



WESTENDER

MARCH—APRIL 2006

THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOCIETY

VOLUME 5 NUMBER 4

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LOCAL LEGENDS (3)

BRIGADIER GENERAL SIR G.H. GATER



BRIGADIER GENERAL, GEORGE HENRY GATER, C.M.G. D.S.O. (AND BAR)
1914 - 1919

Son of W.H.Gater of Winslowe House, West End, George Henry Gater was born in 1886 and educated at Winchester and New College Oxford. He enlisted in the Sherwood Foresters at the outbreak of war and served at Gallipoli with their 9th Battalion. In that campaign he was promoted to Major and later awarded a DSO in March 1916. He went with his battalion to France in 1916 and served on the Somme, appointed to command 6th Btn. Lincolnshire Regt. as Lt. Colonel during which he was awarded a bar to his DSO. A General who led from the front it was whilst in France he was severely wounded in the face. In November 1917 he was promoted to Brigadier General in command of 62nd Brigade. A General at the age of 31, one of the youngest in the British Army having served only 3 years in the army! In 1918 he was again wounded during the last big German Offensive whilst commanding a scratch unit to stem the German tide. He was made a Commander of the Legion of Honour and awarded the Croix de Guerre as well as his DSO and bar and was mentioned in despatches four times, he was apparently next in line to command a Division when Peace was proclaimed. In January 1919 he returned to civilian life as Director of Education for Lancashire. Later in life he had a distinguished career in the Civil Service and was knighted. He died on 14th January 1963 aged 77 years old.

West End Local History Society is sponsored by



**WEST END
PARISH
COUNCIL**



70th. ANNIVERSARY OF THE SPITFIRE



ABOVE: Facsimile of Spitfire prototype K5054 first test flown from Eastleigh Airport 5th March 1936.
RIGHT: R.J.Mitchell's winning Supermarine Schneider Trophy plane S1595 fore-runner of the Spitfire.



ABOVE: R.J. Mitchell - Designer of the famous Spitfire fighter.
LEFT: A Spitfire Mk.Vc in flight.

On Sunday 5th March 2006 at exactly 4.30pm a Spitfire took off from Eastleigh Airport, just as its predecessor K5054, the prototype, had done exactly 70 years before. It was a freezing cold day, but for those who braved the weather the sight of a flight of five Spitfires flying low in formation over the Southampton area and down the Solent and back was well worth it! A reminder of the debt this country owes to its designer R.J.Mitchell and the brave men who flew the planes during the Battle of Britain.

DONATION

You will notice a change to the format of Westender from this edition - the back page is now used for advertising; McCarthy & Stone (based in Bournemouth) have made a donation to help support the publication of Westender and in return we will be displaying an advertisement for their prestigious development of retirement apartments on the site of the old "Sportsman" pub here in West End. We would like to thank McCarthy & Stone for this donation as well as a previous kindness, in presenting our Museum with the large pub sign from The Sportsman pub (*see Westender edition of July - September 2003 Vol 3 Number 12 for the full story*). Its encouraging to see a local company supporting heritage, long may the trend continue!

MANY HAPPY RETURNS OF THE DAY

PAULINE BERRY

How quickly time flies! It is now almost ten years since Steve Broomfield and I decided to take the bull by the horns and try to form a local history society, a totally new concept in West End. We were both very interested in West End's past and I, personally, was convinced by my research into Hatch Grange's history, that there were a lot of artefacts in cupboards, attics and above all, information in people's memories.

It was on **7th May 1996** that we held our inaugural meeting in the main hall of the Parish Centre, backed by the Parish Council's offer of its free use for that evening. Having advertised the meeting, about 30 or so interested residents turned up to hear what Steve and I had to say. After explaining the aims of the future society, simply to promote interest in the past of West End, it was added (so the minutes say) that the catalyst for the meeting was partly the Parish Centenary Exhibition in 1994 and the Parish Council's acquisition of the Old Fire Station for community purposes about that time. There must have been sufficient enthusiasm in the audience for a steering committee was voted in soon afterwards. Steve Broomfield became the first Chairman of this newly formed **West End Local History Society**. It came as a surprise to become the Secretary because I couldn't type! Derek Amey offered to take up the post of Treasurer (a post he ably held for 9 years) and then Ray Upson and Jean Buchan volunteered to serve on the new committee. A few months later we were joined by Bill White and Rose Voller who is still our Minute Secretary (Bill is now our Vice Chairman). With the aid of a "start-up grant" from Eastleigh Borough Council, a new constitution and members' subscriptions, monthly meetings were planned with guest speakers. The late Bob Moody became the first speaker in June, talking about his memories from his book "I Remember, I Remember". The history of the West End Little Theatre Club (now sadly defunct) was the subject of the next speaker in July, Ray Upson. The following April, 1997, The Society took on the extra responsibility of running a museum on the ground floor of the Old Fire Station; the West End Fire

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RECENT ARCHIVE DONATIONS



ABOVE: Fray's Stores next to the New Inn seen in the snow c.1950 RIGHT: Austin sports car outside Burnmoor Farmhouse, Quob Farm BOTTOM RIGHT: The old Moorgreen Inn pub.



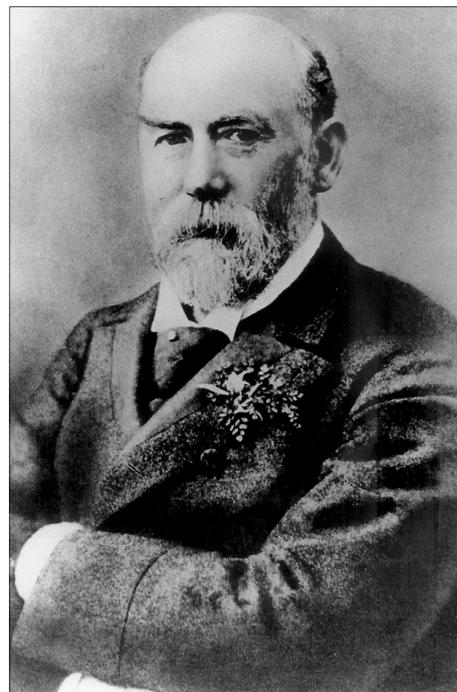
We have been very fortunate recently with donated and loaned photographs for our Archive. Above and at the right are three of the many images from Adrian Fray, John Woolley and Barry Topp. Adrian Fray has sent us many images of old West End in the 1950's from his collection, John Woolley, grandson of Fred Woolley, has also lent us many images to scan including hitherto unseen pictures of Quob Farm and unique pictures of the Vickers Supermarine Schneider Trophy planes and Barry Topp, son of "Teddy" Topp, who was one of West Ends stalwart Councillors for many years, has donated many interesting pictures including the one on the right of the Moorgreen Inn and has joined the Society to boot! Many, many thanks to these people as well as the many others not mentioned here.



HAREFIELD - from Gentry to Housing Estate A Review by Stan Waight



HAREFIELD HOUSE BEFORE FIRE - *Photograph courtesy of Keith Marsh, B.L.H.S.*



PORTRAIT OF EDWIN JONES

The subject for the talk at our February meeting was rather closer to home than usual, and perhaps accounted for such a large attendance despite the bitterly cold weather. The speaker, Keith Marsh, is a prominent member of the Bitterne Local History Society and chose as his title 'Harefield - From Gentry to Housing Estate'. Keith is clearly an industrious and diligent researcher, for his material is well resourced and very detailed.

I suspect that the audience was divided into two groups - those who have lived in the area for many years and knew Harefield before it was completely built over, and those who arrived after the completion of the housing (I am one of the latter, having moved into West End a mere 34 years ago!). The subject was fascinating for us all, but the former group demonstrated its additional interest by the number of questions and comments made.

Keith began with some geological and geographical information about the 270 acre estate and a detailed description of the 18th-century Elizabethan-style house, which was destroyed by fire in 1917. He went on to mention some of its owners, and pride of place went, as might be expected, to Edwin Jones. It was surprising to learn that Jones was only at Harefield for about seven years, towards the end of what was almost a rag-to-riches story. He and his sisters opened a modest shop in East Street and ended with the large department store we are all familiar with. By 1870 he was a Town Councillor and by 1875 Mayor of Southampton.

Some leisure facilities for Edwin Jones employees were subsequently built on the estate, and by the 1920s the estate began to lose its otherwise rural character, with parts being built over by private enterprises. This began a long period of development, the Southampton Corporation becoming heavily involved in the resettlement that followed World War 2. By the 1960s development was complete and the estate became what we see today.

Keith's talk was illustrated by many excellent slides of the former undulating parkland, of the house and farm and of many of the people who lived there. Especially intriguing was the revelation of a 'Cold War' bunker intended to be a control centre in the event of nuclear attack.

Another interesting evening!

THE BOYS IN BLUE

Excerpt from the late Bob Moody's book



SHREWTON LODGE, MOORHILL ROAD AS IT WAS AROUND 1900

The boys in blue became a very familiar sight during the war years. They were the wounded soldiers from Netley Hospital and they were entertained by the people in the parish in all sorts of ways. There were all sorts of organised events including exhibitions of their handicrafts which were used to buy comforts for the hospital bound patients. I remember buying an aeroplane made out of meat cans etc.. Some of these lads in blue were local and were on leave from other hospitals around the country. My father's brother, Uncle Will, used to entertain them in an illegal sort of way at his place of work. It was like this: he was the gardener at Shrewton Lodge (see picture above), that used to stand at the corner of Moorhill Road and Southern Road. The house was empty and he was kept on to keep the extensive gardens in good shape for the next owner whoever they might be. It was one of the biggest houses in West End with stabling for four horses, coach house and garage. In the stable there was the usual harness room and it was here that he entertained the boys in blue. I used to go there during the school holidays and help him in the garden and he told me many times to keep away from the stables during the afternoons. My curiosity was aroused and I was determined to find out what was going on. On one particular afternoon I was given some work to do and uncle disappeared into the harness room. He lit the fire. I saw the smoke coming out of the chimney, and I saw the boys in blue arrive one by one. When I thought the coast was clear, I went up into the loft which ran the length of the stable block and this too was out of bounds because that was where the apples were stored. I crept over the floor 'til I reached the room I wanted. There were a lot of cracks in the floorboards and plaster off the ceiling below and I could see and hear everything. Yes, it was a card school alright, and it sounded to me that a lot of money was changing hands, all very illegal. I said nothing to anyone and I realised in later life that my uncle was doing nothing very outrageous, in fact he must have helped those men enormously to forget the horrors they had gone through.

Another incident that earned me a good ticking off by uncle was like this. Every day he went into the house and opened all the windows and the last job he did before knocking off was to go in and close them. It was

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a very rambling place and I always felt that I would lose myself if I was there alone. There was a hand operated lift in the well of the stairs, and we sometimes used it, mainly for my benefit to give me a thrill. On his entertaining days he would give me the key and tell me to go in and shut all the windows at half past four and on no account to touch the lift. Yes, you've guessed it, that being of a very inquisitive nature I had to have a go, didn't I. Well I did, I got in the lift. There were two rope, a thin one which I knew was the brake and the thick one, that, in my ignorance, I thought was to pull it up. I shut the door and took off the brake and before I could say knife, up shot the lift frightening the life out of me. I did know now that the thick rope was to steady the lift and not pull it up. I didn't know how to bring the lift down again so it had to stay there and that, of course, gave the game away and me the ticking off from uncle threatening me all sorts, if I ever did it again. I didn't.



THE ROYAL VICTORIA HOSPITAL AT NETLEY *(Photograph courtesy Lingwood Netley Hospital Archive)*

NB. "Hospital blues" was the uniform that most patients in Netley and other wartime hospitals wore to distinguish them. It consisted of a bright blue loose fitting single breasted jacket with off white lapels, trousers in the same blue colour worn with a white shirt and bright red tie. Men usually wore their own khaki service cap. Ed.

KELLY'S STREET DIRECTORIES SOUGHT

Pauline Berry

Following the very kind donation by Bitterne Local History Society of three 1950's Kelly's Street Directories to our museum and archive, we are sending out a plea for more. We are now particularly looking to beg, borrow or buy older Kelly's Directories, dated 1950 or earlier (the earlier the better), for the Southampton (including West End) district. The West End section is near the end of these directories of course, and is such a useful source of information for researchers, members of the society and visitors to our museum alike. Please search your attic or cupboards!

VISIT FROM KINGS SCHOOL



On Friday 10th February 2006 our museum was again pleased to play host to a special visit arranged for the pupils of King's School located here in West End. As the above pictures show the accompanying teachers and pupils had an interesting time!

POSTCARD LOCATION FOUND!



Well done to our Treasurer Peter Wallace, on a trip to Whitchurch after a tip-off from member Paula Downer he photographed the picture seen above on the right, as you will see it matches Bill's postcard shown above left (albeit with building alterations on the right) which was the centre of a question in the last issue of Westender. The postcard by Rood Bros that purported to be High Street, West End, near Southampton now appears it should have been marked London Street, Whitchurch!

NAPOLEONIC SHUTTER TELEGRAPH SITE LOCATED

Nigel Wood



SOUTHERN ROAD - THE SITE OF THE TELEGRAPH WAS ROUGHLY IN THE CENTRE OF THE PHOTO & MODEL OF THE SHUTTER TELEGRAPH

Thanks to research carried out by Ray Niblett before he emigrated to Western Australia we now know the approximate location of the Napoleonic Shutter Telegraph which was in use between 1806 and 1814 in the area of Telegraph Woods in West End. At this time Telegraph Woods was quite open heathland and occupied the edge of an escarpment with clear views inland to the east and west. Known as Town Hill Telegraph the structure would have been constructed of timber and looked similar to the image shown above. The system which ran from London to Plymouth with a branch line running down to Portsmouth was surveyed in 1805, the year of the Battle of Trafalgar, and was operational in 1806. The next station in line of sight westward was at Toot Hill, Rownhams and eastward one was located at Wickham. These signal stations were run by the Admiralty and staffed usually by naval ratings and officers who had been wounded or disabled so that they were not fit for active service at sea. Town Hill Telegraph station (named after the area which was known as Town Hill Common) here at West End was commanded by a Lieutenant James Hallam of the Royal Marines who continued to live nearby and run a small-holding for many years after the station closed. Ray managed to obtain a copy of the 1815 Enclosure Map which showed the position of the Telegraph and nearby Pleasure Gardens and merged this in turn with the 1845 Tithe map and a 1960 Ordnance Survey large scale map (indicating the positions of the A27 and other roads and the contour lines) to show the position of the Telegraph in relation with the modern day estate roads. An excellent piece of research which has answered an outstanding question regarding the Telegraph.

(Continued from page 3)

Brigade having vacated it due to massive reorganisation. The Mayor Don Horne officially opened the building and viewed our first exhibition, displayed on a large table, two sagging pasting tables and two cupboards! We did, however, go from strength to strength, and with the able assistance of Nigel Wood soon afterwards, our amateurish efforts took on our ever present professional appearance. Since then, a change of Chairman to Neville Dickinson, several large exhibitions in the Parish Centre and an unveiling of memorial plaques (to Captain Rostron and James Jukes), the society and museum has never, I feel, looked back. Artefacts in the form of photographs, documents, maps and memorabilia have come from many sources. Display cabinets and large display boards too! One never knows who is coming through the doors of the museum and what gems are going to be revealed. How much we owe for our success to residents, past and present, of West End. The names HAINES, FRAY, MOODY, PITTER, WOOLLEY, SILLENCE, MOLLOY and GATER are just a few. Their information has enabled us to develop as a family research centre, with enquiries by e-mail and post arriving most weeks from all around the world. So let us congratulate ourselves, give ourselves a pat on the back, and say, *'Happy 10th.Birthday and may there be many more to come'*.

SGB SITE IN WEST END UP FOR SALE



The SGB (Scaffolding Great Britain) site and house situated at the bottom of Chalk Hill is up for sale for redevelopment as our picture on the left shows. SGB have occupied this site since the early 1930's and before that the house was known as "Woodleigh" and belonged to Fred Woolley. Fred had other interests in West End including two farms (Quob Farm and Hatch Farm) as well as the brickfields between "Woodleigh" and Ivy Lane. The house which is used by SGB as offices can be traced back to at least 1840, and as such is one of West End's older properties. We hope the buyers retain and refurbish the property!

On this day (5th.April) in.....

- 1818** Chile achieved independence from Spanish rule after a revolutionary war led by Bernardo O'Higgins.
- 1827** Joseph Lister, English surgeon and pioneer of disinfection and antiseptics, born in London.
- 1884** John Wisden, Sussex cricketer and compiler of the record books that bear his name, died in London.
- 1894** Chesney Allen, English comedian and member of the famous Crazy Gang, born.
- 1900** Spencer Tracy, American film actor, born at Milwaukee in Wisconsin.
- 1908** Bette Davis, American film actress and twice Oscar winner, born at Lowell in Massachusetts.
- 1922** Tom Finney, English footballer with 76 international caps, born.
- 1955** Sir Winston Churchill resigned as Prime Minister.
- 1976** Howard Hughes, American multi-millionaire industrialist, died on board his private jet en route to hospital at Houston, Texas.

THE NEXT MEETINGS ARE

May 3

THE CAPTAIN'S LADY

(The Tale of the Indomitable Mrs C.B. Fry)

Ron Morris

June 7

HEADACHES, HAEMORRHOIDS & HERBS!

Mary South

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