NEWSLETTER of the WEST END LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Website:
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E-mail address:
westendlhs@aol.com

EDITOR
Nigel.G.Wood

EDITORIAL AND PRODUCTION ADDRESS
40 Hatch Mead
West End
Southampton, Hants
SO30 3NE
Telephone: 023 8047 1886
E-mail: woodng@aol.com

ECHOES FROM THE PAST



THE OLD FIRE STATION IN WEST END IN 1999

Our picture above in this issue shows West End's Old Fire Station on the corner of Orchards Way and High Street. The picture taken in 1999 shows the fire tower and brick and concrete roofed wartime ARP post, both of which have since been removed. The building now houses the West End Local History Museum & Heritage Centre on the ground floor, whilst the room upstairs is available for hire as a meeting room. The building originally only had an external steel stairway to the first floor, since then an extension in place of the brick shelter now houses an interior staircase to the first floor. The Museum is manned by volunteers and is open on Saturdays between 10am and 4pm.

West End Local History Society & Westender is sponsored by

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BRIGADIER HAROLD St. JOHN LOYD WINTERBOTHAM

C.M.G., D.S.O., A.D.C.

By Roy Andrews





LEFT: Brig. Harold Winterbotham, CMG,DSO,ADC
© Crown Copyright Ordnance Survey

ABOVE:
Ardullie Lodge, Moorhill in November 2000

During the 1920's Harold Winterbotham lived at a house called Ardullie Lodge in Moorhill, West End. He had been born the second son of Canon Rayner Winterbotham on 5th February, 1879.

After being educated at Fettes College, Edinburgh, and the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, he was commissioned in the Royal Engineers in 1897. Awarded the Queen's Medal with three clasps for his services in the South African (Boer) War he was appointed at the end of the war as Garrison Adjutant at St. Helena. After a short period of home service he returned to South Africa in 1908, where he carried out a topographical survey of the Orange Free State.

During the 20th Century the three dimensional terrain model played a significant role in many theatres of both world wars. The static nature of World War One demanded relief models of enemy defensive positions for planning offensive assault operations and campaign maps. From his experiences during the Boer War and WW1, Winterbotham devised a method of making to a scale of 1:20,000 terrain models of the Western Front, many made by himself. To facilitate the making of the maps, a Subdivision of the Ordnance Survey, based in Southampton, for General Headquarters in France was set up.

In 1919 the President of the USA awarded Winterbotham the Army Distinguished Service Medal. The citation reads as follows:

For exceptional and distinguished service in a position of great responsibility to the government of the United States, during the World War Lt. Col. Winterbotham gave advice, constructive criticism, and keen personal interest which influenced the creation of the organisation and methods of training for topographical and ranging work. He personally furnished us with a large amount of important topographic data which could not have been obtained elsewhere and which proved of the greatest value to us.

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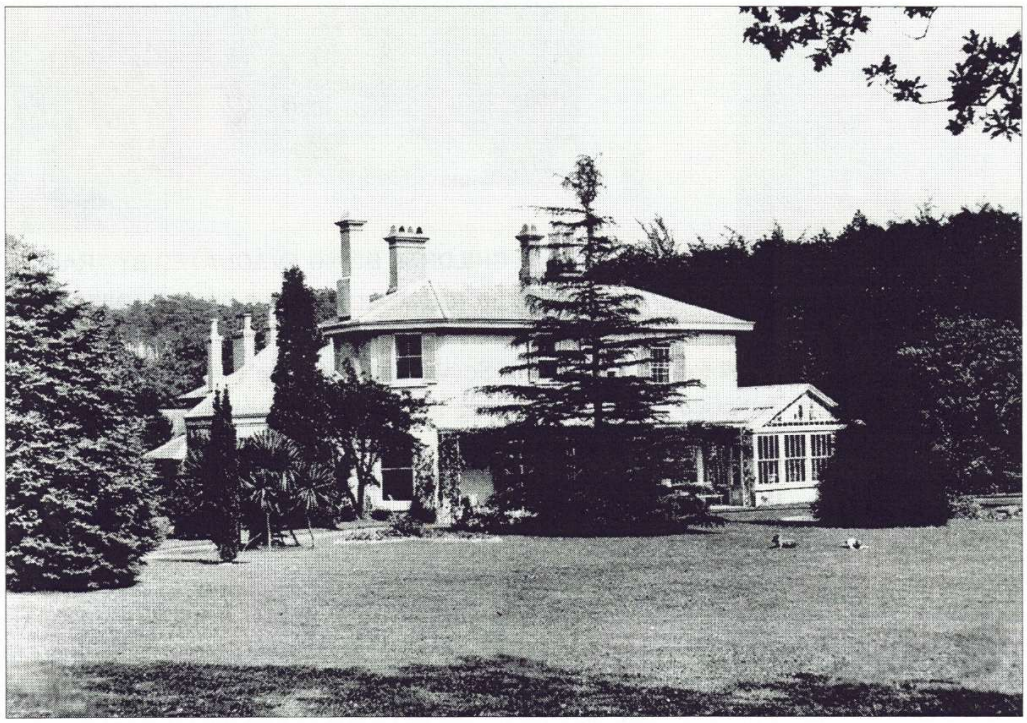
From 1930-1935, Winterbotham was made Director- General i.e. Head of the Ordnance Survey. In that role he would have moved to live in the large Georgian house designated the Director Generals House still standing on the corner of Rockstone Place and The Avenue, Southampton.

Between the two World Wars, the utility of models to aid terrain visualisation was not entirely forgotten. In the second edition of 'A Key to Maps' (1939), Winterbotham added an entire chapter on model making to his earlier edition of 1937.

He died on the 10th December, 1946 and is buried at Sutton Courtenay, Abingdon, Oxfordshire.

ADMIRAL ROBERT COOTE, R.N.

By Roy Andrews



"SHALES" - Built 1840 and demolished in 1984

Robert Coote was the son of Caroline Whaley and Sir Charles Henry Coote 9th Baronet Coot, of Castle Cuff, Queens Co. (Ireland) and was born on the 1st June,1820.

After being educated at Eton School he joined the Royal Navy in 1833 and was serving off the coast of Syria by 1840. He took part in the 'Opium Wars' and was made Commander on HMS Volcano in 1851.

On 14th November, 1854, he married Lucy Parry who was the daughter of Admiral Sir William E. Parry (1790-1855). He had in 1827 with the permission of the Royal Navy attempted one of the earliest expeditions to the North Pole. He reached 82 □45' North before giving up his attempt but set a record that would stand for fifty years.

The same year as he was married Robert was promoted to Captain and given command of HMS Victory from 1860, HMS Gibraltar from 1864 and HMS Arethusa from 1867.

He became Commander of the naval forces at Queenstown in 1873 and Commander-in-Chief of the China Station in 1878. Robert was awarded the Order of the Bath and retired from the navy in 1885.

For many years during the 1870's-80's Robert and Lucy lived at a house called 'Shales' in Westend Road near Cutbush Lane. They had two children Stanley (1862-1925) and Caroline (1864-1927). Robert died on the 17th March, 1898, and is buried in Woking Cemetery.

THE SOUTHAMPTON BLITZ

By Pauline Berry





Above: CHILDREN BEING EVACUATED BY TRAIN

Left: PC 55 JOE MOLLOY IN HIS POLICE UNIFORM

The 'Phoney War' ended in earnest for the residents of Southampton in June 1940 and the first of many air raids began. These gradually increased in intensity during the summer onwards, shelters came into good use and most people became involved in the War Effort. Fearful for their lives, many residents left the town in the evenings to seek shelter in rural districts. Although returning each morning, this was regarded as 'trekking' and spoken of disparagingly.

The evacuation of schoolchildren to the relative safety of the countryside continued and PC Joe Molloy, was sent with other police officers to do duty at the Terminus Railway Station. This was purely to assist in the supervision and ensure everything ran smoothly for the children from different schools in the town. Anxious parents made sure their children wore their obligatory name labels and had their ration and identity cards (and sandwiches) in their small suitcases. This government evacuation scheme was carefully planned judging from the detailed information published in the local newspaper.

Based at Portswood Police Station, PC Molloy often found himself doing 12 hour duties in the centre of Southampton, protected only by the addition of his tin hat, gas-mask and whistle.

On one occasion Bevois Valley was under heavy attack by the Luftwaffe, with bombs dropping everywhere. During a lull, Joe came upon the public- house 'The Crown and Sceptre' in Bevois Valley Road, which was badly damaged, surrounded in rubble. He knew there was a reinforced cellar beneath the building, acting as an air-raid shelter, and he found the steps leading down to it. Opening the cellar door he found an unexpected sight. The several occupants were there, alive and well, but sitting on their benches in stunned silence. When Joe called out, "are you alright?", no answer was forthcoming. He realised they were al suffering from shock and since the air-raid was still ongoing told them to stay put until the 'All Clear' siren, which was eventually sounded.

This was just one of many such incidents witnessed by PC Molloy whilst on duty. On another occasion

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during a daylight bombing-raid, he spotted a JU88 (Junkers) German plane flying high over Bevois Valley again. He watched, horrified, as it dropped a bomb on a commercial garage on the corner of The Avenue, by Stag Gates. It demolished the building and Joe assisted in pulling out the injured.

A lighter moment happened when another air-raid was in full swing, with pavements heaving from the bomb blasts. Joe, again on duty, approached the Civil Defence Post on Asylum Green, near the old Ordnance Survey offices in London Road. He saw the brick building lift and drop several inches during one blast, but was bemused when he realised that the young woman on duty inside had no idea that there had been any movement at all!

Another more sinister occasion happened on duty in Cobden Avenue, Bitterne Park. PC Molloy heard a bomb dropping close by and it landed in the front room of a house there, but did not explode. Joe inspected the hole, more out of curiosity than anything else, then left. He was shocked to learn the following day that the bomb did indeed explode a few hours later.

"You got used to the Blitz", Joe recalls, "I wasn't really frightened, for it all seemed so unreal and I felt little danger. You always think these things always happen to someone else, don't you?".

There will be more of Joe's experiences in the next edition of Westender. Ed

DICKENS & BRUNEL .... Portsmouth's Parallel Geniuses

A review by Stan Waight

Our speaker at the February meeting, Professor A.J. Pointon, gave 'The Little Giant and The Inimitable Boz' as an alternative title for his talk. The Little Giant was Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806-1853), who was only just over five feet tall, and The Inimitable Boz was, of course , Charles (John Huffam) Dickens (1812-1870). There were so many similarities between them it wasn't just by chance that he put the two men together.

After much scholarly shuffling of papers, he proceeded to talk for over an hour with a fluency that held the audience in rapt attention. He is clearly steeped in his subject, hardly referred to notes and introduced a lot of humour into his subject. He described Brunel as the man who built Britain and Dickens as a spiritual leader.

There were very few illustrations to the talk, but, at the start, the Professor gave us a couple of handouts. One of these was a list that detailed what he considered to be the similarities between the two men, who were contemporaries and friends. The more important were:

Both were born in Portsmouth but later spent time in London, Chatham and Bristol.

Both had a dread of debt, occasioned by the fact that their fathers had each spent some time in a debtors' prison.

Both had health problems, loved their country, were smart dressers and would tackle anything.

Both were famous by the time they were 24, and were the greatest in their fields.

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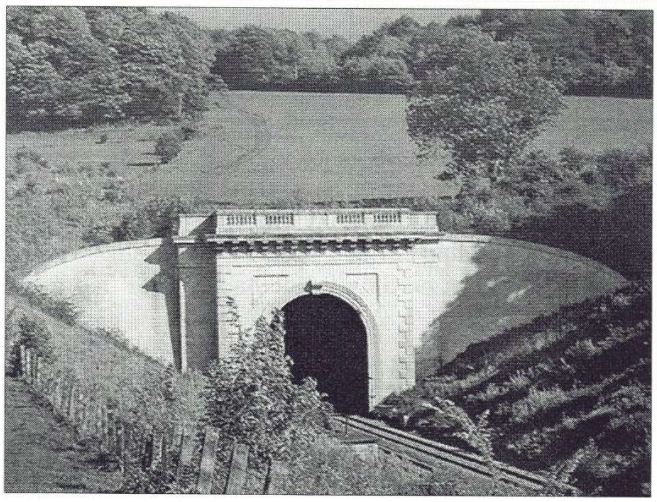



Above: THE WESTERN PORTAL OF THE BOX TUNNEL.
Right: IGNORANCE AND WANT, AN ILLUSTRATION FROM THE ORIGINAL CHRISTMAS CAROL

Both died young, having worked themselves to death.

Although Professor Pointon appeared to 'jump about a bit', I'm sure that this was part of his plan - as he dealt with each point on his list he explained how the mens' characteristics were similar.

Brunel inherited his skills from his father, Marc Brunel, who was a brilliant engineer but without a head for finance. Isambard was mistakenly credited with some of his father's achievements - the Thames tunnel for instance - but went on to surpass him in every way. His trains made Britain smaller and his ships, the Great Western for instance, did the same with the wider world. He spent time making his works into things of beauty; the entrance to the Box Tunnel was an instance - it was inaccessible except on a train that was moving too quickly for anyone except the driver to appreciate it.

Dickens' father, John, was an Admiralty paymaster who lived beyond his means. He put the young Charles to work in a shoe-polish factory but, having been given a good education, the boy progressed to junior clerk in a law firm. Having learned shorthand, he became a freelance journalist and writer. His experiences were the basis for his novels and he, too, made Britain smaller, but in a psychological sense - 'people got to know more about people'. His novels and their illustrations give a great insight into the bleak times in which they were written.

This short report cannot give more than a flavour of the content and style of the Professor's presentation. This was a talk that I, personally, would enjoy hearing again.

NOTES FROM A CONSTABLE'S POCKET BOOK - 11

By Roy Andrews

As an Authorised Firearms Officer, I had carried a weapon on several occasions in the few months since I had qualified in the early 1970's, mostly guarding police stations in Southampton where IRA Terrorist prisoners were being held.
I was working a 2pm -10pm shift one day just after the start of a new year when midway through it I was told by the Duty Inspector to go with him and another Firearms Officer to a meeting in the CID Office.

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There we were told the following story by a young CID Officer.

He was having an affair with the daughter of the licensee of a dock land pub which although a rough pub, was not the worst in the down town city centre. Although the daughter knew he was a police officer, no one else in the pub, including the licensee, was aware of this. Drinking with pub clientele like these often resulted in much useful information being obtained. The daughter had told the CID Officer that a customer had started visiting the pub alleging that he was a police officer and after a few visits had started producing a handgun and showing it to some of the customers. A few days previously over the New Year celebrations a fight had broken out in the bar - it was that sort of pub - which was rapidly getting out of hand until the alleged 'Police Officer' pulled out his gun and threatened the fighters with it. This had stopped the fighting but no word of this gun-waving man had ever reached us from any of the customers - they were that sort of customers.

Our CID Officer had never been in the pub when the gun totting customer was there and had to rely on his girlfriend for the details. Checks had been made to try and establish if this was a police officer but with the limited details, this had proved to be impossible.

The information now was that the man would be in the pub that evening and so our Detective would be in the bar until the man was pointed out to him by the girlfriend. He would then contact us and arrange to be standing behind the man when we uniform officers entered the pub.

The plan was that we would make a show of searching several customers including the Detective, so that his cover would not be blown, but get to the suspect carrying the gun as quickly as possible. And by the way, said the Duty Inspector, although we were Firearms Officers we would not be armed on this occasion.

Having been briefed, all we could then do was settle down and await the phone call. It gave me and my colleague a couple of hours in which to hone our skills at cribbage. In due course the message came through so the two of us, together with the Inspector and a Sergeant, piled into a Personnel Carrier and headed for the pub. We knew that inside the front door of the pub the Bar went off to the left and right and then turned at right angles at each end towards the back of the pub. Not knowing where the suspect might be I elected that once through the front door I would take the right hand side of the Bar.

And that is what I did, whereupon I spotted the Detective just around the corner of the Bar standing behind a seated customer. I put the Detective against the wall, gave him a quick search and then turned to the seated customer and told him to stand up, which he did. I gave him a much more detailed search but could find no evidence of a weapon. I had by now been joined by the other officers, the Inspector and Sergeant had followed us in, so taking a firm grip on the man we hurried outside and into the Personnel carrier where I searched him again just to be sure.

Back at the Civic Centre Police Station, it was left to the Inspector and CID to interview the man but we did not have to wait long for a result. Yes he was a Police Constable, not from our Force but a neighbouring one and had only been in the job a few months. The gun, which was a non firing replica, he had left at home on this occasion. He apparently had an acquaintance who drank in our pub and had taken into his head to go and drink there on his days off, liking the somewhat risqué atmosphere. Why he carried the gun around he could never explain but one can only assume that he had joined the police believing that the gun totting policemen he watched on TV in episodes of 'The Professionals' and 'The Sweeney' was what it was really like ---- it wasn't.

Once the interview was over he was released with no charges being brought but overnight a report was sent to his Chief Constable and the next morning one young policeman was out of a job.

MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS

We always need more volunteers to man the Museum & Heritage Centre, so if you have a couple of hours to spare on a Saturday from time to time contact Peter Wallace to volunteer your services on 01489 786521

BASQUES AT STONEHAM

Forty years ago a field near Southampton saw the aftermath of a tragedy which many believe was the first act of the power struggle which has continued ever since.

By Mark Phillimore

(Reproduced from a 1978 article in Hampshire Magazine with the kind permission of the author)



OVERVIEW OF THE NORTH STONEHAM BASQUE REFUGEE CAMP

One day late on in May 1937 a liner looking the worse for wear and filled to overflowing with children came alongside at Southampton Docks. Her entry was silent. No ship's siren bid her welcome in case it frightened the children. They were Basques, refugees from a region of Spain that was suffering terribly from the Civil War then raging in that country. So on this silent note began a saga that closely involved Southampton. At times the bitterness and passion that divided Spain was to spill over and reveal itself in the Basque children and the English participants.

Few motorists travelling into Chandler's Ford from Southampton will realise that the hypermarket now stands on the site of the transit camp for the refugees. In the fine summer of 1937 this was home for 4,000 children between the ages of 8 and 14. They came from all over the Basque region; some even had survived the horrors of Guernica, where tactical bombing on civilian targets had been tested for the first time with the resultant death toll of 2,000.

The Civil War in Spain had polarised the political passions of Europe. The plight of the Basques, however, had an international appeal which superseded any political allegiance. The fight for their homeland and *fueros* (ancient freedom and rights) drew forth a worldwide response of sympathy and support. The bombing of Guernica, the cradle of their nationalism, by the German Conder Legion added to the appeal. Offers to take the children came from America and most of Europe.

In England the National Joint Committee For Spanish Relief informed the Basque authorities they would initially accept 2,000 children. The body was made up of members from all political parties, the churches and other interested groups. To deal with the children the Basques Children's Committee was set up. A team was then sent down to Southampton, chosen because of the port, to find a site for the transit camp, while suitable accommodation for a longer stay in England could be arranged.

The offer of a well-drained 30 acre site adjoining the then main Southampton – London road was snapped up. Lent by Mr G.H. Brown of Swaythling Lane Farm, the field was a scene of beaverish activity until the arrival of the first children on May 23rd. Drains were installed, water piped in and 400 bell tents and five

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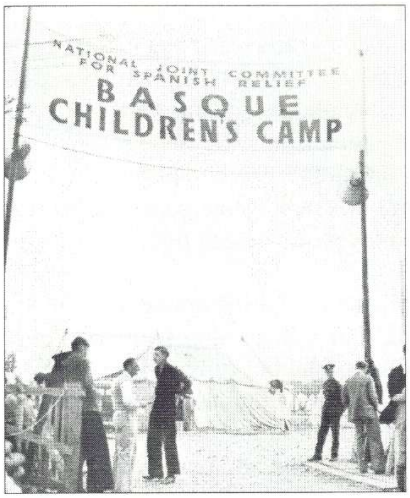
marquees were put up by volunteers under the guidance of the Scouts and YMCA. Soon help came from all directions. A large house, Moorhill at Westend, was accepted for the use of staff and those children too weak to sleep in tents. The most unusual source of help was the bunting used at the coronation of George the Sixth; made of heavy woollen mat, it was ideal for blankets.

Work was going apace when news came from Bilbao that the Basques wished to send a further 2,000 children. Urgent negotiations took place with the Home Office before permission was granted. Dr Richard Ellis flew back to Spain with the news and to accompany the children on their voyage to England. He had been in charge of the medical mission sent out to examine all the children and discard those who were too weak. Against a background of frequent halts due to Nationalist air raids, he and his team carried out their work. A visit he made to the Civil Hospital in Bilbao illustrated the desperate plight of the Basques. Equipment lay idle waiting for spare parts, surgical dressings and anaesthetics were equally scarce with operations carried out despite the lack of drugs.



ENTRANCE TO STONEHAM CAMP



BASQUE REFUGEE CHILDREN AT MOORHILL HOUSE, WEST END

For the trip to England the old converted liner *Habana* was used. The children were taken down to the quay in trainloads of 600 amidst scenes of great emotion. All through May 20th the ship was loaded so she was ready to sail on the early morning tide. Before she left the Basque President Señor Aguirre went on board to bid them farewell.

The *Habana* was escorted by a Spanish destroyer until she picked up the British convoy under the *Royal Oak* and the *Forester* a few miles off shore. The crossing was rough and spirits were low till England was sighted midday on the 22nd. By that evening the *Habana* was alongside at Southampton waiting clearance from health authorities under Dr. Maurice Williams. The next day, Sunday the first group of children move into the camp and receive a visit from the Home Secretary, Sir Kingsley Wood.

We have an excellent account of life at Stoneham Camp in the pamphlet *"The Basque Children in England"* by Yvonne Cloud and Dr. Richard Ellis. Although swept away at times in rhetoric of commitment to the Republican cause, it is most revealing on the set-up of the camp and the problems encountered. Controversy straightaway broke out over the division of the children. The Basque authorities had allotted places on the ship to all the local political parties according to their showing at the last election.

To us it may seem strange but in the situation it was the only feasible way that would not lead to subsequent recrimination. The camp authorities controversially kept the divisions and so the children were grouped in tents according to their parents' political affiliations. Not just two or three parties but all shades of Basque opinion were represented, including two anarchist groups – a strange phenomenon on English soil.

Politics pervaded all aspects of camp life. Though children, their political commitment was forged by the civil war and the passion that the Spanish bring to their politics. "Their smoking and interest in politics

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were the most noticeable things about them," said Mr Albert Arthur remembering his days as a young volunteer at the camp. On one occasion a group of children went without supper rather than wear the yellow armband – to differentiate them from those who had already eaten – because it was the colours of Franco's Moroccan troops.

The main purpose of the camp was to give time for the Basque Children's Committee to find homes for the children's stay in England; have them medically checked and record all details for their eventual return to Spain. While they were at the camp they had to be occupied and organised. After the early heady days the camp took on a more streamlined appearance. Basque teachers accompanying the children gave lessons as well as those volunteers who spoke Spanish.

The occasional trip outside the camp was organised, the most popular being to Eastleigh airport where the children peered closely at the planes that had so frightened them when they first arrived in the country.

Entertainments were put on, with a cinema and shows from outside performers. A few Basques sat for Augustus John the artist, who had his own tent at the camp. However nothing laid on for the children equalled the delight with which they greeted white bread, which was hoarded and bartered with great gusto.

Discipline was a problem at the camp. To induce a more responsible attitude in the older boys and in recognition of the adult duties they had of necessity carried out back home, they were given their own area of the camp to administer. This followed a fairly serious incident that reached the columns of *The Times*. A group of boys vandalised the chapel tent, slashing the canvas and breaking the cross. *The Times* also referred to a "mini riot" on July 12th when some children were caught stealing from the clothes store, otherwise only the occasional disappearance of boys bent on reaching London caused any concern to the camp authorities, save one incident on June 19th, when the fall of Bilbao to the Nationalists was announced over the camp radio.

"We very much regret that enemy troops are now in the town of Bilbao"; the rest of the announcement was drowned in a heart-rendering wail of grief and mounting tide of hysteria. The loudspeaker van was stoned, the priest who had translated the announcement was attacked, and children broke out of the camp confines, while most stayed "swaying rhythmically in an abandonment of grief". Order was gradually restored. With those remaining shepherded to their tents. Police were called in to prevent any more breaking out and find the 300 who had already done so. By four o'clock the next morning all the children had been accounted for, some up to four miles away.

The announcement came at the end of a week which had seen a worsening situation in the Basque country and a growing tension in the camp. Extra entertainment was laid on but the children treated it as an obvious distraction. News came through on the Saturday afternoon of the surrender of Bilbao while Sir John Reith, head of the BBC, was visiting the camp. He immediately phoned London and passed the latest information onto the camp committee who decided to announce the news after supper. Those helpers present were stunned by the intensity of the reaction described by Yvonne Cloud as "the most spontaneous outburst of horror and mourning that has ever been witnessed amongst children".

Although the incident cast a shadow over the camp it did not prevent the dispersal of the children to homes proceeding at a steady pace. Three days after they arrived at Stoneham Camp the first group were on the move again, this time to the Congress Hall, Clapton in London to be in the care of the Salvation Army. They caused much embarrassment to their hosts by greeting the Home Secretary with the clenched first salute. The Catholic authorities on their part found homes for 1,200 of which 70 stayed in Southampton. Apart from those mentioned the children were looked after by church bodies or else local voluntary groups under the aegis of the Basque Children's Committee. Numbers were dwindling at the camp and by August 13th it was down to 320. Finally on September 18th the camp closed with the last group of 220 children moving on to new surroundings.

There were still refugees staying in Southampton and the Isle of Wight but for most people in this area the affair had ended. The camp had had its darker moments with the death of two children, the outbreak of typhoid and the events of June 19th, but overall it was a great success. The provision of one million meals was witness to the efficiency of the organisation while the medical care was equally good with the outbreak of typhoid amazingly confined to one child. The camp finished on a happy note with the marriage of a Basque woman teacher to an English helper the day before it closed.

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The subsequent stay of the children in England was much less harmonious. Part of the problem lay in the varying standards of care at the homes where the children were sent to. Some were excellent with good facilities and teachers but others were inefficiently organised with an appearance more in keeping with a POW camp. Perhaps it was unavoidable with more than 100 locations but it was at these latter ones that the worst trouble broke out. On July 9th at Scarborough 80 children marched on the cookhouse to complain about the food. A brawl ensued and the cook had to run for his life chased by a horde brandishing knives. The authorities not appreciative of the more comic aspects of the affair, rounded up the ringleaders and dispersed them to other homes.

Five were sent to a Ministry of Labour camp at Brechfa in Carmarthen. The camp was in an isolated situation and badly organised. The incidents mounted up. A car was stolen, a Bentley damaged and finally the boys marched on the village and attacked the pub. The police were called in to restore order. Though the boys "alleged they saw guns pointing at them out of the window" the Committee For Spamish Relief decided the time had come for decisive action. They sent the ringleaders home to Spain, and divided the rest amongst the other camps. After that there were no more serious outbreaks of violence.

The prompt sending back to Spain of the troublemakers only begged the question. If it was safe to return them then why not the rest of the children? By the end of October 1937 the war was over for the north of Spain. But by mid-summer the situation was so obviously running the way of the Nationalists that the English government set up an enquiry to suggest when the children should be returned. The Basque Children's Legal Commission reported at the end of October and recommended the immediate return of 500 and the rest to follow as soon as possible.

Pressure had built up for this outcome since August. In that month the Papal Delegate in Bilbao with the implicit support of the Nationalist authorities sent over Father Gabana to seek the children's return. He brought letters from anxious parents wanting their children, but his reception from the Basque Children's Committee was frosty. For them any dealings with the conquerors of the Basque country was distasteful. The report of the Legal Commission may have nudged them into action but it was dilatory. By the end of January 1938 only 956 had been returned and 46 of these went outside Spain.

This approach to the problem was seen in some quarters as deliberate obstruction for political reasons. As a result a counter group was set up that same month calling itself the Spanish Children Repatriation Committee. Chaired by the Duke of Wellington it included such leading Tories of the day as Douglas Jerrold and the society hostess Lady Londonderry. They naturally urged an immediate return of the children, pointing out that the Basque country had been peaceful since August.

Significantly the instigation for the Repatriation Committee came not from the Tory party but from the Catholic church in the form of Cardinal Hinsley. It revealed the dilemma the Catholic authorities felt towards the Basque children. Duty bound to look after those whose parents were Basque Nationalists (regarded as devout Catholics) all their sympathy lay with the cause of Franco. Therefore, in their eyes there was no need to dither with the Basque country firmly under Nationalist control. By sending the children back promptly they would also be giving implicit support and credibility to the Nationalist cause.

For the Basque Children's Committee with its strong leanings to the Republican side it was like a red rag to a bull. The letter columns of *The Times* were witness to the acrimony between the two groups. The children were being converted "into Christ-hating little Communists" thundered those for Repatriation; no retorted the other side, a swift return to Spain would only lead to a reformatory and "re-education" to learn the ways of Fascism.

As for the children they were slowly sent back. By the end of 1939 there were still 1,000 left in England, 500 of which were only waiting for transport to Spain. The fate of the last 500 was undecided. The Basque Children's Committee considered it wrong to return these children. Perhaps because they had no family or relations to go to, or else those they did have, were in prison. Some never returned, and settled in England. Others eventually left for Spain or else found a new life in South America. By then, anyway, the problems of the Basque children had been overtaken by events elsewhere in Europe, not to re-emerge in the glare of publicity until out own time, a generation later.

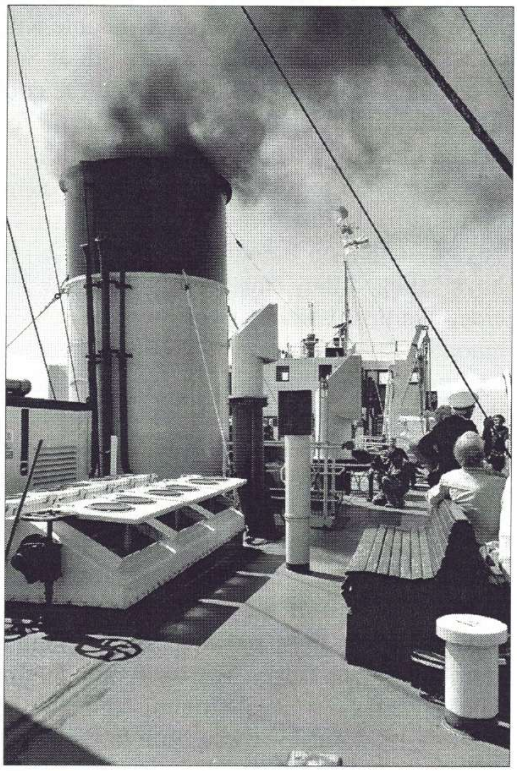
We would like to express our sincere thanks to Sue Overell who kindly obtained permission from the author for the re-printing of this article. Ed.

THE LIFE & TIMES OF SS 'SHIELDHALL'

A review by Stan Waight







The March meeting was very well attended. Around fifty of us assembled to hear Graham MacKenzie talk about what, to me at least, is a truly beautiful ship. 'Shieldhall' is generally recognised to be the largest working steamship of her type in Britain and probably Europe, and her good looks belie the purpose for which she was built - carrying sewage from Glasgow to a dumping ground on the Clyde.

The Glasgow Corporation started to use a single ship for sewage disposal in 1910. This was the 'Dalmuir', which sailed daily down the Clyde to drop its cargo off Dunoon and Gourock. The worthy and wealthy inhabitants of those towns complained, and a new dumping ground off the Isle of Bute was selected, necessitating the introduction of a second ship. This was the first 'Shieldhall', the name being taken from the location of one of the City's sewage plants.

A defensive boom was put across the river during World War Two and prevented voyages to the Isle of Bute, but the use of two ships was resumed after the war and 'Shieldhall I' continued to operate until 1955. The present ship was launched in that year, and, apart from the accommodation for 14 crew members, could carry up to 80 passengers. A spacious saloon was provided and disadvantaged Glasgow residents could apply for river trips.

'Shieldhall II' was decommissioned by Glasgow in 1976 and was brought to Southampton by Southern Water, where she was initially used for her original purpose - she loaded sewage in Southampton and took it to a dumping ground south of the Isle of Wight. By 1986 the system had become uneconomical and, after a public meeting, 'Shieldhall' was bought by Southampton City for £20,000 in 1988. She is now owned by The Solent Steam Packet Ltd., a charity whose aim is her preservation in operational condition, and is available for cruises or static functions.

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Graham MacKenzie is a marine engineer and talked lovingly about his oil-fired, triple-expansion steam engines ('Shieldhall' has two) and the quality of the ship's fittings. She has teak decks and her traditionally-laid-out bridge apparently resembles that of the 'Titanic'. He spoke for over an hour, showed many excellent slides and his talk was peppered with anecdotes and descriptions of other shipping. All-in-all he gave us a very interesting and entertaining evening.

SOUTHAMPTON'S SECOND HISTORY FAIR

Saturday 16th April 2011



TOWNHILL PARK HOUSE - NOW GREGG SCHOOL AND SITE OF THE FAIR

On Saturday 16th April this year the second History Fair will take place at Townhill Park House. Run by Bitterne Local History Society, the Fair will open from 10.00 am until 5.00 pm and be held as last time at Townhill Park House (now The Gregg School) - for those with Sat Nav the postcode is SO18 3RR. There will be limited car parking, so arrival by public transport will be a good idea.

Admission will be £4.00 per person (accompanied under 16 years old are free). On the programme will be: Opening by 'King Henry VIII', a varied programme of talks, meet Jim Brown, author of local books, Historic bus trips and classic vehicles, help on tracing your family tree, Local and Family History Societies' stands and tours of the Gertrude Jekyll gardens.

Exhibitors: *Museums Archives & Galleries (FOSMAG) - Titchfield History Society - Durley History Society - Botley & Curdridge Local History Society - Diaper Heritage Association - Hants Genealogical Society research room - Royal Observer Corps Museum - So'ton Record Series - Society of Nautical Research (South) -Friends of St James Park, Shirley Heritage Project - Mavis McHugh (postcards) - James Brown (meet the local author) - Adrian Edmunds, Advertising Tins - Friends Of Townhill Park House - Little Woodham, The 1642 Living History Village - Friends of So'ton Old Cemetery - Mid Hants Railway (The Watercress Line) - Tram 57 project - West End Local History Society - Friends Of Townhill Park Gardens - Southampton City Museums Archeology Society - Hedge End Bookshop, Stephen Tanti.*

Outside Exhibitors: *Vintage Austin Cars - Woodland Craft Workshop - So'ton & District Transport Heritage Trust buses - Hants & IoW Trust for Maritime Archaeology Bus - "The Bonivants" , Re-enactment Group.*

All Enquiries: MARY ABRAHAM Tel: 07929 873327 OR E-MAIL AT maryabraham_22@yahoo.co.uk

CARNIVAL NEWS

West End Carnival will take place on Saturday 25th June, the theme will be "The Swinging 60's" and there will be a procession with floats again this year. Also included in the festivities will be two walks on Wednesday 15th June and Tuesday 21st June, both led by Eric Read, they will start at the Parish Centre car park at 7.00pm (full details from the Parish Office). There will also be a 60's Quiz held at the Parish Centre on 22nd June - for full details of all these events contact the Parish Centre office on 023 8046 2371. In addition there will be a Carnival Spring Fair also held at the Parish Centre in Chapel Road on Saturday 30th April from 11.00am until 3.00pm. Please support your community and attend these events.

THE NEXT MEETINGS ARE....

May 4
MEDIEVAL SOUTHAMPTON
Dr. Andy Russell

June 1
SOUTHAMPTON FROM BLITZ TO D-DAY
Jake Simpkin

July 6
CALSHOT - THE FLYING YEARS
Colin van Geffen

August 3
SOCIAL EVENING AT THE MUSEUM
(including raffle and free refreshments)

ON THIS DAY.....

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

1199 King Richard I, called the Lion Heart, died from a wound received while besieging the Castle of Chaluz.

1830 The Mormon Movement or Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints was founded by Joseph Smith at Fayette, New York.

1843 William Wordsworth was appointed Poet Laureate.

1874 Harry Houdini, American magician and escapologist, born at Appleton in Wisconsin as Ehrich Weiss, the son of a rabbi from Budapest.

1896 Modern Olympic Games were revived by Pierre de Coubertin, at Athens, with James Connolly of America winning the first Gold Medal, in the triple jump event.

1906 Sir John Betjeman, English writer and Poet Laureate, born in London.

1917 The United States of America declared war on Germany.

1926 Rev. Ian Paisley, British politician and MP for Antrim born.

1944 PAYE income tax came into force in Britain. The system was devised by Sir Cornelius Gregg.