..... ***In the June edition of the magazine you included two photographs of West End Cricket team. The Mr A. Wiltshire mentioned was my great grandfather.....I was wondering if you might be able to publish a photograph (see above) I have of a family group taken in the 1930's. My father is in the group and I believe the others are family members."***

If any members can identify the children in this photograph please contact Hilary at **hilgad@gmail.com**
Ed.

THE HOME GUARD IN WEST END

This is a request to anyone who has any memorabilia or artefacts relating to the Home Guard in World War 2 in West End. We are looking for articles such as steel helmets, caps, badges, cloth flashes, equipment, any paperwork or leaflets etc.. either on loan or as a donation, so that we can put together a display for the museum. Anyone with any information regarding names of men who were in the Home Guard or any information regarding its formation, location of bases etc..

Please contact Nigel Wood on 02380 471886 or e-mail at westendlhs@aol.com

THE NEXT MEETINGS ARE....

October 6
ICEBERG RIGHT AHEAD!
Geoff Watts

November 3
SHIPS & PILOTAGE IN SOUTHAMPTON
Capt. Noel Becket, MNI

December 1
CHRISTMAS BUFFET, QUIZ, SLIDE SHOW & RAFFLE
Members only

January 5
WHERE IS AND WHAT IS THAT?
Jill Daniels

ON THIS DAY.....

On this day (6th October) in.....

1536 William Tyndale, English religious reformer and translator of the Bible, was burnt at the stake as a heretic, at Vilvarde near Brussels.

1829 Trials began at Rainhill, near Liverpool, for a locomotive for use on the Liverpool and Manchester Railway - won by Stephenson's 'Rocket'. The other 4 entrants were 'Cycloped', 'Sans Pareil', 'Perseverance' and 'Novelty'.

1891 W.H. Smith, English newsagent, bookseller and politician died.

1892 Alfred, Lord Tennyson, English poet and Poet Laureate from 1850, died at Aldworth in Surrey.

1895 The Promenade Concerts were founded by Sir Henry Wood.

1911 Barbara Castle, British Labour politician, born.

1914 Thor Heyerdahl, Norwegian adventurer and leader of the Kon Tiki expedition, born at Larvik.

1981 Anwar Sadat, Egyptian political leader and President since 1970, was assassinated during a military parade in Cairo.