WESTENDER

Newsletter of the West End Local History Society
Winter 2026

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Oddfellows Band outside New Inn c.1900

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WANTED

Editor for Westender

Spring 2027 Issue due for publication 1st March 2027

Wagga Wagga to West End – Part Two
By Peter Sillence

From now on, I will refer to Tom/Arthur/Roger as the Claimant to avoid confusion. The Claimant, Mary and Teresa embarked 1st class on a ship for Panama, together with a children's nurse and Andrew Bogle, who had decided to help 'Roger' with his claim. At Panama they changed to a ship bound for New York but not before the Claimant tried to persuade the nurse to run off with him and start a new life in America. At this point, Mary may have started to harbour suspicions about her husband's devotion. The party transferred ship at New York and eventually arrived in London on Christmas day in 1866.

The party was installed in Ford's Hotel and the Claimant, finding that Lady Henriette was staying in Paris, crossed the channel to meet with her taking a solicitor that he had employed. She recognised the Claimant as her son as soon as she saw him and she returned to London with him where the solicitor immediately placed a message in The Times stating that Roger Tichborne had been found.



Harriette Felicité (née Seymour), Lady Doughty-Tichborne
by London Stereoscopic & Photographic Company
albumen carte-de-visite, circa 1873 (1860s)
NPG Ax28426
© National Portrait Gallery, London

The Dowager Lady Henriette bestowed a yearly income of £1000 on the Claimant and by mid-1867 she was living with the family in Essex Lodge in Croydon. In May that year, Mary had another child at the Lodge, a son called Roger. Unfortunately, Mary and her mother-in-law did not 'hit it off', not surprising as Mary was a rather rough ex servant girl, illiterate and with a strong Australian accent. Mary was reported as feeling out of place and rather stifled and would rather be scrubbing floors than sitting genteelly sipping tea. She is said to have been seen sliding down the bannisters, and the Dowager meanwhile, thought Mary and the children savages.

Although Henriette had recognised the Claimant as Roger, the rest of the family, except for one cousin, had not. He had also been legally declared dead about 5 years previously and so had to start legal proceedings to prove his identity so that he could reclaim his estate.

From this time onwards, Mary started to see less of her husband as he travelled round the country visiting Tichborne, Alresford, other estates and old friends and fellow army officers, gathering supporting witnesses. Many seemed to recognise him and he assembled a considerable number of supporters, some quite influential, including two MPs, one of which was Guilford Onslow who became his principle advisor and adherent.

After Lady Henriette's death, Mary and the family moved out of London and down to Alresford to a house in Broad street with a small income provided by local supporters. Here Mary gave birth to another son, James, but relations with her husband deteriorated as he spent much time away purportedly living a rather debauched lifestyle.

In April 1869, another friend paid for the family to move back to West Brompton in London. Mary was pregnant again and soon their 4th child, Henriette, was born and registered in Kensington. At this point, letters from friends report that Mary and her husband were arguing constantly about domestic matters and Mary, unconcerned about the forthcoming legal case, was more worried about the family.

During the first trial, Mary stayed at home with the children. Home for Mary at that time, according to the 1871 census, was a pleasant 4 storey Georgian terraced house where she lived with the 4 children, a nurse, a companion, a butler (Andrew Bogle), 2 maids and a cook.

During the 2nd trial, Mary and the children lived in a smaller house in Kentish Town looked after again by Guildford Onslow. She was reported to be unhappy and bad tempered, probably because her husband was living in Pimlico with his dog and an actress!

After the Claimant was found guilty at the end of the trial, he was taken to Millbank prison then to bleak Dartmoor where he lost much weight during his stay. He was later transferred to Portsea prison at Portsmouth where he remained for most of his sentence, eventually being released in October 1884 when his sentence was commuted for good behaviour.

Mary had seen him briefly in Millbank but never visited him and apparently never spoke to him again. Both his sons visited him several times in prison but not the girls. Mary was mentioned during the trial and was considered an innocent and blameless in the affair. Although she and her husband had fallen out, she still believed his story and still considered herself to be Mary Tichborne.

Guildford Onslow was still convinced that the Claimant was Roger and so was willing to attempt a retrial. A month after the Claimant's sentence began, Onslow was again in Southampton at a public meeting, this time with Mary and the children on stage during the many speeches of support for the cause. Local papers later commented that they felt it was in poor taste for the respectable and unfortunate woman to be exhibited in such a manner.

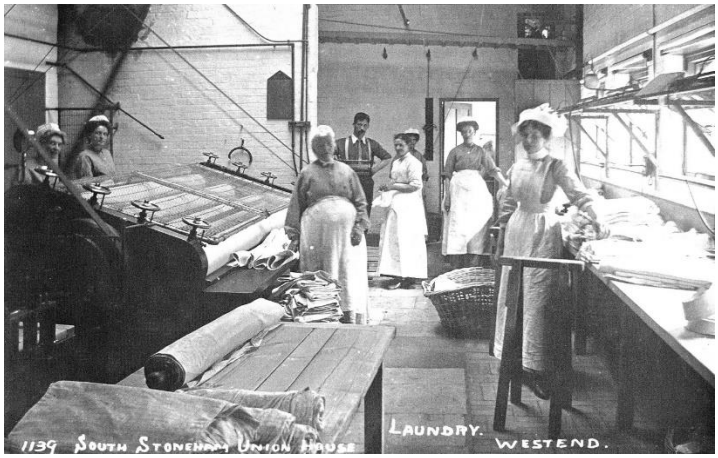
There were still supporters with money willing to help and a Mr Helsby found the family a home in Lymington for the first year. The older children went to school in Lymington but in 1876 Mary moved to 23 Aberdeen Road in St Denys with the two youngest children. At this point, Mary started to 'fall', she continued to 'fall' until she reached rock bottom in 1882.

From about 1879, reports started to appear in Southampton newspapers about her. She had refused to pay the poor rate and was summonsed to appear before the magistrates, then in April of that year she was summonsed again for not sending her youngest daughter ,Henriette, to school and she was fined 5 shillings. In October 1880, she was being questioned about her insistence that she be included on the municipal lists as Lady Tichborne.

In the meantime, she had apparently been conducting liaisons with 2 local men, with whom she had 2 more children. This had alienated the Claimant's friends and supporters and when she fell pregnant with a third child, they gave up on her and withdrew their financial aid. The 2 children of her husband not already in school in Lymington were taken away. As she had no means of support, Mary decided the Poorhouse was her only resort and presented herself at the South Stoneham Workhouse at West End with 2 children and asked to be taken in, St Denys falling within the South Stoneham Union. One of the illegitimate children had been adopted by its father, the other two, one a baby stayed with Mary. The Guardians of the Institution decided to accept the family and they entered on 26th September 1882. Three months later, some Tichborne sympathisers visited Mary and offered to pay for her to return to Australia; she declined and said she preferred to remain in the hope of getting a divorce from her husband. In January 1883, she was reported to be helping in the schoolroom and to wash the younger children.

In the autumn of 1884, the Claimant was released from prison, his friends found him a house in Sholing and he met with his children. By then, 3 of the children were reportedly in school in Southampton. The Claimant was offered a contract touring the music halls, telling his story. His eldest daughter was by then 18 and she followed her father as an assistant.

The Guardians of the South Stoneham Workhouse, hearing that her husband was free, applied to the court to make him financially responsible for Mary so that they would no longer have to house her. Mary at that point was working as a washerwoman in the workhouse laundry. It was agreed that the Claimant would pay her an allowance of 20 shillings a week but he announced his intention to divorce her, knowing all about her infidelities. Mary was released from the workhouse and she promptly moved up to London with her 2 children finding herself a small rented house in Lambeth. In less than a year, the payments from her husband had ceased and Mary was destitute again. He had stopped the allowance because he was now living with a music hall singer called Lily Enver. He married her soon after, without divorcing Mary, and they disappeared to America attempting to start a new life. It didn't work out and they retuned 2 years later.



Interior of the Laundry at South Stoneham Workhouse c.1900, where Mary worked

In the meantime, Mary, moneyless and desperate in London, applied to enter the Greenwich workhouse. The Guardians there, finding out she had recently moved from South Stoneham, sent her back down to Southampton and at the end of August 1885 she was received back into the workhouse in West End with her 2 children. The local papers reported the Guardians of the workhouse were glad to have her back as she was a good worker.

In June the next year, the youngest of Mary's illegitimate children, who had been ill, died after a last minute baptism. It seems that he was buried in an unmarked grave in the old cemetery at West End. Soon after, Mary asked the Master of the institution for a leave of absence but it was refused. Her other child, Violet, still in the workhouse, was much later helped to leave by a lady from Hedge End. She was last heard of working as a waitress in Bournemouth and living in a Hostel run by the Girls Friendly Society.

Mary continued to help in the workhouse washhouse and laundry for many years with some breaks for other duties. In 1890, she was reported to be assisting in the sick wards as there was much illness amongst the inmates of the workhouse. She must still have had some well-wishers on the outside as, in the October of the following year, Southampton newspapers related that Mary had been allowed out with a lady friend. They went out for a drive locally and the horse had stumbled causing Mary to be thrown out of the carriage and injured, though not badly.

In the 1891 and 1901 censuses, Mary is still recorded as being an inmate and a washerwoman, her surname being recorded as Castro alias Tichborne. She had become a widow in 1898, her husband still known as the Tichborne Claimant, had died whilst living with his second 'wife', in great poverty, in London. In 1907, her status changed from being an inmate and she was selected to become a wardswoman in the infirmary, for which she received a small wage. She still insisted on being called Mrs Tichborne and was reluctant to speak about her history. She appears in the 1911 and 1921 censuses as Mary Tichborne a paid assistant and widow from Sydney Australia.
Thus, she remained in the workhouse at West End until early November 1926 when she seems to have suffered a serious stroke. She was taken to the Shirley Warren Infirmary (now the General Hospital) and she died 2 days later on 10th of November. She was buried in an unmarked grave in the Hollybrook cemetery, but the name on the coffin and the Death certificate was Mary Tichborne, a lady to the end?

Fowl Pest

By Barry Topp

As our thoughts turn to the season of Christmas, many will be thinking of ordering their chicken or turkey for the Christmas dinner.



Image by Surya Ali Zaidan on Vecteezy.com

My father, Ted Topp, built up a good business of rearing chickens, turkeys and a few ducks and geese for the Christmas market. This was during the 1950s, 60s and into the 1970s. The poults would arrive from the breeders as day-old chicks and I remember going with my mother to Swaythling railway station to collect several boxes of chicks that were delivered by rail, the station master having placed them in his office near a fire for warmth should it be a cold day.

We also had hens for eggs which we sold from the back door or from an egg vending machine which stood at the gate entrance. So, by September time, there would be several thousand head of stock which would need feeding and watering and fresh clean litter put down on a daily basis.

Somewhen in the mid-1950s, my sister Christine and I were still at school, when my father noticed that the poultry were not looking well. The number of eggs laid was reducing, the chickens and turkeys had runny noses and were sneezing as though they had a cold, while their droppings were greenish and watery. My father decided to call in a vet and he soon diagnosed that the cause was Newcastle Disease or Fowl Pest, a highly contagious, notifiable viral infection that affects chickens and other captive birds as well as wild birds.

The vet would need to contact the Ministry of Agriculture who would come along immediately to shut down the farm. All movements of livestock in or out of the farm was suspended and disinfectant was placed at the entrance to the farm and the soles of boots and shoes were dipped into it to try to prevent the disease spreading to other livestock in the area.

A man from the ministry was appointed and he had the power to dictate to us what we as a family could or couldn't do. My mother was most put out that as man would enter our house without knocking, something she found very rude and annoying. My sister and I were still allowed to go to school, although we had to dip our shoes into disinfectant when we left and when we came home.

The disease happened to my father twice during the 1950s. Regrettably, my memory is not that good, but I know that the first thing that was done was to call in professional men. They would then slaughter every chicken, turkey, duck and goose that was on the premises as humanely as possible. On one occasion the poultry carcases were burnt on a huge bonfire, the smell of burning flesh and feathers continued for several days and the smoke drifted away from our house and up the road, which affected our neighbours. Fortunately, no-one ever complained. On another occasion, a large hole was dug and the carcases were buried in quick lime.

One call the poultry were gone, then prisoners from Winchester Prison were brought in to disinfect and scrub every chicken house, trough and feeder, etc. to try to rid the place of the virus. I cannot remember how long all this took and the farm would still be in lock-down for a few weeks after.

One little incident I do remember was that at the time we had bantams which roamed freely around the farm. Most were rounded up and dispatched but one cock bird evaded being caught. It was still running around when the prisoners arrived. One prisoner picked up a stone and threw it at the bantam cock bird and caught it on its head and killed it, so that it was the last bird to die.

My father received some type of compensation which would enable him to begin to restock, hopefully in time for Christmas, but it would have been difficult as he would try to seek to purchase chickens and turkeys from other poultry farmers.

Newcastle Disease is a notifiable virus, but I believe most poultry can be vaccinated against it. Today, avian flu seems to be a bigger problem which affects all birds, domestic and wild.

Robert Wightman, Doctor of Medicine (M.D.)

By Paula Downer

Robert Wightman was born in Lisburn, Ireland in 1757. His parents were James Wightman II and Anne (née Culbert) Wightman. He had one sister and four brothers. His second brother John Wightman became a Linen Merchant (Lisburn had a prosperous Linen industry) but sadly passed away in 1801 in his early 50s. Their father James had passed away in 1767 when Robert was only 10 years of age. Robert Wightman attended Edinburgh Medical School, considered to be the World's pre-eminent medical School, to study Medicine. Robert had to write a thesis in Latin, his chosen subject 'De Hypochondriasi' explored hypochondria and its associated nervous disorders. In the 18th century hypochondria was considered a severe, physical nervous

disorder originating in the digestive organs and affecting the brain. Thus, Robert Wightman was awarded Doctor of Medicine (MD) in June 1789.

Prior to this, in 1780, Robert Wightman had entered the British Army Medical Service as a Surgeon, firstly with the Cinque Ports Battalion, then in 1785, with the 12th Regiment of Foot. After Medical School, in 1790 he served with the 15th Light Dragoons then in 1793, was commissioned as Apothecary to the Forces under Francis Rawdon-Hastings, the 2nd Earl of Moira who was then Major-General. This was a crucial role for an Apothecary who was responsible for procuring and dispensing medicine to surgeons and patients. As a Commissioned Officer he was on full pay until June 1796. During the late 18th century there were a number of conflicts with the French. Robert Wightman returned to Active service with full pay in November 1798, was on half pay during the Treaty of Amiens in 1802 then back on full pay in July 1803 until retiring from the Army Medical Service on half pay in 1805. This meant that he could be called back into active service if required.

In 1796 Robert Wightman was granted a license from the Royal College of Physicians to practice medicine as a Physician in England. In the 1800s Physicians were considered the elite of the medical profession, Surgeons were thought to be of a lower rank as they did manual work such as amputations, set broken bones, external wound treatment, pulling of teeth. Physicians examined their patients and wrote prescriptions. Physicians held a high social prestige, only the wealthy could afford his fees. He normally went to the patient's house, would listen to his patient explaining their symptoms, emotions, lifestyle then check their pulse, tongue and eyes. Next, the Physician would write out a recipe, in Latin, then a servant was sent to a local apothecary to have the prescription made up. Physicians were forbidden from mixing drugs themselves. He may have recommended bloodletting, which was performed by a surgeon, as it was thought that it could prevent or cure illness and disease. Diagnostic instruments did not exist in the early years of his profession, the stethoscope was not invented until 1816, initially this was a monaural hollow cylinder.

Robert came to Southampton where he set up a Practice, initially in York Buildings, near All Saints' Church. It was at a time when Southampton was a Spa Town, its mineral waters were said to contain properties which were beneficial to health, treating fevers, jaundice, scurvy, paralytic disorders etc. A spring at Houndwell, north east of the Bargate, was said to be good for eye disorders. The Chalybeate Spring at the end of Orchard Street was renowned for performing 'remarkable' cures. Southampton could also promote itself as a sea bathing resort. Bathing Houses could offer warm and cold sea water baths which were thought to be favourable to health, treating all manner of ills. A number of practitioners set themselves up in the Town, including Robert Wightman M.D. According to a publication dated 1848, 'Southampton considered as a Resort for Invalids with a Notice of its Chalybeate Spring' by Edwin Wing M.D., Robert Wightman M.D. is noted to have frequently prescribed the use of the Chalybeate Spring water to his patients.

On 15th October 1811, Robert Wightman of Holy Rood married Harriet Potenger of St. Lawrence, Southampton. Harriet Potenger was a widow, her late husband was Thomas Potenger who had died intestate in 1805. Thomas was originally from Compton, Berkshire and was domiciled in Guernsey, Channel Islands at the time of his death. Harriet had four children with Thomas Potenger: John Lockman, Sarah Frances, Henry James and Harriet Ann. They had married in Eling, Hampshire in 1800). Thomas also had four children from his previous marriage to Mary Brock, who was from a prominent, influential family in Guernsey. During the early years of her marriage to Robert Wightman, Harriet was embroiled in a case at the High Court of Chancery as a consequence of her son Henry James Potenger sadly passing away at the age of 6 in 1809, and then in 1812 her son John Lockman Potenger passed away at the age of 10. The question had arisen as to whether Harriet Potenger's children's share of their father Thomas Potenger's property should be distributed according to the Law of Guernsey or the Law of England. Henry James Potenger was buried in All Saints' Churchyard, Southampton (reburied in 1944 at Hollybrook cemetery in plot D4 57a after the church was bombed), John Lockman Potenger was buried in the parish of Hamble-le-Rice.

In 1812, Robert and Harriet Wightman had a son Robert then in 1817 a daughter Emily was born; they were both baptized in the Parish of Holy Rood. There was sadness in 1819 when Harriet's daughter Sarah Frances Potenger died. Then in 1825, Robert's wife Harriet Wightman sadly passed away at the age of 51 after a long illness. They are both buried in Hamble-le-Rice.

Robert Wightman moved his practice to 6 Prospect Place, in the northern part of Above Bar Street, continuing as a doctor at this residence until he died 13th January 1843 at the age of 86. He is buried in St. James' churchyard in West End. Southampton was becoming too crowded, burial space had become very scarce, due to a large increase in population, it was also considered hazardous to public health to have too many burials so close to the residents of the Town. The Southampton Cemetery Act of 1843 was drawn up to establish a cemetery for the 'Internment for the Dead near the Town and within the Borough of Southampton'. In the event, Southampton Old Cemetery was not open until May 1846. Until then families looked to surrounding rural churchyards for burial space. St. James' Church was a new church, having been completed in 1838. In 1843, its churchyard had available space.



Robert Wightman M.D. was laid to rest in St. James' Churchyard, West End

His son Robert Wightman is not listed in the Southampton Directories after his father died, so where was he? In his Will, his father appointed his friend William Gray and his daughter Emily to be Executors. It appears that his son Robert had a disability and was therefore unable to look after his own affairs. The Executors were instructed to use proceeds from his estate to purchase parliamentary stocks or funds of Great Britain to provide a safe, steady income of dividend payments for the 'maintenance and support of my son during his natural life'. Sadly, Robert Wightman died in September 1850 after a short illness at the age of 38; at the time of his death he was living at 4 Lyons Street, Southampton where he may have had lodgings. He died intestate; his sister Emily was left to administer the estate; her brother is buried alongside their father. A Southampton Street Directory for 1845 shows Miss Emily Wightman in residence at 70, Marland Place, by 1847 she was living in the newly built Sussex Place (No.8) in Above Bar Street. Emily resided at Sussex Place until she married Dr Thomas Simpson in 1852 at All Saints' Church, Southampton. After her husband died in 1880, Emily moved to North Stoneham.

Thomas Potenger's wife Mary's brother was Major General Sir Isaac Brock, a prominent military figure. At the age of 10 (c.1779-1784) he was sent to King Edward VI Grammar School in Southampton which was then in West Hall near the Woolhouse. Isaac Brock entered the British Army as an Ensign, rose to the rank of Major General. He was posted to Upper Canada where his actions earned him the title 'The Hero of Upper Canada'. Major General Isaac Brock was commander of the British forces in Upper Canada during the war of 1812 against the Americans; sadly, he was mortally wounded in battle. Major General Sir Isaac Brock was awarded a Knighthood of the Order of Bath.

Richard St Barbe Baker 1889-1892

By Diana Barnes

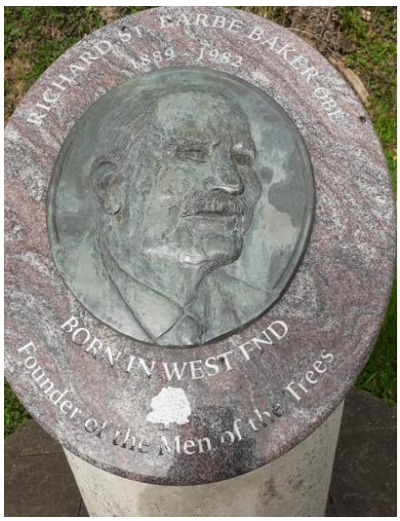
After several years of driving down Barbe Baker Road to visit family in Quob Lane, and wondering about the name, it was only when we moved to West End and started walking round Hatch Grange that we discovered the plaque to Richard St Barbe Baker in a little garden, with two benches to sit on and enjoy the sun. I was intrigued by the fact that he founded The Men of the Trees, and I borrowed his book 'My Life, my trees', from the library.

The Bakers originally came from Normandy, and inter-married with the St Barbes from Brittany. Generations of St Barbes lived at Broadlands, Romsey, until it was sold in Victorian times. His family lived at The Firs, in Beacon Road, and at that time it had a very large garden. The house is still there, but evidently a lot of the land was sold, and now there are newer houses quite close. His great-grandfather had been Rector of Botley, and his grandfather, also a parson, served in Botley, Durley, Sholing and West End, and often scattered acorns from his pockets as he walked around. He was buried in the graveyard 'near the West Door at St James', but I haven't managed to find his headstone yet. Richard's father had become interested in the Evangelical Revival while a student at Cambridge in the 1880s, and devoted himself to God's work, marrying Charlotte Purrott, daughter of the Squire, who was then Vicar's Warden at St James, West End. He set up a Mission Hall, which could seat 300 people, so it probably wasn't the corrugated iron building that is there now, and by 12 he was deputizing for his father at meetings for the workless, with coffee suppers and illustrated talks. People like General Booth of the Salvation Army would call to chat. The young Richard had his own small garden aged 2, and at the age of 5 he claims to have experienced a feeling of "an almost ethereal sense of wellbeing, as if I had been detached from the earth. I became intoxicated with the beauty around me, immersed in the joyousness and exultation of feeling part of it all" in what is now Telegraph Wood, which was just at the back of their garden. His nanny was married to the Forester looking after the woods for Queen's College, Oxford, so he went into those woods quite often, and this love for trees was hugely significant for the rest of his life.

Richard went to primary school in Bitterne, and then to Dean Close, a public school 'with evangelical tendencies' in Cheltenham. For his 12th birthday he asked for a beehive: by the age of 16, by his own account, he was a proficient beekeeper (did the gardeners help out?) He was very practical, and built a little house for himself, and a revolving summerhouse for his mother in the garden. A speaker who came to his school inspired him to go to Canada, and, encouraged by one of his father's friends who talked about the settlers who had no means of grace, he decided that was his Mission, and became one of the first students at the University of Saskatchewan. Even then, he was encouraging local farmers to plant trees, and became a keen rider and trader of horses. Returning to England as the Great War was beginning, he joined up, and was injured a couple of times, but also managed to get a job at the Swaythling Remount Centre, Southampton, crossing the Channel many times with horses. Invalided out in 1918, he followed his father and grandfather to Cambridge, studying Forestry, Silviculture and Tree Genetics in Cambridge, and he not only started a business making surplus aircraft material into caravans, giving employment to out-of-work aircraftmen and paying his way through college, but he also set up an Amateur Beekeeping Club to help fellow undergraduates who had been disabled in the war to find purpose, and to sell their honey. He did also complete his training!

Many adventures followed, and he is not exactly modest about his achievements. He was evidently charming and persuasive, and a great solver of problems and issues. When Assistant Conservator of Forests in Nigeria, he was able to show that cedar trees are regenerated by pigeons which drop cedar berries beside olive trees, and that the two trees are mutually supportive. He showed the interconnectedness of nature before it had been widely recognised: for example, groundnuts grow well in clearings in the high forest in Nigeria, for the mutual benefit of the trees and the shaded crop.

When, as he explains, tough, hard-drinking bulldozer drivers, paid more than local people and with little understanding of country or people, did not consult agricultural experts, and cleared all the trees to plant groundnuts on a big scale, the crop was pitiful. He also noted that the process of decay and growth balance one another, and advised that too much tidying of dead plants and trees was not necessary.



Richard gave many talks, and typical titles were: “Adventures of a Forester in Kenya and in the mahogany forests in Nigeria”, or “Wonder trees of the world”. He travelled globally, meeting heads of government, businessmen and entrepreneurs, and claims to have been responsible for naming the science of the study of tree rings as ‘dendrochronology’. His tales are likely to digress into fascinating facts, e.g. the strange death in a pit in Hawaii of David Douglas, who named the Douglas fir: he must indeed have been an entertaining speaker. After one such talk, he was told by a member of the audience, who happened to be a publisher, that if he could write as well as he could talk, he should write a book, and the result became “Men of the Trees,” the first of many books about trees and their importance.

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West End Baptist Church
By Peter Wallace

This is a follow up to Peter Sillence’s article which appeared in the May-June 2017 edition of Westender. Well worth a read to give you the history of the Tin Church in Beacon Road (also known at the Tin Tabernacle.)

I was talking to a West End resident who was visiting the West End Local History museum during my shift on September 12th. He made me aware of some restoration that was being carried out by a couple of volunteers. So, after my shift, I decided to pay a visit to see how work was progressing. I found it was a major job which has been taken on due to the very poor state of the main timbers all-round the base of the walls. The building is being supported by Acrow props whilst the rotten timber is cut out and new timber bolted in place to the sound wood. Work has progressed well during 2026.

The wood that supported the roof insulation, which has disintegrated due to age, was removed to stop dry rot affecting the main roof supports. The roof had leaked causing a lot of the problems. Two of the main roof support beams have also been replaced to help stop the building spreading sideways. The entrance porch is separating from the main building due to rotten timber in the footings.

Looking back through our archive photographs, I found many taken of the church over the years which show its steady decline. I have included some of these with this article and some I took on my visit in September 2026.



c.1998 showing the church in good condition.



c.2019 with the church showing signs of neglect.

Below: Images taken on 12th September 2026



Exterior view.



View of new roof beams.



The exterior corrugated sheets which have seen better days.

WEST END LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY NEWS

Fray Museum Visit 26th October – Peter Wallace

Kevin Fray of the West End Fray family and his friend James Brannon, who is a distant relative of Herbert Collins, the architect of Orchards Way visited the museum. They spent about three hours looking at books relating to their family histories, discussing the museum collection relating to the two families and enjoying coffee and biscuits.

W.I. Museum Visit 4th November – Museum Team

Members of the W.I. visited the museum and watched a slide show of local historical photographs, browsed the exhibits and enjoyed tea and cake.

Remembrance Day 8th November

Jo Leach presented a wreath on behalf of the Society at the parish Remembrance Service.





Images courtesy Jo Leach

FORTHCOMING LOCAL EVENTS

All information is correct at time of publication. Please contact event organisers for up-to-date information.

Christmas Carol Concert – The Chapel, Royal Victoria Country Park
Sat 12th December 6.30 p.m.-8.30 p.m.

"Join the Friends of RVCP and get into the festive spirit with an evening of Christmas music, songs and carol singing in the beautiful surroundings of Netley Chapel. Featuring a special performance by the Hamble River Singers, this heart-warming festive concert is the perfect way to celebrate the season with family and friends."

£5 per person (includes parking)

Tickets available from the Park shop

Carols Around the Christmas Tree – River Hamble Country Park (formerly Manor Farm Country Park)
Thurs 17th December 6p.m.-8p.m.

"Join us for our annual Carols Around the Christmas Tree, a much-loved festive tradition filled with music, Christmas cheer and plenty of singing! With the wonderful New Forest Brass Band providing the music, gather around the Christmas tree and sing along to all your favourite Christmas carols. The Barn will be open till 8pm to accommodate this event, serving hot drinks and festive snacks throughout the evening."

Free entry.

Winchester Cathedral Christmas Market
20th November – 22nd December
It is recommended that you use Winchester's Park and Ride when visiting the Christmas Market as the city centre car parks can become very busy.

A Christmas Wish – Hinton Ampner (National Trust)
16th November – 3rd January 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
"Meet King Arthur, Clara from The Nutcracker, Amelia Earhart and Jay Gatsby, each with a very different wish for Christmas. Their stories and wishes are told through sparkling decorations, twinkling trees and beautiful set dressing."
Normal admission charges apply. Booking essential.

Jack & the Beanstalk – Mottisfont (National Trust)
21st November – 3rd January 10 a.m.-3.30 p.m.
"The house is transformed with sparkle and theatrical flair, lights and laughs as you journey from a towering beanstalk to a castle in the clouds. But be careful; can you hear the fe-fi-fo-fum? … Outside, the gardens are filled with hilarious challenges. Rescue the Golden Goose's eggs from Fleshcreep and return them to giant nests. Can you repair the Giant's torn underpants before he notices? Dame Trott's School of Pantomime will help hone your 'He's behind you!', booing and mooing skills. The Merrydown Beanometer reveals if you're a garden pea or the next giant, plus you can help Jack grow a new beanstalk by aiming magic beans into giant plant pots."
Normal admission charges apply.

A Starlit Christmas Ball – Kingston Lacy (National Trust)
21st November – 3rd January 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
"The magic of a winter's night sky is the inspiration for Kingston Lacy's 2026 Christmas. The house and gardens will be decorated for a spectacular Christmas ball, with plenty of festive stardust. On the State floor, you'll follow a magical story, brought to life with glorious costumes and twinkling decorations."
"Please note: in order to provide the best experience for all our visitors, we limit the numbers in the house. You may be asked to queue for a short period before entry. Visitor numbers usually peak in the morning and you may find the queues are reduced in the afternoon."
Festive Twilight opening until 7.30p.m. (last entry to house 6.30p.m.) on 4th & 5th December.
Normal admission charges apply.

WEST END LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Unless stated otherwise, all events take place at West End Parish Centre, Chapel Road SO30 3FE and begin at 7.30 p.m.
Members free. Visitors welcome (£3 per person per meeting). Free refreshments.

Programme of Talks 2027

Wed 6th January	NO MEETING
Wed 3rd February	"The Queen Mary from Launch to Maiden Voyage" – Stephen Hoadley
Wed 3rd March	"Your House Through Time" – Professor Deborah Sugg Ryan
Wed 7th April	AGM - followed by "Isambard Kingdom Brunel" – Simon Gomm
Wed 5th May	"The Red Cross Hospitals at Netley & Patient Treatments in WW1" – Ursula Pearce