NEWSLETTER of the WEST END LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

WESTENDER

MARCH—APRIL 2005 VOLUME 4 NUMBER 10

CHAIRMAN
Neville Dickinson

VICE-CHAIRMAN
Bill White

SECRETARY
Pauline Berry

MINUTES SECRETARY
Rose Voller

TREASURER
Peter Wallace

MUSEUM CURATOR
Nigel Wood

PUBLICITY
Ray Upson

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY
Delphine Kinley

VISIT OUR WEBSITE!

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

VIOLET'S VARIED MEMORIES

As retold to Pauline Berry



STAFF AT THE SOUTH STONEHAM UNION IN MOORGREEN c. 1934-36

The hatless young lady in the centre of the photograph above showing the staff of the South Stoneham Union Poorhouse in the early 1930's is Violet Victoria Vare. Born in West End in 1910, she is now Mrs Violet Brown residing at Oaklands Nursing Home in Allington Lane. With the help of her friends Mr and Mrs John Hatch, she has kindly recounted some of her early memories.

Her father, Charles William Vare, known as Will, was a Miller at Gater's Mill, and was married to a local girl, Ada Littlefield. Ada, a kind and caring person, was the daughter of Harper and Helen Littlefield who kept the Moorgreen Inn at

Continued on page 9

West End Local History Society is sponsored by

WEST END PARISH COUNCIL

EASTLEIGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

A WALK INTO HISTORY

Conducted by Friends of Southampton Old Cemetery

On Sunday 30th January a few WELHS members joined the ***Shipwreck and Maritime Walk*** around Southampton's historic cemetery adjoining the Common. Our member John Avery and Southampton tourist guide Geoff Watts pointed out various graves to a group of 62 visitors.

The Cemetery opened in 1846 was one of the first in the country to be opened and managed by a local council. The famous landscape and garden designer John Claudius Loudon was engaged by the town council but his plans were not used.

There are about 30 graves in the cemetery associated with the *Titanic*. The *Titanic* sank in April 1912 after colliding with an iceberg. None of the graves of the victims actually contain the body as the victims were either buried at sea or at Halifax, Nova Scotia. The West End Museum has a small tribute to the local resident James Jukes whose body was not ever recovered.

The White Star company insisted that any bodies that were to be transported back to Europe would be at the normal charge for freight, few families especially those of the local crew were able to afford these charges. In contrast to Southampton the cemeteries at Halifax are kept in first class order.

The *Rhone* and the *Wye* were wrecked in a hurricane that swept the West Indies, over 80 ships were wrecked or damaged. Reports of the damage read very similarly to the havoc caused by the recent Tsunami. The monument has been restored by members of the Friends of Southampton Old Cemetery, a conservation group. The shipwreck of the *Rhone* is now an internationally known scuba diving site (picture of monument courtesy John Dunkason).

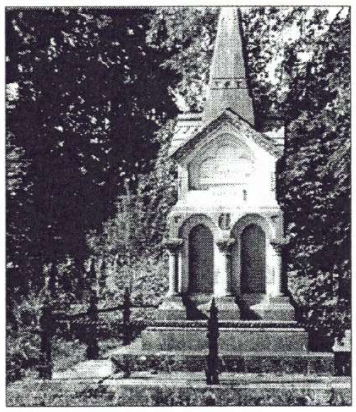
The Royal Mail Lines ship the *Douro* was the vessel that brought back the news of the loss of the *Rhone* and the *Wye*. She too some 14 years later was also to meet her end by sinking.

Continued on page 5



SOME OF THE WALKERS HAVING SITE SAFETY EXPLAINED





THE *DOURO* AND THE *RHONE* & *WYE* SHIPWRECK MEMORIALS



THE OVERGROWN & DILAPIDATED STATE OF THE CEMETERY



JOHN AVERY EXPLAINS THE FINER POINTS OF A MEMORIAL

LOOKING BACK

We take a look at past extracts from "West End News" Community newsletter

From the September 1982 issue.....

FIRE FIGHTING

It was first mentioned in 1898 when fire hydrants of the type used by Southampton Fire Brigade had been erected at New Road — Church corner and near the New Inn and consideration to be given to the purchase of hose, standpipes and accessories. In 1899 efforts were being made to purchase a Fire Engine in conjunction with neighbouring parishes. In 1903 additional hydrants were placed at Chalk Hill. The first mention of a fire brigade was in 1904 and the minutes of 1905 reads:-

"The Fire Brigade had proved their efficiency by their promptitude and energy displayed at the recent serious outbreak of fire at the New Inn". At the same meeting Mr Welch complained of the Water Company's charge of 5 shillings for every wet drill the Fire Brigade held.

A Fire Station was established at the Hall (Parish Hall) in 1906. Mention of the appointment of a new Fire Brigade Captain was made in 1910, but not named. Over several years additional hydrants were installed and extra lengths of hose. The hose cart was re-constructed in 1913.

In 1915 a fire at Thornhill Farm was promptly dealt with. Iron marking plates were fixed to the hydrants to make them easily distinguished at night and special "Fireman" plates were fixed to the houses of the men. A scheme had been organised by the Council for the speedy calling together and despatching the members of the brigade to any part of the Parish in case of fire. What this modern scheme was, is not detailed. The Parishioners had liberally contributed to the Christmas Fund for voluntary firemen.

The 1916 meeting was told that there were now $23\frac{1}{2}$ hydrants in the Parish and 550 ft. of hose. One wonders where the odd half hydrant went to — vandals? P.Bunney, the Captain of the Brigade was called to the colours in 1917 and Mr Welch was appointed Vice-Captain to act during his absence. A rear red lamp was fixed to the hose truck.

Harefield Manor was destroyed by fire on 6th May 1917. The Fire Brigade could only save some of the contents as the water pressure was too low. The Insurance Company compensated the Council in the sums of £10 for destroyed hose and £6 to be shared by the men.

The 1925 meeting records that the Fire Brigade had been re-organised and the new Captain was Mr C. Sillence. A new Fire Station was erected in 1930. Two fire extinguishers were added to the equipment.

From the September 1982 issue.....

EARLY DAYS

A contrast to the weather we have had lately, June 1903 South Stoneham Highways Committee—The Guardians or Counsellors were told that Bitterne and Netley urgently need water carts to keep down the dust and there was a proposition that every village should supply their own. They were quite a common sight before the roads were tarred, local contractors with horses were hired to draw the two-wheeled oval tanks around the main roads in the villages. The carter usually managed to finish around 12 noon outside one of the village pubs—it must have been quite thirsty work.

Since early days, fire precautions at the Workhouse were always being discussed either by the Guardians or the local Fire Brigade and representations were often made to the village council. As early as 1900, Firemen demanded a pump to enable the hose pressure to reach the high roof and third floor adequately, but always it was denied on economic grounds.

It is interesting to know that at that time there were 8 men in the Brigade, 6 hydrants in the district, a stand-pipe and 200 feet of leather hose. The South Hants Water Company stated the water pressure was maintained evenly day and night.

It was recommended that several more lengths of canvas hose be purchased in place of leather ones and two iron staircases should be erected at each end of the building to allow children and old people to escape. These stairs are, I believe, still in existence.

Later another 15 hydrants were ordered to be fixed in various parts of the village, 150 feet of canvas hose

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3
purchased, together with an extra branch pipe and hose reel. The first trailer pump did not appear in the village until the beginning of the 1939-45 war.

From the August 1985 issue.....

SHOTTERS HILL

I have had a number of enquiries regarding Shotters Hill. In the early days, hills were taken more seriously than they are today, carts heavily laden tried to miss the steep ones, Gaters Hill was one problem.
Mr Gater was so concerned about the cruelty to horses trying to negotiate his hill that for some time he kept a trace horse at the Mill to help those in difficulties, but so many needed help that he withdrew his horse on economic grounds and appealed to the local council to take 10 feet off the top of the hill and offered the land free, but it was some time before it was actually dealt with.
The next hill was Barnsland, taking its name from the 10 acres on the north side. Blacksmiths Hill was the next through the village and even here at times it was sad to watch overloaded cart horses staggering up and being lashed by some often drunken carter.
Shotters Hill was the last one to encounter, which stretched from New Road crossing to the Cemetery corner. It derived its name from, presumably, a Mr Charles Shotter who lived in the house now demolished according to the Hampshire Directory of 1859. I have never heard any news of this gentleman but the hill has been mentioned several times.
The late Vic Houghton first gave me an account of the rather rough game which was played up and down the Hill called "Rumpy", which is mentioned in the book "Tales of Old West End". Mr Alf Hyde gave me an account of the traction engine which came to grief halfway up with a broken driving shaft causing the huge wheel to shear off. I was able to confirm this from an account in a 1900 edition of the Hants Advertiser. The engine belonged to Messrs, Rose & Andrews, timber merchants of Totton. Nobody was injured but it stopped there for 3 weeks, according to Alf. What a problem it would cause today.
A few years before the last War a sand pit was opened just about opposite Hope Lodge. I remember many of the older men connected with the building industry saying it was not suitable for brick laying, but in fact that was not what the sand had been intended. Those were the days when Southampton enjoyed the sight of all the big liners visiting the busy port and the sand was intended for ballast. Mr Jim Dunford's steam Foden's took loads of it into the Docks, according to one of his old drivers.
When Mr Shotter lived in the house it was then known as Laurel House. In 1905 when Sir Arthur Percy Fitzgerald Aylmer was the resident, it was known as "Donadea Lodge". Sir Arthur's wife was Lady-in-Waiting to Queen Victoria. When the 1914-18 War was over the tenants were the Misses Preston's, who gave a lot of time to the village, and their only brother was killed in that War. He also won the Military Cross and his medals were proudly exhibited on a sideboard in the lounge.

These and many other stories that appeared in "West End News" were written by the well known local historian Mr C.M. "Charlie" Sillence, who also wrote the excellent and very readable book "Tales of Old West End", copies of which are available in the Museum Bookshop. Ed

LOCAL MAN WALTER TAYLOR'S CONTRIBUTION TO NAPOLEON'S DOWNFALL

Walter Taylor, engineering inventor and entrepreneur, enjoyed an almost total monopoly in the supply of rigging blocks to the British Royal Navy from 1759 until his death in 1803. With his father he developed the mass production of block-making machinery which allowed fast and accurate manufacture. They worked initially from cellars in Westgate Street, Southampton, until they moved to more spacious premises at Woodmill on the river Itchen. A 74-gun warship of the period required 1,400 blocks and by the 1780's the Taylors were supplying around 100,000 blocks a year, as well as pumps and other equipment. A major contribution to the ultimate naval defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte and the establishment of the premier world power position of the Royal Navy. A local success story and one we should be proud of in this 200th anniversary year of the Battle of Trafalgar.

Continued from page 2

She collided with a Spanish ship the *Yrurac Bat* off Finistere. One lady passenger became hysterical and refused to be assisted into the lifeboat of the *Douro*, this probably caused more deaths as some of the ship's officers stayed with her on the ship.

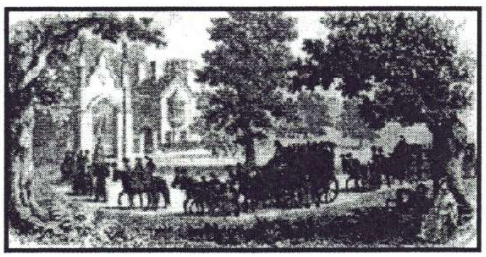
The *Douro* had earlier in her service carried the Emperor and Empress of Brazil on a state visit to Japan. The wreck of the *Douro* was located about 10 years ago and a team of divers recovered bullion and gold sovereigns. These are sold by dealers in magazine advertisements and on the web with the heading "Sovereigns from a Victorian Shipwreck".

Two foreign seamen were accidentally killed in Southampton Docks and unusually the grave inscription is in English and German. They were heading back to their ship *Philadelphia* when they were struck by a shunting locomotive and killed instantly.

Research has shown that although there were only two names on the headstone there are a total of nine bodies in the grave. It appears to have been a grave for paupers and it is assumed that the seamen probably on a low wage did not have families with the ability to buy a grave. The stone commemorating the grave was paid for by subscription of the crew of the *Philadelphia* and the "verrain" (trade union) of New Jersey. The grave has been cleared of bramble and is adjoining a path near the Cemetery lake on the Common.

One grave reflected that a father and son died in two different shipwrecks, the *Normandy* and the *Mauritius*. There are also graves associated with the *Stella*, the *Hilda*, the *British Princess* and *HMS Victoria* a Royal Navy battleship. Several record that deceased died of yellow fever which was prevalent in the West Indies, Central and South America.

Note: Your editor was one of those who went on this walk and found it fascinating and well worth the effort, I recommend anyone who is interested in history to attend one of these walks, they are excellent. Ed.



A FUNERAL IN THE VICTORIAN STYLE ARRIVING AT THE MAIN GATE
(courtesy Southampton City Archives)

FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH

On 21st/22nd May from noon until 4pm at the Hawthorns Urban Wildlife Centre, off The Avenue; Family History research in Southampton Old Cemetery—locate a grave in the cemetery—HGS have Monumental Inscriptions microfiche available to view. For more details phone John Avery on 023 8063 8650.

PHOTOGRAPH WANTED

One of our great local benefactors, Harriet Haselfoot by name - we do not have a picture of this lady who gave so generously to the welfare of the parish. Obviously very wealthy, she lived at Moorhill House on the Moorhill Road (now alas no longer but the site of a reservoir) opposite Haselfoot Gardens named in her honour. The house was a very large well appointed affair with stable blocks and various outbuildings (we are fortunate to have a photograph in the Museum Archives). Of her many generous donations to the well being of the parish was the purchase of land and payment for the building of Moorgreen Infants School in 1871, several large donations to the rebuilding of St. James Church as well as a donation to St. John's Church at Hedge End...I am sure there are many more to be discovered. We have a copy of her Birth Certificate but...we still haven't got a picture of the lady concerned, can you help us? Ed.

SOUTHAMPTON'S DISASTERS AND DISEASES TALK

Review by Stan Waight of the February meeting

'Southampton's Disasters and Diseases" reads as a pretty morbid title for an evening's talk but it turned out to be very enjoyable. Mary South may not be the most polished of speakers, but she certainly knows her stuff. She cheerfully spoke for the full hour, with many an amusing quip, on malaria, leprosy, smallpox and the plague, not to mention famine, massacre and shipwreck. Illustrated by many and varied slides, the talk took us chronologically through the ages from the 14th century to the 20th.

Around 50% of the population was lost during the French raid on the town in 1338, including those who had taken refuge in St Michael's church, and the town had little respite before the plague struck in 1348 (Southampton's position as a leading seaport meant that it was particularly vulnerable to the rat-borne infection that came in with ships from the Continent). It is clear that the pox (syphilis) was rife during the 1400s, and the ladies of the public baths were licensed and put in the charge of a Master of the Stews to exercise some control over the disease. 1556-9 was a period of particularly virulent 'flu and the plague struck again in 1563 and 1604; according to the records of St Julian's convent, 70% of the Huguenots in the town died during the latter outbreak. Plague booths were set up in the town fields for the segregation of plague victims, and when they were ransacked as the epidemic was dying away, it started all over again.

The town did not escape the ravages of the Civil War either. The Redbridge, the only access to the west of the town, was blown up and the severe overcrowding caused by the presence of the Parliamentary forces gave rise to an epidemic of typhus. Further spates of typhus occurred in the 1740s when prisoners-of-war were accommodated in the Woolhouse , and again in 1794 when the bedding of sick soldiers was left behind and looted by the inhabitants. As late as the 1850s the overcrowded town, with its slaughter-houses and middens, was attacked by cholera. All in all it had been one thing after another, with recurrences of the plague at regular intervals; in fact Southampton was apparently the second-most-seriously-hit town in the country in the outbreak of 1665.

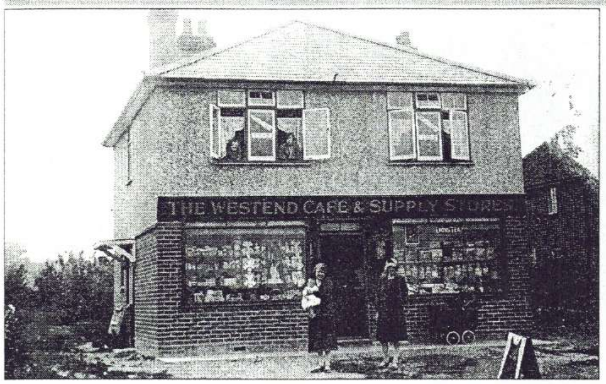
As if disease wasn't enough, natural disasters also took their toll. There was a great loss of shipping during the great storm of 1703, and terrible damage was done. As we in West End well know, most of the crew of the 'Titanic' were Southampton men, and her loss in 1912 was a terrible blow to the town. Barely 30 years on, the WW2 Blitz again cost it dearly in terms of loss of life and damage to property.

The talk was very well received, and provoked many questions, but not before our Chairman suggested that his own arrival 30-odd years ago was yet another disaster. But that's not really true ..... is it?

UPDATES FROM THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

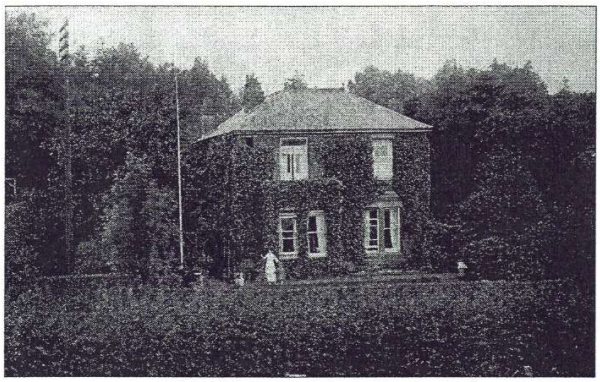
At the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday March 2nd the following changes were announced; Derek Amey, our Treasurer since the formation of the Society in 1997 stood down and Peter Wallace was nominated as our new Treasurer and unanimously voted in. John Avery who has ably assisted Ray Upson with Publicity for the Society over the last year decided to stand down due to increased workload in his many other interests, our thanks to him for his sterling work. The Subscription rate was reviewed and was increased from £8.00 per annum per person to £10.00 after a proposal from the floor was voted on by the membership, it was also decided that the Visitors rate of £1.50 per meeting be increased to £2.00 per meeting. All these measures will take affect immediately. After the AGM business meeting was concluded the audience listened to a recording of the late Bob Moody, made in 1997 at the first speaker meeting of the Society. He recalled some of his many memories of the village and of the changes that have taken place, and it made us realise also just how things have changed since that recording was made. We are indebted to his widow Betty for permission to play the tape and the audience which included Betty found it very interesting. It was a very cold wet evening with the odd snow flurry, but in spite of this over 30 people attended the AGM! Ed.

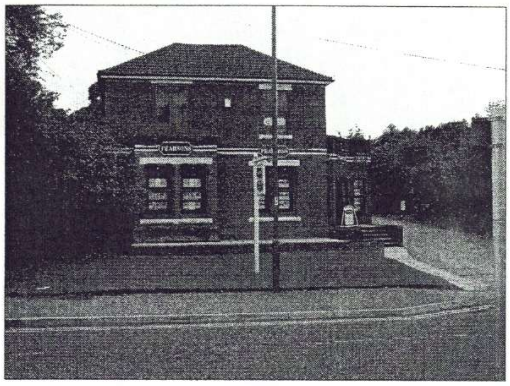
WEST END ..... THEN AND NOW





WEST END CAFÉ & SUPPLY STORES IN 1929 AND THE SAME BUILDING TODAY AS A PRIVATE HOUSE





HARRY HAINES HOUSE IN THE HIGH STREET AROUND 1900 AND THE SAME BUILDING TODAY AS AN ESTATE AGENTS





LANGFORD'S STORES ON THE CORNER OF HIGH STREET AND UPPER NEW ROAD AROUND 1910 AND THE SAME SITE TODAY



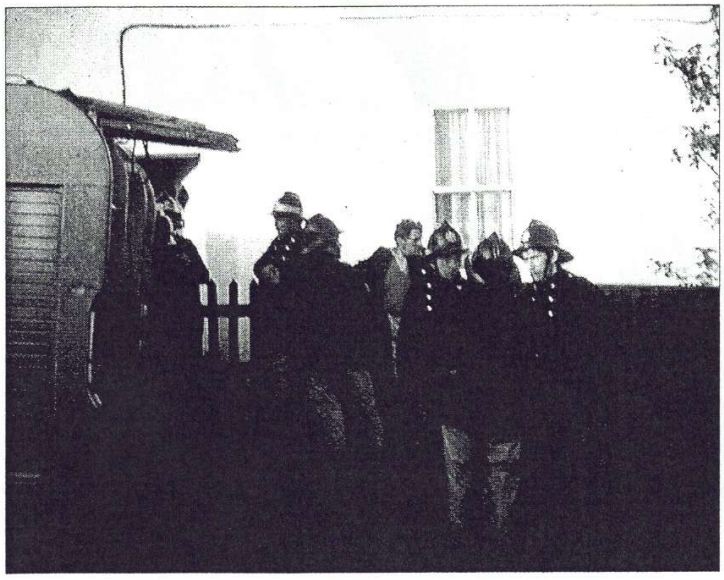


BEALES AND WILTSHIRE'S SHOPS IN THE HIGH STREET IN THE EARLY 1940's AND THE SAME VIEW TODAY

SOME ADDITIONS TO OUR PICTURE ARCHIVES







The three images shown on the left were taken in 1975 by villager Neville Bolt's son. They show the aftermath of a fire at Myrtle Cottage at the bottom of Chalk Hill. You will see from the images below taken recently this year by local man Jim Chapman how the cottage has changed and been extended—it is also two properties now and one has been renamed "Thatched Cottage". If anyone has more information regarding this fire or more pictures can they contact the Editor—many thanks.





PLEASE NOTE

Anyone who has old photographs, postcards or documents relating to West End please allow us the opportunity to see them and perhaps with your permission scan them for our ever expanding archives, alternatively, you may wish to donate the originals to the Society in the knowledge that they will be well taken care of and benefit present and future generations of local historians and researchers. Ed.

Con tinued from page 1

the turn of the twentieth century. The Inn, demolished in the 1980's, was in Moorgreen Road, almost directly opposite present day Monarch Way, and must have quenched the thirst of many a local or passerby.



VIOLET & DONALD VARE c. 1930



MOORGREEN HOSPITAL (The Old Poorhouse) c. 1950



THE MOORGREEN INN



SUNDAY SCHOOL CHILDREN FROM THE MISSION HALL c.1910



WEST END SCHOOL c.1950

Violet's father Will, was one of a big family (Tom, Walter, Albert, Eliza and Kate were his siblings) brought up by John Henry Vare, a carpenter, and his wife. Will married Ada in 1908, soon followed in 1910 by Violet's birth and in 1915 by her brother Donald's. They both grew up in Alma Cottage (now demolished) in Upper New Road, where they were both born. West End School (now Hilldene Community Centre) was where their education took place from four to fourteen years of age. Violet (Vi) remembers, as others do, the well-known headmaster, Mr Shelley who was "very strict but good at his job". Friends included Annie and Charlie Sillence from Fir Tree Cottage, and Phyllis Pickman the daughter of Oakland's gardener. She recalls with pleasure the happy days spent playing on Hatch Grange and in Oakland's garden in Allington Lane; Captain and Mrs Pearson were in residence then.

Regular attendance at Sunday School was natural for most children, and Vi and Don attended the Mission Hall in Beacon Road, run by the kind-hearted John St. Barbe Baker, popular with so many in the early 1900's. One of Vi's Sunday School prizes, a religious book with a colourful cover, as well as a scrapbook of religious texts have been kindly donated to our museum. On leaving school in 1924, Vi's first employment was as an apprentice seamstress at the old Tyrell & Green's store in Above Bar, Southampton. Her hours were 8am to 6pm and she cycled all the way via the old Toll road at Lances Hill. In 1928 Vi found a local post as a tailoress at Moorgreen Poorhouse (South Stoneham Union), now the hospital, assisting in the making of dresses and clothing for the female inmates. She worked there regularly for the next nine years, working alternatively 8am-8pm one day, then 8am-5pm the next. In addition, evening work at the Institution was 5pm-10pm which included serving the vagrants a gruel or soup for supper and then helping them prepare for bed by providing lots of soap, hot water and towels! Some of these unfortunate people had walked many miles from as far afield as Fareham and Brockenhurst, just to reach Moorgreen for a bed and a roof over their head for one night.

Other staff members at that time, and in the photograph, was the cook Mrs Whybrow (who lived in Moorgreen Road), Mr Bradley, the Master, and his pleasant wife, Mrs Bradley, the Matron. The Head Nurse was a very stern Miss Longman and Mr Gardner who was possibly the Head Porter. Vi's career at the Institution came to an end in 1937 when she married stevedore, Ernest. F. Brown, from Southampton. Despite a spell of T.B. (Tuberculosis) in 1940 from which she duly recovered after treatment at the Chest Hospital, they lived at Bryanston Road in Bitterne for many years until Vi felt compelled to give it up in 1997. Our thanks go to Mrs Violet Brown and Mr & Mrs J. Hatch, for these fascinating insights to her life in old West End. If you can elaborate on these tales or tell us your own, please contact us!

MERRY OR CHERRY

Peter Andrews

Looking recently at the transformation of the house opposite the West End Parish Centre, I noticed the name been changed as well, "High View" from "Merry Gardens". Merry is the old name for cherry and could, according to which encyclopaedia one refers to, be the wild or cultivated type or even the black ones. To the left of the building as far down as the Monkey Puzzle tree was a cherry orchard, most likely of the cultivated type. The tree was planted in 1904, probably the same time as the house was built. At the moment "male" flowers are still in situ, but are rapidly falling. At Charmwen Crescent there's a Monkey Puzzle tree, a "female", in flower, these look like small coconuts. Opposite "High View" the hedge making the boundary to Hatch Grange has two or three wild cherries growing. I've sampled the fruit; small but quite edible, but not a lot of flavour!

WE ARE NOT CLOSING DOWN!

Recently an article appeared in the local newspaper regarding possible closure of museums in the area due to possible financial cutbacks. This was accompanied by a picture showing our local Borough Councillor Steve Broomfield and prospective Conservative Parliamentary Candidate Conor Burns clearly outside the West End Museum. This has led some people to assume that our museum is likely to close down. We can confirm that this is definitely not the case and that in spite of any cutbacks that Eastleigh Borough Council may make in the way of Heritage that we are an independent museum and not tied in with any actions that Eastleigh may make. Ed.

VIOLET VICTORIA VARE

It is with great sadness that we have to report that Violet Victoria Vare passed away peacefully on 21st March 2005, shortly after the article in this newsletter was written. Our condolences go out to her family and friends. Ed.

On this day (April 6th.) 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.

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

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

1955 Sir Anthony Eden succeeded Sir Winston Churchill as Prime Minister.

1965 The communication satellite "Early Bird" was launched by the USA.

THE NEXT MEETINGS ARE ....

May 4
NEPTUNE'S DAUGHTERS
(Women at Sea)
Jean Cook

June 1
POLICING IN THE 1950's (Southampton)
Jim Brown