

WESTENDER

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*WELHS... preserving our past
for your future....*

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HERO OF THE HOUR



CAPTAIN SIR ARTHUR HENRY ROSTRON

(Image courtesy of Mr & Mrs Pettet)

This year is the centenary of the loss of RMS 'Titanic', the story of which most people are familiar with, however, whilst we have remembered those lost in the

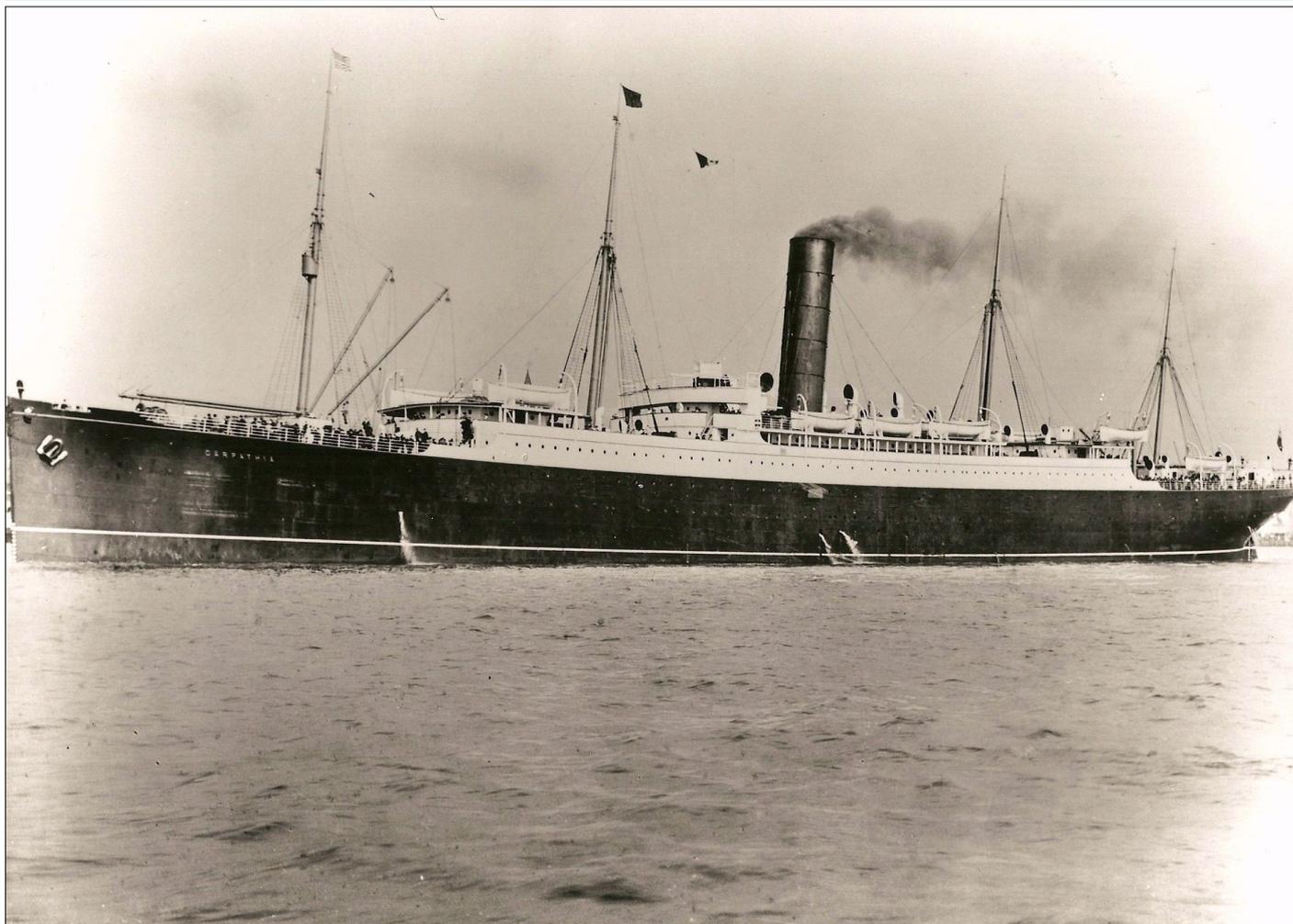
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West End Local History Society & Westender is sponsored by



**WEST END
PARISH
COUNCIL**



Continued from front page**RMS 'CARPATHIA'***(Image courtesy of Cunard)*

disaster, including our own two men from Moorgreen, we have concentrated on the hero of the hour. A man who moved to West End in 1926 and retired here by choice - Captain Arthur Henry Rostron, who remained in West End until his death in 1940. His ship RMS 'Carpathia' was responsible for rescuing over 700 survivors, which was thanks largely to the foresight and heroic efforts of Captain Rostron and his crew. But for their timely arrival, many more would undoubtedly have perished in the ice cold of the North Atlantic on the night of 14th/15th April 1912.

As part of the centenary commemoration and with financial aid from Eastleigh Borough Council (HEWEB) a plaque was commissioned from local artisans Ron and Pearl May to remember all four of West End's connections; Captain Rostron, James Jukes, Fred Woolley and John Lovell Diaper. A second plaque was commissioned from the same artists and sponsored by The Diaper Heritage Association through Cheryl Butler, the Association's Chair. Councillor Wayne Irish - Mayor of Eastleigh performed the unveiling of the plaques on Saturday 31st March 2012 at 4.00pm., with introductions by our Chairman Neville Dickinson and The Diaper Heritage Association's Cheryl Butler. We were pleased that so many people turned up on such a cold day to witness the events.

Earlier in the day Eric Read, well known local Hamble Valley Heritage Guide, conducted some 47 people around the new West End Titanic Heritage Trail, devised by WELHS, ending up at the museum for well deserved excellent refreshments provided by members wives Delphine, Vera, Margaret and Lin. A really successful day, but this was just the beginning.....

A special display entitled "Titanic - the West End Connection" was produced to accompany Eastleigh Borough Council's Titanic Symposium at The Berry Theatre, Hedge End on Sunday 1st April 2012.

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WELHS hosted a Wreath Laying on the grave of Captain Rostron at The Old Burial Ground, West End on Sunday 15th April 2012 at 11.15am. The proceedings were opened by Councillor Wayne Irish, Mayor of Eastleigh who handed over to Neville our Chairman to say a few words and introduce the wreath layers; our society wreath was laid by Captain Rostron's grand-daughter Rosemary Pettet, followed by wreaths from the Rostron family laid by Brian Pettet, the Cunard Line (Captain Rostron's late employers) laid by Captain Chris Wells, Captain of Cunard's Queen Mary 2, The Mayor and Council of the City of Southampton laid by Neville Dickinson on their behalf, the British Titanic Society re-laid by Pearl May, as well as floral tributes from The Southampton Master Mariners Club the Cachalots, The Conway Club and Francis Mizzi an ex Cunard crewman. Press and television was well represented in the shape of BBC South, The Southern Daily Echo and Eastleigh News as well as Jim Ballard from Gaijin Channel in Japan.

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MEMORIES OF A WEST END GIRL - Part 4

By Judy Jones

Where Swaythling Road changes to High Street was The New Inn run by the Cooper family. Next to that was Fray's grocer shop with their butcher's shop adjoining. Just further along was the Box Factory. Travelling up High Street past where I lived towards the centre of the village was Dunford's Garage where Mr and Mrs Dunford and their son called Roland lived and ran their business. Next, up the hill on the opposite side was The Blacksmith's Arms and the Wilshire family with Terry (of white sheet ghost fame) and I think they had another child later on.

Just near the corner of Orchards Way opposite the Fire Station (manned by retained firemen like shop keepers who worked from home or at least nearby) was The Baby Shop – a haberdashery owned by the Carter Family. On the other side of the road on the corner of Chapel Road was Browning's grocers shop. Now at the centre of the village there was Rawlins Bicycle Shop where we had our accumulators charged for the wireless. The Post Office, Police Station, Fray's Butchers shop, Newsagents, Barber Shop and another pub on the corner of Lower New Road called The West End Brewery known familiarly as Tom Forder's. Mr and Mrs Forder had two sons. Mrs Forder's hair fascinated me as she had two plaits that were wound round on either side of her head just above her ears. She had two bulldogs that terrified me especially as they growled and barked and dribbled behind the railings as we went by.

Just a little way along Upper New Road there was another bakers – Knowlton's – and I remember buying a crusty roll when available on the way home from school if I had a farthing!

On the opposite corner of Lower New Road was a painter ad decorator who was also the undertaker called Mr Haines.

Travelling up the hill on the opposite side was Dr. Bamber's surgery and house. Further up past the Cenotaph and on the opposite side of the road was the coalman, I think his name was Barfoot. At the end of High Street and corner of Telegraph Road was another pub called The Sportsman's Arms. Mr and Mrs Light ran this and they had several children all a bit older than me. I just remember the son called Valentine. Diagonally opposite was The Workhouse or Moorgreen Hospital as it is now. Turning down Moorgreen Road there was a nursery and another two pubs! The Moorgreen Inn and The Southampton Arms. There were also several farmsteads along this road.

Back to where High Street changed to Botley Road and there was yet another baker, Welch's. These are all that I remember but there may be others.

Characters of the village.

I'm sure that every village has unforgettable characters and West End was no different. The gas man who lived right at the bottom end of the village was called Mr Mattison – Colli he was familiarly known as. He was rather excitable and wherever he went, always riding his bike, he called out silly things to make you laugh or whistled to attract attention even when passing school! What really amazed me about him was his expertise at counting out the old pennies from the gas meter. He would unlock the coin box and tip the coins out on our scrubbed table. He would spread them out to a single layer and using the fingers of his right hand he could sweep and count them into his left hand making piles of 12 (I shilling piles). When all were counted he would with a quick flick open the dark blue paper bags and slide 5 piles in then click, click, fold, fold and the 5/-d. rolls of coins were stacked ready for a final total. Coins were very heavy in those days and he would go to lots of houses in one day so his load must have been weighty and valuable.

Our postman lived in Chalk Hill and his name was Mr Weeks. Whenever you saw him he was riding his bike with his dog sitting on the pannier in front. It was a sight to see. I actually did a Christmas post round with him when I was sixteen and he always had his dog for company. There was a rather serious looking lady called Nurse Savage who was the village midwife. She rode a bicycle with a black box on the back which contained all her paraphernalia. However, when I was young I thought that she brought the new babies in that box! Oh, the innocence of the young. Another person who seemed a mystery to us was a man called Mr Apothecary. He lived in a secluded bungalow up Chalk Hill, the last building before the woods.

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It was surrounded by trees and difficult to see and the man was rarely seen. I was never sure whether he was an apothecary or indeed his name was Mr Apothecary. As a child to me he was a mysterious person. Then of course there was the rag and bone man who came round with his horse and cart to collect any rags, metal or recyclable rubbish which he would buy for a couple of coppers (old pennies). The milkman's float too was horse drawn. We used the Raeburn Dairy from Hedge End but the biggest dairy was Brown and Harrisons. I'm sure there were other characters but these are all that spring to mind at present. Life was so different then. Hard times certainly, but so much simpler. As my mum and dad would say ... what you didn't have you went without. If you didn't have the money you couldn't spend it. Most things were bought and paid for with real money as you got them. No cheques or credit cards in those days. You saved or went without! Dare I sound like all old people and say those were 'The good old days!'.

I left West End in 1958 and shortly after, sadly my old home was sold and then demolished and I haven't really thought much about it for years. However, after a really enjoyable visit to the museum I started to remember my roots and early days and that's a good thing for anyone to do. I have really enjoyed this trip down memory lane and I apologise sincerely if I have got some of my facts and figures wrong but as we get older the memory is liable to play tricks!

Families I remember in West End.

Beginning at the bottom end in Swaythling Road:

Mattisons, Razey, Turls, Skilton, White, Hurst, Smythe, Wheeler, Bennett, Lawrence, Emman, Pinkney, Sims, Brown, Parker, Shergold.

Ivy Lane:

Squibb, Lawrence, Jacob, Dobbin, Bartlett.

Chalk Hill:

Upson, Clark, Pearce, Upson, Weeke, Apothecary

High Street:

Fray, Bulmer, Payne, Dunford, Clarke, Wilshire, Browning, Munday, Rawling, Nash, Stubbs, Beale, Forder, Bamber, Barfoot, Wheeler.

Orchard Way:

Knight, Dowling, Barr, Dennis, Jones, Jones, Potts, Emery, Redman, Freemantle, Dumbleton, Munday, Chase, Dunbar, Carter.

Church Hill:

Rook, Langford, Rabbetts.

Lower New Road:

Keylocks, Palmer (Stokes), Butts.

Telegraph Road:

Light, Miss Moody (Councillor).

Moorgreen Road:

Topps, Withers, Moody.

NOTE: This concludes Judy's article based on her memories of West End - if any of our readers would like to write down their memories of the old village, we would be happy to publish them. It is important to have a written record of the way things were for posterity. Ed.

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A short service was conducted by Rev. Brian Pickett, MA., the Vicar of St. James' Church, West End assisted by members of the choir and Scott Langridge on the trumpet. In excess of 120 people turned up and although the sun shone it was bitterly cold, but at least the rain kept away.

In the afternoon at 2.00pm people gathered at 84 Chalk Hill, West End to see Rosemary Pettet unveil West End's first blue heritage plaque in honour of Captain Rostron, the houses original owner. The event was hosted by the houses owner Dr Tony Lawther and S.O.L.E. (Southampton Ocean Liner Exhibition) who organised the plaque and event. A large number of people again attended and the event was reported in the Press and filmed as well.

HENRY'S DESIGN MISTAKE

By Ray Upson

I'm sorry that I missed the March meeting as I am very interested in anything to do with the sea. I have a special interest in the "Henry Grace a Dieu". A friend of mine, lived on a yacht at Moody's Boat Yard at Swanwick. He was acquainted with a Curator of the Greenwich Maritime Museum whose father discovered her. For those of you who are landlubbers - ships are always called her because it takes a man to handle

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them. At first he thought it might be an 18th century barge. On further investigation he realised that what was left of her - the keel and part of the bottom, made her too large to have been moored there before any bridges had been built over the River Hamble.

Going on the size and the construction he realised that she was indeed the *Henry Grace a Dieu*. The Reference Library in the Civic Centre at Southampton has a full history of her short existence. She was built at Bitterne Manor. A guarded stockade had to be built out into the river to prevent the shipwrights deserting.

On her sea trials she, as mariners say, sailed on her ear. In other words she had a bad list. Thinking she was beset by evil spirits, she was taken up the Beaulieu River to Bucklers Hard where the Abbot of Beaulieu Abbey read the bell, book and candles on her. Of course this made no difference, so she finished up grounded in the Hamble River, just above the Railway Bridge, stripped and left derelict.

She was struck by lightning and caught fire. When Botley Flour Mill opened, what was left of her, being a navigational hazard was burnt leaving only the keel and bottom in the mud. It can only be reached at very low tides - the best time to see her is at the Equinox Tides which are the very lowest.

So, three of us were seen rowing up river at 4.30 in the morning on the last of the ebb tide. Rowing under Bursledon Bridge we saw someone fishing from the bridge. 'Have you caught anything' we asked, 'not a bite all night' he replied. As we approached the Railway Bridge, I was rowing and something slapped me across the ear and landed at the feet of my friends, who were sitting in the stern. It was a 4 pound Sea Bass! It must have been dozing just under the surface, suddenly saw the boat and jumped. We arrived at 'Henry' and examined what was left of her. When the tide started to come in again we rowed back down river. As we approached Bursledon Bridge the man was still fishing. 'Any luck mate', was our retort. 'Not a thing' was the reply. Holding up the 4 lb. Sea Bass we said 'you must be using the wrong bait, they are jumping out of the water down here'. The air was blue. Anyway we had a good breakfast!

FLYING THE FLAG FOR WEST END



Your society was represented (or rather "flew the flag") at three events in April. Small displays showing West End's Titanic Connections were shown at the Titanic Symposium at The Berry Theatre, Hedge End on Sunday 1st April; at St. James' Church Spring Fair, West End on Saturday 21st April and finally at Fareham Museum/Tourist Information Centre, Westbury Manor also on Saturday 21st April. My thanks to Peter and Margaret Wallace for manning the St. James' Church Spring Fair stand whilst Lin and I were busy at Fareham. It is important for the society to be seen "out and about", showing people what we do and how we preserve our local history, and hopefully encouraging other members to "have a go" as well. Ed.

THE BELGIAN CONNECTION

By Pauline Berry

Situated half-way up Allington Lane, just past the railway bridge, Allington Manor and Farm had been part of the large Townhill Manor estate for centuries. By the late 1800's it came into the ownership of the first Lord Swaythling, Sir Samuel Montagu and extended to 700 acres at that time. He extended Allington Manor House to incorporate extra rooms and a conservatory before his death in 1911.

He was succeeded by his son, the second Lord Swaythling, who lived at Townhill Park House, surrounded by his extensive estate. Known for his generosity, he offered his property, Allington Manor House, in 1915, to the Wounded Allies Relief Committee as a convalescent home for Belgian soldiers who had contracted T.B. in the trenches of the Great War.

The white house with four acres of garden, was described as 'charming' by the local newspaper, was a suitable size to accommodate 25 men or rather, patients. Its rural site in the open South Hampshire countryside, near the River Itchen, was considered to be conducive to a healthy recovery for many of its patients. The staff consisted of a resident Belgian commandant and doctor named Capt. Feys, an assistant Belgian medical officer - Mr Massart and English matron - Miss Houldenshaw, two English nurses and two Belgian military orderlies. The English female staff resided in the house and the Belgian male staff occupied a cottage in the large garden.



In these grounds, a recreational shelter was added, with a piano and gramophone for entertainment. Indoors was a games-room with a billiard table for the patients. The attractive gardens included a large pond, a croquet lawn and a flagpole flying the Belgian flag.

The convalescent home (one of five in the South), was officially opened by Belgian royalty, Prince and Princess Napoleon, on a fine day on Monday August 31st 1915. Having enjoyed lunch at 'Swaythling House' with Lord and Lady Swaythling, they all motored to Allington Manor where they were met by several local dignitaries including the Mayor of Southampton, Mr F. Handel Booth M.P., the Belgian

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Consul to Southampton and Mr W.A. Gater (local landowner). The Princess Clementine, dressed in navy blue with a velvet hat with rose, wearing a white fur, toured the grounds and wards, speaking to all the patients, sitting both in and out of doors. After speeches and due ceremony, she was presented with a 'sheaf of lilies and roses' and the large party of guests enjoyed tea in the grounds. Having signed the visitors' book, the Prince and Princess took their leave and as they motored away they waved regally at the few soldier patients gathered in the drive to watch them depart.

Allington Manor convalescent home stayed open for the next four or five years, when the recovered patients returned home to Belgium. Unfortunately, a few did not make it, as noted in Haines Bros. undertaking ledger in our museum archives. Many thanks go to Dee Clift for uncovering this event in her research into Allington Manor for the Hampshire Gardens Trust, a copy of which she has donated to our archives for private research. Often left out of censuses and street directories, this has helped to develop an area of research barely touched upon until now.

THE MAY MEETING

A Review by Stan Waight



Left: South side of Bargate. Centre: Southampton coat of arms. Right: Arundel tower and town walls of Southampton.

Jake Simpkin made a welcome return to our meetings in May and took us on an 'Armchair Walk around the Old Town' of Southampton. Jake is a Blue Badge guide of Southampton and sometimes guides parties around Windsor Castle and Stonehenge. He spoke for over an hour, fluently and without notes, to a large audience of members and visitors.

The first third of the talk concerned a chronological history of the City, from the Romans, through the Saxon era and on to the medieval period. The old town had been laid out more-or-less on a grid plan, and this section of the talk was accompanied by numerous maps, ancient and modern. There was a heavy French influence on the town after the Conquest and, soon, one third of the population spoke Norman-French. This influence was mainly based on the wine trade, from which the merchants became very rich and the port became very important. The early history was also affected by Henry II's pilgrimage, in atonement for the death of Thomas a Becket, in 1174; this was followed by a steady stream of pilgrims through the port. The town was sacked by the French and Genoese in 1338, more to embarrass Edward III than for what they got out of it, and it was ravaged by the Black Death a few years later. But prosperity continued to rise until it peaked in the late 16th century. In more recent times, the 17th-century decline in prosperity was reversed by the reclaiming of land from the sea which began in 1927. The last tram ran through the Bargate in 1938 and the last one ran round it in 1948 (incidentally, can anyone remember the Rag Days when students disconnected the trailing arms on trams to hold the passengers to ransom?).

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The virtual tour of the City was enhanced by some beautiful slides, but there was so much detail that no report could do justice to it. It started at the Bargate and proceeded in an anti-clockwise direction all the way round. Not unnaturally, the walls featured largely in the presentation. Most sections were built after the French raid of the 14th century, but they were subsequently altered to satisfy the needs of the day. For instance, towers were given keyhole gun ports to replace arrow slits, and the top of God's House Tower was converted into the earliest purpose-built gunnery platform. Time was given to the Castle, and sketches were to show its development. The purpose of the medieval buildings was explained, again with slide back-up. The nature of the town was such that it only had five churches; of these, only St Michael's remains intact after war and dereliction.

The total hush during the talk and the breadth of questions that followed showed that it had been very well received.

OUR THANKS TO WATERS & SONS

Our grateful thanks to Simon Waters and his son Craig for their continued support in providing display space in the windows of their Funeral Undertaking business on the corner of Spring Road, Sholing. A new display showing West Ends connection with Titanic has been installed as well as other photographic displays from our archive. Leaflets and back copies of Westender are also available. Ed.

THE NEXT MEETINGS ARE....

July 4

THE CENSUS did I count?

Colin van Geffen

August 1

SOCIAL EVENING AT THE MUSEUM

(including raffle and free refreshments)

September 5

THE TRAM 57 PROJECT

Nigel Smith

ON THIS DAY.....

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

1727 The first boxing title fight took place, in London - James Figg defeating Ned Sutton.

1868 Robert Falcon Scott, British Antarctic explorer, born near Devonport in Devon.

1882 The three-mile coastal limit for territorial waters was established by the Hague Convention.

1900 Arthur Askey, English comedian, born at Liverpool.

1944 The allied landings on the coast of Normandy, called 'Operation Overlord', took place - the start of the biggest seaborne invasion in history.