Museum

NEWSLETTER of the WEST END LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

# WESTENDER

JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2005 VOLUME 4 NUMBER 9

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**Website:**
**www.hants.org.uk/westendlhs/**

**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**

## GUARDIANS OF THE SICK AND POOR

### By Gordon Cox (adapted by Pauline Berry)



**THE SOUTHAMPTON BOARD OF GUARDIANS c. late 1920's - early 1930's**

In the late 1920's and the 1930's there existed the Southampton Board of Guardians who were elected separately from the local town councillors. They were responsible for the Infirmary (the General Hospital), the Hollybrook Children's Homes, the Workhouse in Hursley Road (built 1900 and recently demolished), another next to St. Mary's Church in St. Mary's Street (now a Technical College) and of course the Workhouse at South Stoneham Union, the Moorgreen Institution at West End.

There was a rota for Guardians to visit the various institutions to make sure they were properly managed and to listen to any complaints. My father, Henry Daubney Cox, was one of those worthies to be elected a Guardian. He ran a book-binding business in West Street, Below Bar,

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# FEVERS AND DISEASES AMONG SEAMEN

John G. Avery

In Britain, the records of the Navy Office show the numbers of deaths of seamen over sporadic periods. From about 1779 just the annual numbers were recorded but from 1811 the cause of death was often shown.

The smaller ships were often used as guard ships, prison hulks, for seamen recovering from injury or illness and the general term "misfits" such as demoted officers and the crew rescued from a shipwreck etc.. Awaiting another appointment. It was relatively common to send naval defaulters to such ships to serve their sentence. Often on being released from a debtor's prison a man would join the navy as a means of supporting himself. These ships were often in need of repair but the Navy spent money on the refitting of the larger fighting ships. The inmates arriving from the gaols were usually in an unhealthy state; typhoid often ran through the gaols. Known by various names such as gaol fever, ship fever or barrack fever merely indicated where it had originated in that area. It was from this source that the admirals drafted men to the bigger deep sea ships to man them for long voyages often heading into fever zones such as the West Indies where the weak and in poor health were the most vulnerable. Some of these unfortunates would die on the outward voyage and once fevers such as yellow fever broke out, few survived.

The fleet of Sir Francis Wheeler attempted to attack the French in the Windward Islands in 1693 but without much success. In the winter months he headed the fleet northwards with the intention of attacking the French at Quebec. However, when the fleet arrived at Boston it was desperately weak as after leaving Barbados there was a major outbreak of yellow fever amongst the seamen and soldiers. The fleet consisted of 2,100 seamen and 2,400 soldiers. On leaving England he had brought 1,800 soldiers recruited from the guard ships, prisons and "volunteers" in overcrowded troop ships with virtually no means of getting fresh air on the lower deck. He lost over 3,100 men die to the fever, some of the survivors deserted at Boston. Weak, low in morale the fleet set sail for England no doubt to off load many of the sick back onto the smaller guard ships to act as a reserve. The French at Quebec probably owed their survival to the English fleet's lost battle with yellow fever.

The West Indies was at the hub of the many conflicts between the British, the Spanish and the French. The British Navy had the power to press men into service from merchantmen and from the plantations. Thus your ancestor could arrive in the West Indies on a civilian ship and did not arrive back in England for some years or so on a naval ship. We did not have a permanent naval service personnel, often when a ship returned it was paid off and resumed service as a merchantman (the term "to the ordinary" was often used). Tracing the career of seamen from those times is fraught with difficulty. The Navy sometimes commandeered a whole ship or just members of the crew and of course the dreaded press picked up individual men walking the streets in our ports and villages.

The slave trader *Hannibal* arrived at Carlisle Bay, Barbados in November 1694 during a major outbreak of yellow fever. The Navy attempted to press the entire crew into naval service as their own ships had suffered many deaths. The *Hannibal* set sail for England in company with other merchantmen in a convoy escorted by the navy ship *Tiger*. The *Tiger* herself had been on station for two years and had buried 600 men due to fevers. Her compliment was 220 men and as their numbers fell the captain had regularly recruited pressmen from the slave and sugar trade ships. Each day they counted the dead, they then went off with the Press to recruit replacements. Men were lined up at the plantations and the Press men selected their choice. The next day the same exercise would occur.

Parliament began to take a greater interest in the nation's health in early 1805 when a Board of Health was set up to advise on the risk of the yellow fever and typhoid then spreading from Spain and Gibraltar. The

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Yellow fever had been responsible for 100,000 deaths in Africa and Spain so the threat was serious one. The Board had five Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians, one Commissioner from the Board of Customs, a Commissioner from the Navy Board and a Commissioner of the Board of Sick and Hurt. The Board discontinued to function after 1806 as the reason of being had diminished.

As cholera spread toward Britain, it was necessary to recreate a new Board. In June 1831 a Board was set up in an advisory role and it looked at means of preventing the spread, the need of quarantine and isolation and of course to consider the debate as to whether cholera was contagious or not.

The Quarantine Act of 1805 made it an offence for a Customs Officer to desert his post from an infected ship or to permit any person or goods to leave a lazarette or ship in quarantine. Offenders were liable to the death penalty "without benefit of clergy".

Quarantine was strictly enforced in the mid 19th century as the evils of yellow fever, cholera, typhoid and typhus spread to our shores. The yellow quarantine flag was an all too familiar sight at the entrances to our ports and mooring roads. In fact so prevalent was yellow fever to become on the eastern seaboard of the USA they started calling the fever "Yellow Jack" after the yellow jack flag.

In the 19th century, the naval surgeons began to realise that mosquitoes and other parasitic insects and flies could soon spread the fevers around a ship and began to use nets around the hammocks or bunks of the sick crew to lessen this risk. Later the authorities began to realise that cramming men together like sardines in a can below deck without a supply of fresh air or light was in itself an ideal situation for the spread of disease and gradually better conditions were introduced.

The trade with South Australia developed in the mid 1800's, many ships would call at St Thomas in the West Indies to replenish water and stores and such arrivals in Britain subject to the usual quarantine. Typically is the quarantine declaration of the *Tasmanian* arriving at Southampton on 1st April 1861:

***What is the name of the vessel and the commander?*** *Tasmanian* Charles G. Wheeler.
***From whence do you come?*** St Thomas WI.
***Have you any and what bill of health?*** Clear*
(* a ship would have a clear or foul bill of health – in this case Robert Boyd Lamb, British Consul certified *"no plague, epidemic, cholera nor any other dangerous disorder exists on the island")*
***What numbers of officers, mariners and passengers have you on board?*** 203.
***Have you had any intercourse of communication with any vessel during your homeward voyage?*** No.
***Did yellow fever or any other fever prevail at the port from whence you sailed on your homeward voyage or at any port or place at which you touched during your outward or homeward voyage?*** No.
***Have any persons suffered from yellow fever or any other fever during the homeward voyage?*** No.
***If so furnish the names of the persons who have suffered from fever; the dates of the attack and what was the termination of the disease?***
***What were the most obvious symptoms or appearances of the disease in the patients?***
***Had any of them vomiting of a black nature?*** **
(** this was typically a symptom of yellow fever as the stomach lining came apart)
***What was the general duration of the disease?***
***Are there any patients confined to bed?***
***Are all convalescents able to walk on deck? If so parade them to the gangway.***
***What are the dates on which the sick now in the list were last entered on your journal?***
***When did any deaths occur?***
***What are the dates on which the patients who died were last entered in your sick list?***
***Did you take on board or send on shore any sick or invalids at any port or place at which you touched***

*Continued on page 4*

*Continued from page 3*

***on your outward or homeward voyage?*** No.
***If so, what was their state as to disease?***
***Has the bedding or clothing of the persons who died or have suffered from fever been destroyed?***

*We the Master and the Surgeon of the above named vessel do hereby swear/declare*** to the truth of the replies which we have given to the above questions.*
*Charles Weller, Master* *Charles Decruchy, Surgeon.*
(*** at times the rules changed and a formal oath taken on a testament, in this case a declaration was made)
*Declared before me this thirtieth day of March 1861 – L. Jeffreys, Officer (of Customs)*
*John Wilkin Superintendent of Quarantine* (we assume the ship arrived about midnight as she was shown as arriving on 1st April and the declaration would be taken at the mooring station)(**Public Record Office Kew ref: PC1 4543**)

In some locations such as Gravesend the declaration or oath was passed to the Customs official by a long pole. The pole had a holed container made of brass that contained a bible and the oath was administered without the possibility of contagious fingers handling the bible. For obvious reasons, the Customs called it a fever bible.

At large ports lazarettes (quarantine ships) were stationed. At Motherbank off the Isle of Wight the *Menelaus* and the *Edgar* were stationed for many years until 1896. After the severe cholera outbreak of 1848-9 when things seemed to be improving, the Customs Quarantine Service began to lay staff off from the lazarettes. It was too soon to be complacent and another severe outbreak came in 1853 requiring an urgent recruitment of staff. Often in times of epidemics the entrances to our ports were lined by a group of ships flying the yellow Q flag, isolated from the local population.

Many of the fevers and diseases of ship board life continued for many years but as medicine developed, vaccines and other preventatives were discovered. In the 1840's and 1850's the main shipboard diseases were cholera, yellow fever, spotted typhus, enteric fever and relapsing fever. Dr William Cockburn, physician to the fleet discovered a secret remedy for dysentery and took out a patent. The Admiralty were so impressed they set an increasing emolument as the cases of dysentery fell drastically.

Not but a few of the seaman's diseases were of course associated with those we politely refer to as a "social disease". In the richness of naval slang the "clap" ward at Greenwich Hospital *HMS Dreadnought* was known "as being in Rose Cottage". Some of the officers from respected families preferred to go ashore for treatment to the house of one of the surgeons in the hope that their condition would not be the subject of wagging tongues. The lower deck humour of course soon identified the ward at the hospital as the same name as <u>that</u> house. That is why today many an ex-sailor smiles to himself when walking down a country lane on spotting a neatly white washed house with pretty garden called "Rose Cottage". The owner carries on gardening quite unaware of being a source of the humorous reaction and the reason behind the knowing wink of a passing stranger!

Quarantine (based on the Latin for 40 days) was used in earlier times to prevent soldiers returning from the Crusades bringing back infectious illnesses. The time span varied from country to country and often the red tape of trying to get internationally recognised common conditions was quite appallingly drawn out. Very often a country imposing restrictions faced a tit for tat reaction when its ships entered a foreign port. There being no restrictions on the country's own ships. In the case of cholera it took over 40 years to get an internationally agreed standard.

**Reference sources**
*Ancient and Rightful Customs* Edward Carson, Published by Faber & Faber.
*Continued on page 5*

*Continued from page 4*

*Cambridge Illustrated History Medicine* editor Roy Porter.
*History of Epidemics in Britain* Charles Creighton, published by Frank Cass 1965
*Privy Council Records, the quarantine declaration of TASMANIAN* courtesy the Public Records Office Kew.
*The Customs Quarantine Service* Edward Carson (article)
*The Cholera Years* John G.Avery (published by the author 2001)
*The People's Health 1830-1910* F.B. Smith published by Croom Helm.
*Victorian People* Gillian Avery published by Collins.

**NOTE**

**Those of you who found this article interesting might like to know that John Avery is giving his talk entitled "The Cholera Years" to WELHS at the meeting on September 7th. Ed.**

*Front page article continued from page 1*

nearly opposite the Dolphin Hotel. As he didn't drive a car, I used to take him on his visits of inspection and accompany him on his rounds.

What changes have taken place since those far-off days! In fact all that is left of the original Hollybrook Homes buildings as I knew it, is the Nurse's Home. They were once efficiently run by a matron and her husband who trained the boys to play instruments and form a silver band which was much in demand in the town. In the summer the children would go for a month to a camp at Milford-on-Sea.

The workhouse in St. Mary's Street, Southampton, was later converted into a home for elderly people, much to the dismay of wayfaring tramps. They could no longer settle there for the night, after indulging in an evening's "entertainment" in Southampton, perhaps not entirely fit for the walk to Moorgreen Institution in West End!

One of the Guardians was George Parker. He had a large white "stick-out" beard which seemed to be an elaborate frame for his face. He was a Non-Conformist and ran a Blue Cross Choir. Once a month, they would all go to West End and hold a religious service for the inmates. My father was often asked to preach a sort of sermon and of course, the services were hardly normal, with frequent clapping and interruptions. The event, however, obviously gave the residents some enjoyment which lasted beyond the Sunday evening. Some inmates were not considered suitable to be allowed to attend the service and were probably being assessed for transfer to more secure accomodation.

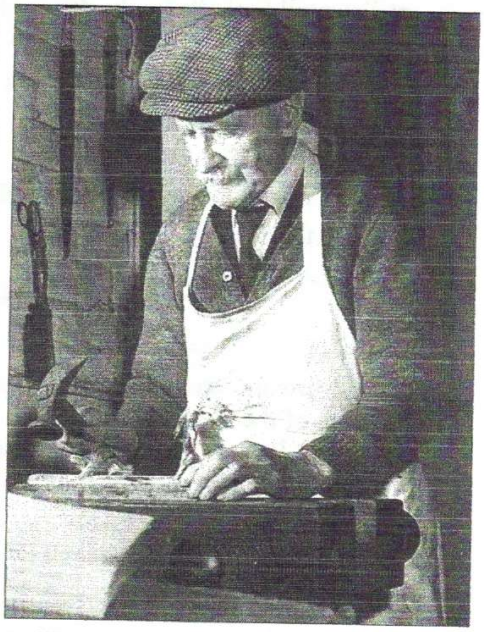
In more recent times, the Tom Rudd Unit and the Countess Mountbatten House have been established to the rear of the older buildings at Moorgreen which now comprise a hospital for the elderly. The Countess Mountbatten unit has a Day Centre where such wonderful support is given today for in-patients. Incidentally, the car-park at the far right side, now extends over what I remember as a massive sewage disposal plant!

As for my father, his bookbinding business thrived and he and his staff did work for all over the world, not least, the Southampton City Council. He worked, in various capacities, at West Street, which somehow survived the war bombing, all his long life until the grand age of 90 years! His story was covered by the Southern Daily Echo that year, but unfortunately he died the following year in 1960.

***NOTE: Gordon Cox, who has been equally active all his life, has been ill recently and we send him our best wishes for a full recovery. Ed.***



MOORGREEN HOSPITAL TODAY



**HENRY DAUBNEY COX — 23.7.1868—8.8.1960**
**Master Bookbinder, Board of Guardians.**

# LOCAL HERITAGE INITIATIVES

### Heritage plaques

Following a suggestion from Pauline Berry, West End Councillor and LHS member Steve Broomfield placed a motion before the meeting of Eastleigh Borough Council on 25th November that Eastleigh should look at a scheme of heritage plaques to commemorate famous residents of the Borough. This motion was unanimously accepted, and we hope that Steve's and Pauline's work will see house plaques in the Borough in the not-too-distant future. Steve said: "I am delighted this was so well supported. Now we have to start work and put the idea into practice - watch this space!"

### Pub name change

Steve has also been trying to see if the historic name "The Crown and Thistle" could replace The Master Builder's name. The landlord is happy for this, so contact will need to be made with the brewery. Steve will get onto this in the new year, so let's hope that the village will see another one of its historic names back in use.

# BOOK REVIEW

**Derek Amey**

**"Townhill Park – The Life and Times of a Gertrude Jekyll Garden"**

**ISBN 0-9532830-2-X Price: £12.00**

Written by local author Rosaleen Wilkinson, this is a fresh look at Townhill Park House with particular reference to the restoration of its designer garden. Members of the Society will recall visiting the house and garden some years ago, but, as the photograph on the front cover of this very attractively produced book shows, the restoration of the garden has made enormous strides since then.

The house and the family are the setting within which the author describes the enormous amount of work put in by the volunteer "Friends of the Garden" to achieve the stunning effect seen today. Nice to note too that, in the course of writing her book, Rosaleen interviewed WELHS President Bob Moody who worked at Townhill Park. Sadly, he did not live to see the result in print.

The book concludes with a section on the plants used in the restoration, Latin names and all. Bob would have approved of that as well!

A copy of this excellent book will be held in the WELHS Museum Library and copies can be ordered through the Society.

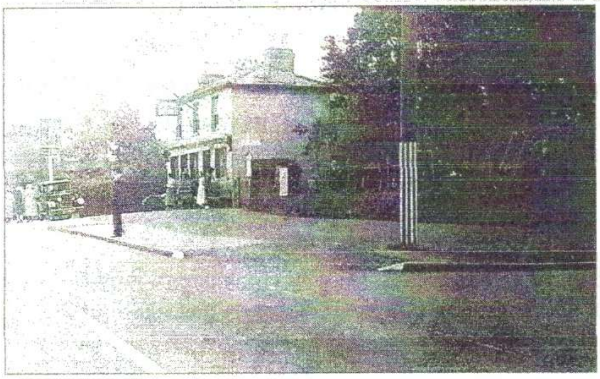
# VISIT BY M.E.P. TO MUSEUM

Your Museum was recently the location of a VIP visit; MEP Nirj Deva paid a visit to see the historic heritage of the village. In a packed Museum, Nirj met several members including the Curator Nigel Wood and Steve Broomfield , and spent some time chatting with them while also learning a lot about the history of our village. Also present was prospective MP Conor Burns.

# TREASURER WANTED

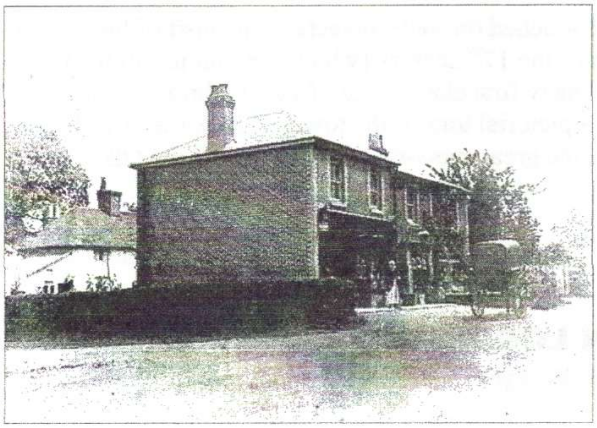
As previously reported our Treasurer Derek Amey will be stepping down at the AGM and we are looking for nominations to be our new Treasurer, please see any Committee member if you are interested.

# THEN & NOW PICTURES OF WEST END





THE ORIGINAL "SPORTSMANS ARMS" PUB ON THE CORNER OF TELEGRAPH ROAD & BOTLEY ROAD AND THE SAME VIEW IN JANUARY 2005



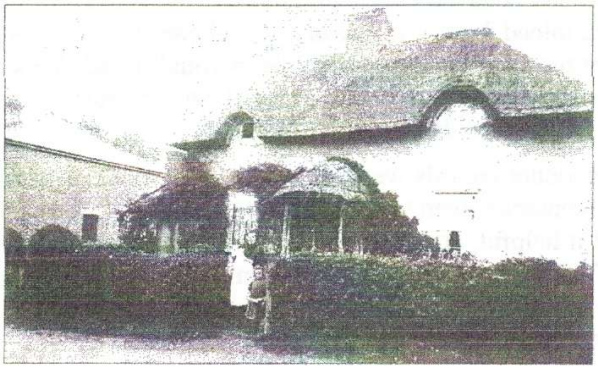



MAY'S BAKERY & STORES LATER FRAY'S NEXT TO "THE NEW INN" IN THE HIGH STREET AND THE SAME VIEW IN JANUARY 2005





"MERRY GARDENS" IN CHAPEL ROAD OPPOSITE THE NEW PARISH CENTRE ON HATCH GRANGE AND THE SAME VIEW IN JANUARY 2005





"MYRTLE COTTAGE" AT THE BOTTOM OF CHALK HILL AND THE SAME VIEW IN JANUARY 2005 ADJACENT TO THE SGB YARD

## FORDINGBRIDGE TALK

### A Review by Stan Waight

As I drove to the Parish Centre for the first meeting of 2005 I wondered to what extent Gerald Ponting would awaken my interest in Fordingbridge, and, in the event, I have to say the answer was 'Not very much really!'. In case that may seem rather unfair, I also have to say that I felt that the Breamore-born speaker put on a first-class presentation - it was just that the subject didn't appeal. Gerald is an expert local-historian who does a good job promoting his own bit of Hampshire.

A teacher by profession, his job had taken him as far afield as Suffolk and the Hebrides before ending his career in Fordingbridge. On retirement he took on the task of school archivist, and has co-operated in the publication of many local-history books. Not surprisingly, his main work has been *A History of Fordingbridge*.

His talk was fluent, for he spoke without notes, and touched on such subjects as the visit of the BBC's Time Team in 2001 and the several disastrous fires of the 17th century (which account for all the houses dating from the early 1700s). It was supported by many first class slides of Fordingbridge, which spanned the period of the 1870s to date and Gerald gave us a pictorial tour of the town. There was a wide variety of photographs, including some stunning images of the great snow-storm of 1908, and the talk was peppered with local anecdotes.

I'm sorry I can't be more enthusiastic, for I'm sure that the talk goes down a treat in Fordingbridge.

## THE BRITISH CENSUSES IN LOCAL AND FAMILY HISTORY

### Stan Waight

My wife and I have been researching our family trees for over twenty five years. As many of you will know, this can be a very exasperating but often rewarding pastime, and long periods of frustration will usually end in an exciting breakthrough.. Although I am back to the 1580s in one line of my family, names and dates don't mean much unless 'flesh' is put on the 'bones' of the family tree skeleton so to speak. Where was Joseph Waight in 1697, for instance, when his wife died and their five children were taken into the care of the parish of Eling, and why had Joseph Death started to attend church 'evenings' in Hadleigh, Suffolk, in 1836 when he used attend 'mornings'? I don't know the answer to the first, but the answer to the second is that he became a baker, and bakers often used their ovens to cook the Sunday dinner for others. Eventually, however, you run out of ideas as to where else to look for your own ancestors and turn to other aspects of family history.

In my own case, the decennial censuses of 1841 to 1901 began to take up my entire interest. My grandfather, Sam Rowe, was born in Marazion, Cornwall, in 1874, and was enumerated with his unmarried mother and his tin-miner grandfather in the 1881 census. I haven't yet found him in 1891, but know that he was already a sailor by that time. By 1901, he had joined Trinity House and was aboard the Seven Stones Lightvessel off Lands End. My mother was born at the Fog Gun Station at Flamborough Head, Yorkshire, in 1904, and I know that granddad had been moved to Harwich in Essex by 1912, so I'm eagerly waiting for the 1911 census - but that won't be published for another six years!.

One of my problems was that Trinity House's personnel records were all burnt during the London blitz, and it occurred to me that it might be possible to reconstruct them to some extent using the censuses. If so, descendants of other Trinity personnel would find it helpful, and so it proved to be. The Record Office at Winchester has all the local censuses and it wasn't difficult to find the three Hampshire and Isle of Wight Lighthouses in all of them. The surprising thing was that Trinity House men were moved around a lot, and the ages and places of birth of their wives and children were a sure-fire indication of previous service.

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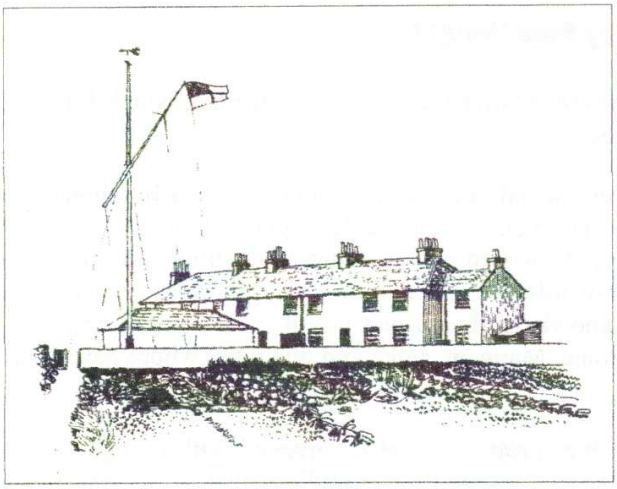
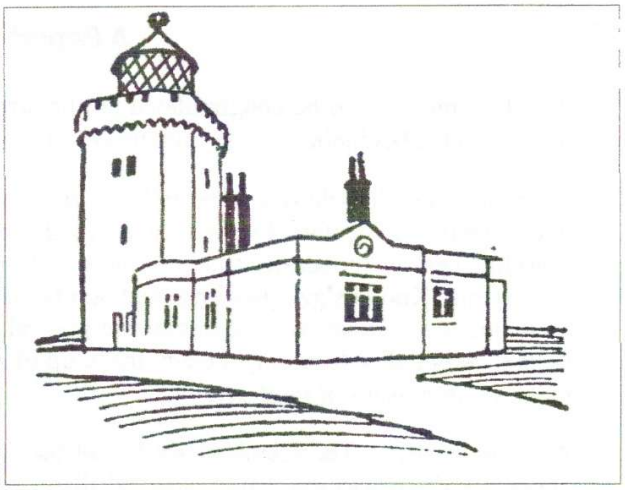


ROW OF COASTGUARD COTTAGES



A TYPICAL LIGHTHOUSE

Thus encouraged, I wrote to Family History Societies in all the coastal counties in England and Wales and was able to get enough volunteers to complete the lighthouse project for the whole of the area covered by Trinity House (most family historians really do like to help others). Lightvessels were a different matter because, being offshore, many of them were missed from the censuses altogether, and a third of the crew were ashore at any one time; as a project it was really a non-starter, although quite a lot of information was gathered..

The lighthouse project went online in August 2003, and there has been a lot of feedback from it. Trouble was, having completed it, quite a void was left in my life - until I found that Coastguards moved around even more than Lighthousekeepers! At least 95% of the Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Coastguard stations have already been been found in all the 1841-1901 censuses and show movement as far afield as Ireland, Wales, Cornwall and East Anglia; it is hoped that this part of the database will soon be online too.

More and more census information is being transcribed online by many dedicated family historians, so it looks like being a busy year or two ahead.

## LOOKING BACK 1946 – 47

*Extract from "West End News" community magazine....*

"This period was an exceptionally difficult one with a severe shortage of almost everything. Even bread and potatoes were rationed.

The greatest difficulties were experienced with the shortage of housing which was made worse by the return of those who had served in H.M. Forces. Many families, annoyed at the slow progress by local authorities, took matters into their own hands and occupied military camps as they were vacated by the Forces. They became known as "squatters". One such camp was Winslowe Camp in Quob Lane which was eventually taken over and controlled by the R.D.C. (Rural District Council) and became a temporary home for many families. The Wilderness Camp was also used for housing. There are many local residents who started their married lives in these camps.

The Parish Council then had a considerable influence on who occupied any available house or hut in the Parish. These days it is done by remote housing officials who to a large extent are not influenced by democratic processes.

During this period the purchase of Chapel Road frontage to Hatch Grange was completed."

***NOTE: There are many copies of this local magazine from various dates available for research in the Museum archive. Ed.***

# CHRISTMAS MEETING

## A Report by Stan Waight

The Committee is to be congratulated on the arrangements for the December meeting, which for most of us marked the beginning of the Christmas festivities.

There was no slide show and no talk - just a very social and sociable time occupied by quizzes (with intermittent commentary by Chairman Neville of course). Nigel, ably supported by Lin, was at his sparkling best as quizmaster and introduced a strong element of good-natured competition with four rounds of General Knowledge questions and a play-on-words game based on various areas in and around Southampton. It has to be said that the general knowledge board was swept - and the Ferrero Rocher market cornered - by a single team, made up of Anne, Maureen, Mike and one other whose name I won't mention for reasons of modesty.

And the food!!! The members really did themselves proud, and tables groaned with a huge variety of goodies. There was one small personal disappointment - for I am a traditionalist - in that Pauline's concern that we should have too many mince pies meant that there were none at all. Will it be alright if I bring a dozen next year, and am first in the queue?

And the raffle!!! Were there ever so many prizes? It seemed that the draw went on for ages, and that every table got something.

It was a first-class evening, and I've come to the conclusion that we're really quite a jolly lot!

## On this day (February 2nd.) in.....

**1650** Nell Gwyn, English comic actress, favourite and mistress of Charles II, by whom she had two children, born as Eleanor Gwyn, the daughter of a fishwife.

**1880** The first frozen meat imported into Britain, arrived in London from Sydney, aboard SS Strathleven.

**1914** Cub Scouts were founded in England, at Robertsbridge in Sussex.

**1926** Giscard D'Estaing, French statesman and President, born.

**1959** Buddy Holly, American singer, guitarist and major influence in early rock-and-roll, died aged 22.

**1970** Bertrand Russell, British philosopher, mathematician and Nobel Prize winner in 1950, died aged 97.

**1976** The Queen opened the 310 acre National Exhibition Centre (NEC) at Bickenhill, Birmingham.

## THE NEXT MEETINGS ARE ....

**March 2**
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**
plus
**The late Bob Moody's 1997 talk of Old West End** *(taped)*

**April 6**
**PENNY CLOTHING CLUBS**
*Peter Jones*