

WESTENDER

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2012

(PUBLISHED SINCE 1999)

VOLUME 8 NUMBER 7

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for your future....*

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LOCAL GROUPS (1)



9th. Southampton (West End) Scouts in camp at Harefield Estate in 1913



Harefield House before the fire in 1915

This issue's front cover picture shows the local scout group summer camp which was held in the grounds of Harefield House (at left), which was part of West End parish at the time. The owners of Harefield frequently allowed the grounds of the house to be used for local events such as the Scout Camp of 1913 and the Village Fair held on Wednesday July 21st 1920 in aid of the Westend Club extension fund, presided over by Rev. Rowland Dawson, vicar of St. James'.

West End Local History Society & Westender is sponsored by



**WEST END
PARISH
COUNCIL**



THE AUGUST MEETING

A review by Stan Waight



It's becoming the norm to hold the August meeting as a social evening at the Museum, and so it was this year. We were lucky with the weather, for the wind dropped and the sun shone and those who chose to sit outside came to no harm (the gazebo is also becoming a regular feature of the occasion). The turnout was good, almost fifty of us I believe, but not so much as to overcrowd the Museum and its little garden.

The Museum itself looked impressive. The new, illuminated display cabinets showed the exhibits at their best and Nigel and Peter were on hand to answer questions. But the rest of the Committee were there in strength and deserve special mention. Lin, Margaret and Vera served tea, coffee and a variety of cakes (and delicious they were too, as I can personally testify) with Leslie washing up. The raffle was a great success - with Delphine doing a roaring trade selling tickets - at the appropriate time Neville made the draw and there seemed to be no end to the number of prizes.

Conversation flowed between members, which only goes to show that we're a friendly bunch - and that's really what it's all about.

MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Volunteers are always wanted for the Museum. Just a two hour shift by each member once a month will make all the difference to Peter Wallace who has the task of filling the duty roster. Duty at the Museum gives you the benefit of increasing your knowledge of West End through the viewing books and meeting and talking to visitors to the museum. Contact Peter at the meeting and volunteer.

REQUEST FOR HELP COPY OF A LETTER RECEIVED BY THE PARISH OFFICE

Below is a copy of the letter received by the Parish Office requesting help from anyone who may recognise the name Emily Brewer - please contact Tony Brewer on 01237 478289 if you have any information or can help....

Dear Ms Cooke

I am writing to ask for your help. I am trying to trace anyone who worked at Moorgreen Hospital in the late 1960s. I have been researching my family history and recently found out that my grandmother on my fathers side was a long term patient at Moorgreen Hospital probably from the late 1940s to 1970 when she died in the hospital at the age of 86. Her name was Emily Brewer. My Grandfather lived in Chalk Hill from the mid 50s until 1970 and I also lived in Chalk Hill with my parents from 1960 to 1971. I had always assumed that my Grandmother had died before I was born. She was never talked about by my parents or my Grandfather and as you can appreciate I have been very disappointed to find out that she was in Moorgreen Hospital for 21 years of my life and I never met her. I have no idea if anyone ever visited her or even went to her funeral. I have contacted the Hospital and the HR department but neither has any information regarding staff who were working there at the time. Obviously medical records no longer exist either. This is very much my last chance and I appreciate that it is a longshot. It is just possible that someone working there in the late 1960s would remember Emily Brewer since she was there for such a long time. If you would be kind enough to publish this letter in the parish newsletter I would be most grateful. I am hoping that someone who either worked at the Moorgreen Hospital or knows someone who did, will get in touch with me. Any information about Emily would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you

*Tony Brewer
01237 478389*

ARTICLES AND NEWS ITEMS WANTED FOR WESTENDER

We are in desperate need of more articles and short items for inclusion in Westender - you will have noticed that this issue is a little smaller than usual, this is because I do not have enough articles, in fact as I write this I have NO material for the Christmas issue. If you enjoy this newsletter, and I know that many of you do, then now is the time to help. Jot down some of your memories or write up some of your research into local topics. So don't delay let me have your articles as soon as possible. Thank you. Ed.

CHRISTMAS MEETING

The next meeting on December 5th is the Christmas meeting and the last one of 2012. This year we will be having the usual American Supper, so don't forget to bring something, we will also be having our usual giant Raffle, again, please bring a prize to donate. This year we will also be having a Skittle Alley in place as we did last time so it should be a lot of fun. This meeting is of course open to members only, so if you are not a member, join up now in readiness for the Christmas do.

AUSTRALIAN TRANSPORT SHIP KAROOOLA AT SOUTHAMPTON (1915) - A LETTER HOME

By John Avery

Mr. Moylan, purser on the S.S Karoola writes from Southampton [6th Oct 1915] at which port the vessel arrived, after having landed her troops, and after having made a call at Marseilles. He says:-"I have now been here a week, and feel that I know all England. Much to my disappointment, we were ordered into this port instead of going to London, as intended, but we soon found out that we were lucky in coming here for more reasons than one. On reporting to the Admiralty I found that all officers of transports were entitled to a first-class pass to any port or town in the British Isles; so I am going to Glasgow, via London, where I am to stay for a few days. The Government are treating us very well, and have issued a very neat badge to show that we are on war service, so we are not likely to be jeered at by the people ashore, who might think one should be at the front.

"We had a very fine run from Marseilles, calling in at Gibraltar for a few hours then with all speed to England. We are to stay here about six weeks while they are converting the ship into a hospital, and, from present appearances, she will look beautiful when finished. In walking round the deck I can hardly realise that it is the same ship that left Sydney last June. Ten of the nurses who are on board are daughters of titled people here. I have been kept very busy here, as the police do not allow you in or out of the dock gates without a pass, and it falls on me to issue them."

"A lot of our men were camped near here, but they left for the front just before we arrived".

"The hospital ships from France and the Dardanelles berth near us. The men are discharged into trains to go on to the hospitals."

HEADLINE: "1st Dec 1915 Hospital ship Karoola due on Saturday."

The hospital ship Karoola, which left London with sick and wounded Australian soldiers on board is expected at Adelaide today, she is due to arrive in Hobson's Bay late on Friday afternoon, and the Victorians and Tasmanians will disembark at Fort Melbourne on Saturday morning. Previously the Karoola was a transport, but together with the Kanowna she was recently fitted up as a modern hospital ship in England



The HMAT A63 *Karoola* weighed 7,391 tons with an average cruise speed of 15 knots or 27.78 kmph. It was owned by the McIlwraith, McEacharn's Line Pty Ltd, Melbourne, and manned by Australian officers and crews. The *Karoola* was leased by the Commonwealth until June 1919.

WANDERINGS THROUGH THE WILDERNESS

By Pauline Berry



An early Carnival Day held at THE WILDERNESS



William J. Collins

The Wilderness, so named because of its original wild state, was once a large house standing in a country estate covering about 23 acres. Bounded by South Road (Chalk Hill), West End Road and Church Hill (A27), it sat on a high ridge, commanding fine views.

It first appeared in the South Stoneham Tithe Map of 1845, which showed an established house, stables and pleasure ground (gardens) surrounded by a fir plantation. The recorded owner, John R. Pitter was living there with entrances from the three roads. Today 'Wilderness Heights' occupies much of this site. During the 1850's Alfred Jackson Esq. became the owner of The Wilderness and he soon extended the southern 'meadow' or parkland to nearly 7 acres and built a lodge by the main drive. He permitted, like later owners, his parkland to be used by the Bitterne and West End Horticultural Society for its shows. In 1865, 'The Hampshire Advertiser' reported on this show and the exhibits in the marquee including begonias, coleus, hollyhocks and petunias, also *'the luscious collection of fruits'* from the owner. Among the many visitors mentioned were members of the local gentry: Mr and Mrs Gillett (Harefield), Mr and Mrs Burrell-Ayre (Firgrove), Mr G. Gater (Winslowe) and the Rev. and Mrs J.T.W. Baker (Pinewood).

In 1885, Mr and Mrs A. Jackson moved away from The Wilderness, much to the regret of the Vicar of St. James' Church, Rev. C. Tudor Williams who wrote in the Parish Magazine "...for 28 years they have been hearty and generous supporters of all good works and sent beautiful arrangements of fruit for the Church altar for Harvest Festivals".

The house and grounds had previously been advertised for sale and had been described in 'The Times' as being *'self-contained and unique, romantic walks, lovely dells and rhododendron and holly walks, with as much beauty as is usually found in properties three times the size'*.

The house itself had large dining and drawing rooms, a 30 foot library and twelve 'best and secondary bedrooms'. Outside was 'ample stabling and a small homestead (lodge?). Also a walled kitchen garden. Two packs of hounds were stated to be nearby. Could these have been in Dog Kennel Farm, in what is now known as Telegraph Road?

Mr and Mrs John Rochfort Blakiston became the next owners and moved into The Wilderness in 1885. The
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tradition of offering their parkland for Cottagers (Villagers) Shows began in 1890, although Hatch Grange and Harefield were used in other years. These were shows intended for the villagers to exhibit horticultural and 'industrial' (needlework, laundry etc..) items. Mr Blakiston became well-known in West End, becoming a member of the Church Council, Treasurer of the Cottagers Shows and Secretary of the Coal Club (a savings scheme for a winter delivery of coal). He had the lodge rebuilt for the use of his coachmen early in the 1900's.

Mr Blakiston died in 1921 and The Wilderness was next occupied by William J. Collins, a prosperous builder and local benefactor. He was responsible for much new development in the Southampton area, including Thornhill Park Estate, Bassett Green Estate and the Highfield Uplands Estate. Among the many donations of land, he gave 4 acres of Barnsland to the Parish Council in 1929, which now comprises the recreation ground and adjacent houses. Church garden parties and summer camps for the Boys' Brigade were held in the grounds of his home. His son, Herbert, became an accomplished architect in and around Southampton, including West End Fire Station in Orchards Way and the old Church Hall, since replaced.



Top left:
THE WILDERNESS in the 1950's when used by the Ministry of Food.

Top right:
Rear view of THE WILDERNESS c.1910

(both pictures courtesy of B.L.H.S.)

Left:
THE WILDERNESS and grounds in snow (house on the left)

Mr William J. Collins died in 1939, just before the Second World War. During the wartime, the house and grounds were used for billeting American and British troops, building up to D-Day. It was later used by Land Girls working on West End farms.

The 22 huts erected in the extensive grounds of The Wilderness were re-used for housing the many homeless after the War had ended. Following this, the Ministry of Food District Office moved into the lonely house during the early 1950's and soon after The Wilderness house was demolished. After years of being used as a playground and blackberry picking area, the land was sold and the present prestigious housing estate was started around 1990.

Can you tell us more about the post-war Wilderness and provide us with much needed photographs? Many thanks go to Dee Clift for additional information on this subject.

THE TRAM 57 PROJECT

A Review by Stan Waight



Tram 57 Project

– a tale of three
Southampton
tramcars



The title of Nigel Smith's talk to the Society in September didn't sound very appealing but over 50 members turned out on a beautiful late summer evening to hear him and see his slides. In the event they had a treat, for, after a shaky start when his computer refused to talk to his projector, Nigel talked enthusiastically for well over an hour on the subject of the project - the restoration and preservation of Southampton trams after the closure of the system in the late 1940s.

A group of enthusiasts on a farewell tour of the Southampton tramways in August 1948 decided to purchase and restore one of the open top trams on which they had ridden. For the sum of £10 they purchased No. 45 and worked on it for several years; it later became the first exhibit in the tramcar collection at Crich in Derbyshire. But that was just the beginning. In 1975 the body of Southampton tram No. 57 was discovered near Romsey. The City Museums decided to acquire it and, in 1977, a support group was set up to restore it. Thus the TRAM 57 PROJECT was born. Two other trams, Nos 11, built in Portswood in 1923, and 38, built in 1903, were located and brought to Southampton in 1979 for restoration in the Group's workshop in Millbrook. Tram 57 was put in store and later moved to the HCC Museum reserve collection site at Chilcomb in 2000. The Millbrook workshop closed in 2003 and trams 11 and 38, plus a Lisbon tram which had been purchased for spares, were placed in storage until the latter half of 2011 when a new workshop was built in Southampton's Eastern Docks. Up to 200 volunteers have been involved in the project at one time or another.

Much of the talk was devoted to the discovery and rescue of trams that had ended up well away from the city. They had been purchased at knock-down prices for use as workshops, chicken runs and even a holiday home. There must have been 100 photos, all first class, of the dreadful state many were in before, and the wonderful state after, restoration. The Bargate figured largely in the tramway's history, for in its early years the height of the central arch determined the height of the vehicles. Open-topped vehicles were common until passengers got fed up with travelling in all kinds of unpleasant conditions.

The opening of tramways all over the country produced a demand that the regular manufacturers were unable to fulfil, so Southampton commissioned a dozen from Hurst Nelson in Motherwell. Support for the upper deck proved unsatisfactory and all had to be rebuilt. In fact, the speaker went to interesting detail of the problems associated with the building and restoration of trams. The structure of the domed ends of the later trams, in response to the restrictions posed by the Bargate arch, had special mention.

Nigel finished by showing slides of some of the artefacts associated with trams. These included destination boards, the pylons to support the power cables and even the Supervisor's office that was converted to an Information Bureau.

It was one of the longest talks we have had but I, for one, could cheerfully have listened for longer.

WANTED ... WANTED ... WANTED

We need new committee members - next year in April at the AGM, several posts on the Committee will become vacant. If you enjoy the Society, think its worthwhile and want it to continue, then please consider putting your name forward for election in April next year. Ed.

THE NEXT MEETINGS ARE....

November 7
LEST WE FORGET
Geoff Watts

December 5
CHRISTMAS SOCIAL EVENING
Christmas Buffet, Skittles and Raffle

2013

January 2
CALSHOT ... a place in Time
Colin van Geffen

February 6
SARAH SIDDONS, actress
Geoff Watts

March 6
LIFE IN NELSON'S NAVY
Anne Baxandall MBE

ON THIS DAY.....

On this day (3rd October) in.....

- 1811** The first women's County cricket match started, Hampshire vs. Surrey at Newington.
- 1867** Elias Howe, American inventor of the first practical sewing machine in 1846, died.
- 1906** SOS was established as an international distress signal at the Berlin Radio Conference - replacing the call sign CQD.
- 1914** The first national flag-day was held in England, in aid of the Belgian Relief Fund.
- 1935** Italian forces invade Abyssinia.
- 1941** Chubby Checker, American singer and entertainer, born at Philadelphia as Ernest Evans.
- 1952** Britain detonated her first atomic bomb, aboard a naval vessel in Monte Bello Islands off N.W. Australia.
- 1959** The post code, required in the addressing of mail for mechanical sorting, was first used in Britain, in Norwich.
- 1967** Sir Malcolm Sargent, English conductor, especially of Promenade Concerts, died.