

WESTENDER

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2013

(PUBLISHED CONTINUOUSLY SINCE 1999)

VOLUME 9 NUMBER 1

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PORTRAITS FROM THE PAST



Our front page picture this issue features a family group taken around 1906 outside the pair of Southampton Waterworks cottages at Mansbridge. The picture shows all the members of the Dennis family. The picture on the right taken before 1905 shows the cottages in relationship to the waterworks. Our thanks to those that kindly lent us the images.



West End Local History Society & Westender is sponsored by



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THE SOUTHAMPTON TRAMS

By John Avery



ABOVE: Southampton horse-drawn tram in Oxford Street c.1890
RIGHT: Open top Southampton tram c.1948



The trams in Southampton were at first horse drawn and then in 1878 a company was formed introducing the electric tram to the town. The service began in 1879, and soon there was a public petition of 3,500 signatories raised opposing a Sunday service on the grounds of religion. Nowadays we complain about lack of transport on Sundays.

Weaknesses in the accounting system resulted in a manager absconding to America in 1881 with a load of cash and another was dismissed the following year for accounting irregularities. After that the company showed a steady profit each year and in 1898, Southampton Council took over and bought out the undertaking, running the 13 miles of track until 1949. Because trams had to run through the Bargate arch [passengers were instructed to remain seated on the top deck] they were lower in design than trams in other municipalities.

In WWII trams were damaged by enemy action and the council faced heavy expenditure replacing track where streets had been bombed. A decision was made to replace the trams by buses and a large batch was sent to a scrap yard in Bevois Valley. The council however managed to negotiate a deal [much to its delight] with Leeds Council and several dome topped trams were transported up to Yorkshire. After six years of war the fleet was in quite a state and well past its sale date.

The transport department at Leeds soon suspected a pig in a poke and several of their recently acquired trams had to be rebuilt. A particular problem developed in that the Southampton trams being lower in height could be “marooned” and suddenly brought to a halt if following a native Leeds built tram as the larger tram would force the overhead cables up out of reach. Leeds realised their misfortune and sent the ex-Southampton trams to be scrapped.

Here are a couple incidents in the story of our trams:

19th July 1937 Violent Scenes at Southampton. Angry crowds stormed a tramcar at Southampton today, smashing the windows with stones, when police commandeered it to rescue Sir Oswald Mosley, the leader of the British Fascists.

As Sir Oswald tried to address a crowd of 20,000 from the top of a loud-speaker van the crowd catcalled, missiles were thrown and a man mounted a ladder and attempted to reach the speaker, until he was seized from behind and his trousers were torn off. When Sir Oswald Mosley stepped down the crowd surged

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forward, shouting and striking. Police surrounded him, but once he was struck and forced to the ground before officers got him to a tramcar. Policemen then filled the platforms of the tram to prevent others boarding it, wrenched upholstery from the seats and barricaded the windows to protect women passengers. The tram ultimately forced its way through the crowds and was diverted from its usual destination In order to take Sir Oswald Mosley to the sanctuary of his hotel.

2nd March 1946 Malcolm Willmott was a 21 -year-old Southampton tram driver, whose 16 year-old fiancée used to travel every evening on his tram for three and a half hours (fare 3/6). Now her parents had forbidden them to meet, so they keep the tryst in secret and daily renewed their vow to wait — if necessary for the full five years until she was of age. Said Malcolm ‘We met in 1943, but because it seemed madness to be so serious when she was so young, we parted for a year. Then we knew we were meant for each other.’

4th January 1950 All but one of Southampton's population of 140,000 rejoiced at the passing of the city's ramshackle trams when buses took over in the New Year. The only complaint came from 44-year-old Clement Roy Robinson, who drove the trams for 21 years — and that included during the Blitz. Mr Robinson started a petition for the retention of the trams, but he found little support and got only a few signatures most of them out of sympathy. Today he was found gassed in his bathroom at his home in Swaythling. His wife, Rose, who helped him to organise the petition told a friend “He loved the trams. He was very depressed and kept saying it was a mistake to get rid of them. He took the day off on Saturday and I think he went out to see the last tram return to the depot.”

FOLLOW-UP TO BARGAIN BASEMENT

By Nigel Wood

In the last issue of Westender an item entitled “Bargain Basement?” from regular contributor John Avery mentioned a newspaper report regarding a collapsing floor at an old country residence in West End in 1928.

A more detailed follow-up to this story can be read in Pauline Berry’s new book entitled “The Haines Legacy” on page 37.

Its states:”...An interesting anecdote came from Joe Molloy, referring to an incident which happened at an auction in 1928. Following the death of the owner, Mrs Acton, of ‘The Glen’ on Church Hill, the large house was packed with local people seeking a bargain amongst the items for sale. The floor suddenly gave way under the unusual weight and several villagers, including Joe’s mother, were slightly injured falling through it! This accident provided useful work for Haines Bros. who were called in to replace the floor joists and floorboards for £25. The estate agents, Waller & King, had to settle the bill and Miss M.Acton, daughter of the late owner, soon moved into her new Haines’ built home called ‘The Jungle’ on a plot of land just above the Burial Ground, in 1929. Miss Acton became West End’s first female parish councillor in the early 1930’s”

This fascinating book is available either from the museum book shop or from Pauline directly priced at £6.00 plus p&p. It is an excellent read about one of the families who helped to create and establish West End. I suggest you grab yourself a copy soon as there are limited stocks and “when they are gone, they are gone”!

WE NEED MORE VOLUNTEER’S FOR MUSEUM DUTY

I know it’s the old battle cry but we really do need more volunteers for the museum duty - if you can spare just 2 hours a month on a Saturday it would make all the difference to the manning situation. Margaret Wallace would be only too pleased for NEW volunteers to come forward, and they would not be expected to “do it alone” as initially they would be paired with a regular volunteer, so they can get to learn the ropes. So go on, put your name forward to help at the museum - remember without you we wouldn’t be able to keep open such a useful asset to for the village - look upon it as putting something back into the community! Ed.

THE AUGUST MEETING

A Review by Stan Waight



It has become the thing to hold the August meeting in the Museum as an open evening, and over fifty members and visitors got together there again this year. The weather was fine, so we didn't have to crowd indoors (the gazebo has also become a regular feature of the event although not this year). Nevertheless, with such a good turnout the Museum and the garden were buzzing with activity.

The Museum is an ideal venue for the occasion and all the Committee were on hand to superintend the proceedings. All credit to Nigel and Peter for the way in which the artefacts are displayed and they were on hand to answer any questions. Lin, Margaret and Vera served refreshments and I can personally confirm that Margaret's chocolate cake was well up to standard! As usual there were masses of prizes (about twenty I believe) for the raffle; this was organised as usual by Delphine and Leslie with the calling shared by Neville and Nigel.

We're a friendly bunch and conversation flowed - this was great, because there is so little chance to get together at the regular monthly meetings. I also noticed that Bill and Neville were showing members how to use the binders of records in the research area.

Once again, Margaret made a plea for members to come forward to do a two-hour stint at the Museum on a Saturday - the attendance quite clearly showed that there are enough of us to make it unnecessary to do it more than about once a year!!!!

FROM THE NEWSPAPERS....

Sent in by John Avery

FAIRY GODMOTHER TRAGEDY [Feb 1935]

GIRL'S TRAGIC DEATH.

Nine-year-old Rita Fancy was to have been the fairy godmother at a Girls' Friendly Society concert at West End, near Southampton recently. Instead, the village mourned her death.

Rita had played in the last dress rehearsal and was still in her fairy god-mother dress when she set out for home. Then she remembered she had left her purse in the hall. She dashed back for it, and the next minute was lying under a motor-car fatally injured, her tinsel and muslin bedraggled in the grime of the road.

Her two friends, Joan Thorne and Eileen Payne, seeing her danger, had dashed into the road, regardless of their own safety, to save her, but they were too late.

****** WEST END HONEY FOR SALE ******

WELHS members Peter and Kathryn Hatton who live in West End keep bees and have honey for sale. The honey is actually produced here in West End and sells for £3.50 per jar for 227g (8oz in real weight). They have very generously offered to donate 50p from the sale of each jar to WELHS funds - so by buying the honey you will have something nice to consume and also benefit the society. Peter and Kathryn can be contacted on 02380 474789 and are happy to deliver to your door here in West End whilst on their travels. They will also bring a quantity to the meetings for sale, so bring your money! Ed

CAN ANYONE IDENTIFY THE PEOPLE IN THIS PICTURE?



The above photograph shows people from West End on a coach trip in the 1950's and has been kindly donated to our archives by Margaret Palmer. Can any of our readers identify any of the people in the photograph and identify where it was taken? If you can please let the Editor know. Many thanks. Ed.

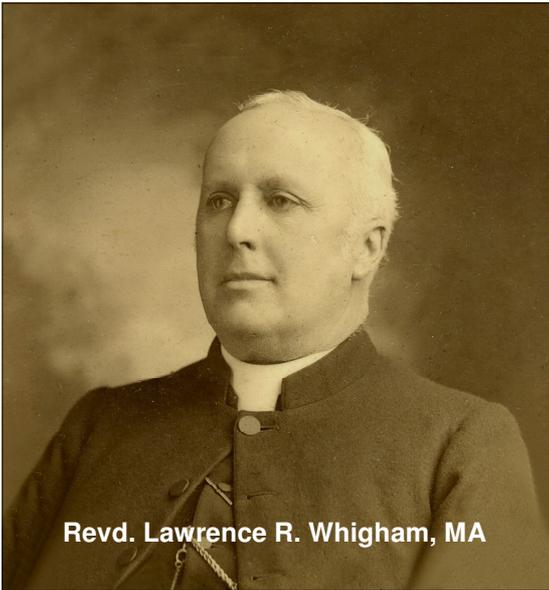
A NEW VICAR FOR WEST END



It is with great pleasure we report that St. James' Church in West End has a new vicar. It has been many months since the last incumbent Revd. Brian Picket retired, but on Sunday 8th September, the new vicar Revd. Thomas Wharton was licensed by the Rt. Revd. Dr. Jonathan Frost, Bishop of Southampton at a service at St. James' Church. The Revd. Thomas Wharton is seen at the left with his wife Vessi and sons Anthony and Michael when they visited the Church Fete earlier in the year. We wish both Thomas and his family a long, fulfilling and enjoyable stay in West End.

FURTHER EXTRACTS FROM St. JAMES' PARISH MAGAZINES (1905 - 1911)

By Pauline Berry



Revd. Lawrence R. Whigham, MA

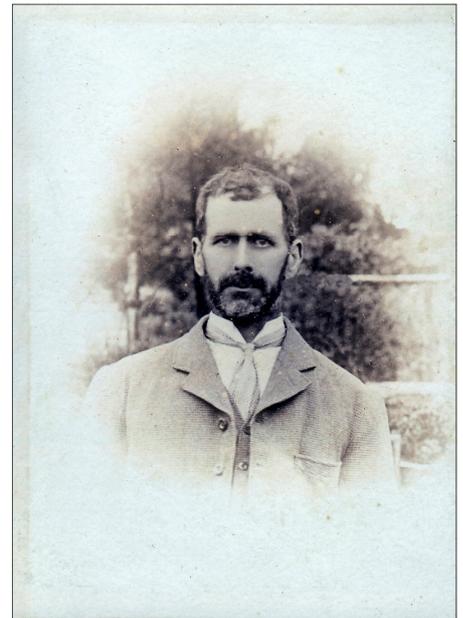
Following the arrival of the new incumbent of St. James' Church on November 2nd. 1905, the Parish Magazine continued to guide and inform under the editorship of the Revd. Lawrence R. Whigham, MA. It did, however, acquire a new style in red and black, plus photo's, costing 2d. (1p. in today's money) and reported on church clubs and societies, births, marriages and deaths.

The sudden death of Albert Fray was recorded, having died suddenly at the age of 45 years, on his farm - Hatch Farm. He was a hard-working man, well-known in the village for his work on the School Committee and as a Representative on the Rural District Council. There was a large attendance at his funeral.

All members of the Coal Club who had paid their regular contributions during the year (15 shillings for 16 cwt. or 7/6d. for 8 cwt.) received their annual supply of coal delivered on December 1st. There are unfortunately no copies of the magazine available for 1906.



Black House photographed in 1976



Albert Fray

In 1907, John Gater (Miller) of Black House on Gaters Hill, married Margaret, daughter of Col. And Mrs E.K. Perkins of 'Shales', West End Road. Another big wedding was that of Alice, daughter of Col. K. McCleod (Hon. Physician to HM King Edward VII) of 'Duncaple', to Mr R.M.C. Munro of London. Detailed reports were included of both marriages.

August of that year saw the Sunday School have its 'annual treat' at 'The Wilderness' owned by Mr Blakiston, with games and tea on the lawn. The Mothers Union enjoyed a similar treat at 'Winslowe House, off Quob Lane, owned by Mr and Mrs W.H. Gater.

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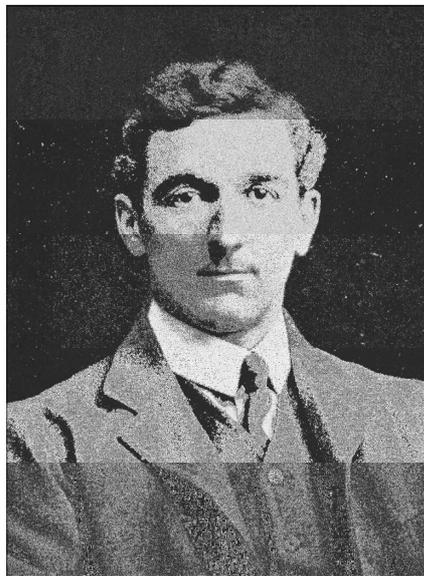
An extract from the first meeting of St. James' Church Council in October of 1908, stated that the vicar, Revd. Whigham had suggested the provision of a wheeled hand-bier (known locally as a 'coffin cart'), to save mourners the expense of hiring a vehicle and bearers to transport the coffin at funerals, from the church to the Burial Ground (at the bottom of Cemetery Road). Having been approved the funeral bier came into use soon after, the result of generous donations. There was to be '*a charge of 1/6d. for its use within the parish*'. (The bier was displayed in our museum for a few years before being returned to the Southampton Museum Service, due to lack of space).

The July issue of 1909 reports on the church choir trip, by train, to the Crystal Palace Exhibition in London. They were entertained there by sports, a maze, balloon ascent, crazy staircases, phantom rooms and a small menagerie! A concert and fireworks display ended an exciting day, with a late return to West End at 2.15am!

That summer the Band of Hope enjoyed an outing to Hamble on three borrowed wagons, where they visited T.S.'Mercury', run by Mr and Mrs C.B. Fry (the famous cricketer), who gave them tea, after a cricket match played between both teams. Unfortunately, West End lost!



Revd. C.R. Patey



C.B. Fry photographed in 1900

The Mothers Union were entertained at Titchfield by Mrs and Revd. C.R. Patey, the previous vicar of St. James', who entertained them all on their pianola. Mrs Patey was presented with a china jardiniere as a token of appreciation from the Mothers Union.

November's issue reported on the 'Temperance' (abstinence) meetings in West End, and one of the speakers was Mr C.B. Fry, a former resident of the village. The Mens' Village Club, based in the Reading Room on Shotters Hill, sent out a plea for a second-hand billiard table for their use. This room, used by several

societies, also provided a meeting place for the school managers who decided to instruct Haines Bros. builders, to install ventilators into certain stuffy classrooms of the new school.

A report also stated that 10 children from South Stoneham Poorhouse had joined West End School on the advice of the Local Education Authority. In October, fifty three children took part in 'The Cry to the Nations', all dressed in national costumes from around the World.

The vicar became a member of the Oddfellows (Insurance group) in 1910 and later made statements to the Church Council, about the poor in West End and the lack of opportunities for the young. The subject of high rents, alcoholism, credit and small holdings were mentioned. "*The fact that West End is not prosperous is evident Considering the amount given by all the inhabitants of the village*", he said.

An interesting reference was made to the death of Laurence Peel (74) of Shrewton Lodge, Moorhill, who was a descendant of Sir Robert Peel. He had formerly worked in the War Office in London and was described as "*enjoying country pursuits, gardening and reading, being an intelligent student of men and matters*".

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Another report was that about Dr. Walter Acton, MRCS, RCA, of 'The Glen' on Church Hill, who had retired as a Churchwarden. He had "*served in the Crimean War, as a civil surgeon at Scutari, alongside Florence Nightingale*".

Mrs Frances Lovekin, the mother of Mrs R.W. Fletcher of 'Hatch Grange', died at West End. She and her late husband, Revd. Alfred P. Lovekin who was moved from his resting place in Hove to be re-interred with his wife, were buried together in the Fletcher family plot in The Old Burial Ground. It was originally surrounded by iron railings which rusted away long ago.



The Old Burial Ground Fletcher family plot with railings



Thornhill Park House (Photo courtesy of BLHS)

In the summer of 1910, Margaret Wellesley Bigsworth of 'Firgrove House' in Moorhill Road, was married to Commander Mahon, RN in Hedge End. Their reception was held at her home (now part of Grosvenor Gardens). Interesting to note that she was the sister of Arthur Wellesley Bigsworth, the First World War flying ace, the inspiration for W.E. Johns character 'Biggles'.

The first West End patrol of the 'B P Scouts' (Baden Powell Scouts) was formed at the church by Mr Molyneux, the Curate, as scoutmaster. He was later to be ordained as a priest. The inmates of the South Stoneham Poorhouse enjoyed a performance from the West End Handbell Ringers.

In 1911, the Willan's of Thornhill Park left for Ringwood and Mr and Mrs Campbell became the next owners of the estate. Mrs R.W. Fletcher took Mrs Willan's place as President of the Mothers Union in West End.

A different report referred to the fact that all the 'Marys' in the Kingdom (including May, Marian, Marie etc.) would be encouraged to contribute to the festivities surrounding the Coronation of George V (and his wife Mary formerly May) to be held on June 22nd. All 400 local children were to be give a special tea and souvenir mugs, and a 'meat tea' would be provided for about 100 people over the age of 60 years in West End. A band would lead a procession to St. James' Church for a unique celebration service.

The Revd. L.R. Whigham warned of his retirement in October and wrote a long farewell letter to his parishioners, including an extensive list of credentials belonging to the next vicar, the Revd. F.R. Dawson who would take over at the end of 1911.

SPECIAL ENTERTAINMENT THIS CHRISTMAS

This Christmas our meeting on 4th December in addition to the usual American Supper style buffet, drinks and a Raffle we will be entertained by John Pitman who will give us "Pantomime and the Role of the Pantomime Dame". I am sure we will be well entertained and look forward to seeing you all there. Ed

THE SEPTEMBER MEETING

A Review by Stan Waight



The speaker for our meeting on 4 September was Don Bryan, and his subject 'The Civil War in Hampshire'. The war began in 1642 and involved a number of battles and skirmishes in our county. Don had drawn much of his material from 'Cheriton 1644' by John Adair and 'The Civil War in Hampshire' by G.N. Godwin and clearly was completely at home with his theme.

The background to the conflict was the excessive taxation imposed by the king, Charles I, and the fact that his wife, Henrietta Maria, was a Catholic.

Don's talk contained too much detail for this short report to do justice to it, and his slideshow was mainly in text emphasising the personalities who took part and the location of the encounters. Winchester, whose castle controlled an important route to the West, played an important part.

Included in the personalities were the local Royalist commander Lord Fairfax and his opposite number Sir William Waller. Ironically, Waller's wife owned Winchester Castle.

The locations were listed chronologically, and comprised:

Hursley, in 1642, and Wherwell in the same year.

Also in 1642, Winchester, which was besieged, fell and was ransacked. The cathedral was terribly defaced.

1643, Romsey, when Winchester was again ransacked, and Alton.

There was a skirmish in Bishops Waltham in 1644, but the battle of Cheriton later that year was the turning point of the war.

On his first visit to Winchester in 1645, Cromwell went out of his way to enter peacefully. He offered terms but the Bishop refused. The castle was reduced, a parley ensued and the inhabitants surrendered. Cromwell forbade the further ransacking of the city and, in my view, came out of it very well for his clemency; he was responsible for the slighting of the castle 1649 however.

So ended Hampshire's involvement in the Civil War, which finally came to a conclusion in 1651.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO....

This old newspaper report was seen and sent in by John Avery.....

“October 1912

TWO AGED PAUPERS ASPHYXIATED

An alarming discovery was made at South Stoneham Workhouse, near Southampton, early on the morning of 2nd October. An inmate named Nicol on opening the door of a small ward which contained five other paupers, found the apartment full of gas.

Calling for assistance, he threw up the window and sent for the master of the house. Meanwhile the five male occupants were removed to the corridor, where it was ascertained that two already had been asphyxiated by the fumes, while the other three were unconscious and in a serious condition.

The names of the deceased are Henry Ridges, of Woolston, near Southampton, 76 years of age, who was admitted to the house as the indirect result of injuries received during the 1904 Army manoeuvres, when he was kicked during a stampede of horses and Geo Perke, aged 81, who had been in the institution several years.”

THE NEXT MEETINGS ARE....

October 2

20 MILLION BRICKS - the history of Bursledon Brickworks

Caroline Haynes

(Change to advertised programme)

November 6

HASLAR HOSPITAL ... what next?

Eric Birbeck

December 4

CHRISTMAS SOCIAL EVENING

Including entertainment, Raffle and Buffet

ON THIS DAY.....

On this day (2nd October) in.....

1452 Richard III was born at Fotheringay Castle in Northamptonshire, the youngest brother of Edward IV.

1608 The first telescope was demonstrated by the Dutch lens maker, Hans Lippershey.

1803 Samuel Adams, American patriot, statesman and one of the signatories of the Declaration of Independence, died aged 81.

1847 Paul von Hindenburgh, German military leader and President of the Republic, born at Posen.

1851 Ferdinand Foch, French military commander, born at Tarbes.

1869 Mohandas “Mahatma” Gandhi, Indian political and religious leader, born at Porbander.

1901 The first Royal Navy submarine, built by Vickers, was launched at Barrow.

1942 The British cruiser ‘Curacao’ sank immediately off the coasts of Donegal with the loss of 338 lives, after a collision with the Cunard liner ‘Queen Mary’.