



WESTENDER

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LOCAL LEGENDS (6)

Dr. RICHARD St. BARBE BAKER, OBE



Richard St. Barbe Baker was born in West End at "The Firs" in Beacon Road in 1889, one of six children of local evangelist John St. Barbe Baker and his wife Charlotte. The family was an old established one locally with many of the members prominent in the Church. Richard's father John founded and built the Free Church Mission Hall on his property in the shape of a corrugated iron church, which is still functioning today as a Baptist Church. His father set up Baker's Westend Nursery growing trees of all kinds on the site of previous gravel extraction (the Telegraph Woods area has always been a site for gravel and sand extraction especially during

the Victorian period) at "The Firs". Richard helped his father at the Nursery and after serving in the Great War, being wounded and invalided out in 1918 returned to civilian life and gained a Forestry Diploma at Cambridge. He had various jobs including being a lumberjack in Canada, then a spell in Kenya in the Colonial Service during which he founded "The Men of the Trees" organisation in 1922. This flourished over the years to become "The International Tree Foundation" today.

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**WEST END
PARISH
COUNCIL**



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Deeply committed to re-forestation as a way to counteract some of our environmental problems, he soon became friends with Presidents and Kings alike, travelling extensively around the world to promote the increased planting of trees. He will be remembered for his contribution to saving the Pacific Redwoods/Giant Sequoia's of Northern California with help from the likes of John Muir and President Roosevelt. In 1944 his father John died and in 1946 Richard married his secretary Doreen Long, having two children, a daughter Angela and son Paul. His campaign to counter the advance of desert's culminated in the 1952 expedition to Nairobi via the Sahara. He frequently carried acorns and fruit stones in his pockets and would plant them whenever the opportunity permitted.

In 1959 Richard sold "The Firs" and left for New Zealand to settle travelling via Moscow and Delhi. In 1965 the Free Church Mission Hall in Beacon Road was sold to the Baptist Union. Richard was a prolific writer, being credited with some 30 books and although most are now out of print, they can be sought out second-hand and make interesting reading, particularly "My Life My Trees" published in 1970 and reprinted many times.

Richard died peacefully at the age of 92 in 1982 in Saskatoon, just prior to giving a lecture at the University of Saskatchewan in Canada and is buried there.

To quote Geoff Poulton's memories of Richard:

"Richard St. Barbe Baker

Evangelist, missionary, writer, raconteur, entrepreneur, generous, visionary, single minded, boundless energy, member of the Bahai' faith, excellent networker, inspirational, abstemious, excellent recall, Vegan."

NOTE: For those visiting our Museum & Heritage Centre in West End, we have on display several items connected with Richard St. Barbe Baker as well as a file devoted to him—well worth the reading. He was one of the founders of the environmental movement. Here in West End Richard is remembered with a road named in his honour "Barbe Baker Avenue" as well as more recently a bronze plaque sculpted by Jill Tweed surmounting a plinth on the corner of Chapel Road and High Street unveiled on Friday 28th March 2003. Ed.



RICHARD MARRYING DOREEN LONG IN 1946



RICHARD WITH HIS MOTHER CHARLOTTE

MORE MEMORIES FROM BOB MOODY

Extracts from the late Bob Moody's book "I Remember, I Remember"

Continuation of our series of the late Bob Moody's memories to celebrate the 100th. Anniversary of his birth.....

"My brother (Leslie) left school several years before me and he got a job as a milkman, delivering milk with a bicycle and sidetruck to carry the churn and the can. I remember him betting me twopence that I couldn't ride his trike. I took him on and lost. I didn't know then that you didn't have to balance on a three-wheeler and if you tried to all you did was to go round in circles. He didn't earn much and decided to try his hand at making torch batteries. There was an advert in "Tit-bits", a weekly magazine, which made it seem very easy. According to them you just couldn't go wrong. You had to send one pound (£1) for the kit consisting of the formula, the zinc cans, muslin bags, carbon sticks and a little gadget to fill the sacks evenly with the mixture. Having done all this then they had to be cooked for a period, allowed to cool and then sealed with a pitch-like substance. We had no place to work in so we bought a shed. It had a span roof and was about eight feet square. We bought it for a pound (£1) from the local chimney sweep. It had been used as a sweet shop in Botley Road opposite the Workhouse. We carted it home and re-erected it and set to work on the batteries. We made several batches but none of them worked so we gave it up as a bad job. My brother had another brainwave, or to be more accurate, a brain storm. He accepted a gift of a young goat. We built a stable for it with stable type doors and thought all would be well with the goat. There was an iron spike and a length of chain so that she could be tethered out in the garden or beside the road. The animal turned out to be an escapologist. It wound the chain round and round the spike and then would pull out the spike and be away. Mother said that we would have to keep it in the shed. We did, but it just jumped over the lower door and wandered off. When one day it wandered into a neighbour's garden and chewed off all her roses, that was the last straw. My father said it would have to go so my brother gave it away. The new owner had plenty of room to let it roam so the goat and everyone else was happy."

Memories of a more innocent and simple life...a little different from today! Ed.

TALES OF OLD WEST END

Extracts from the late C.M.Sillence's book of the same name

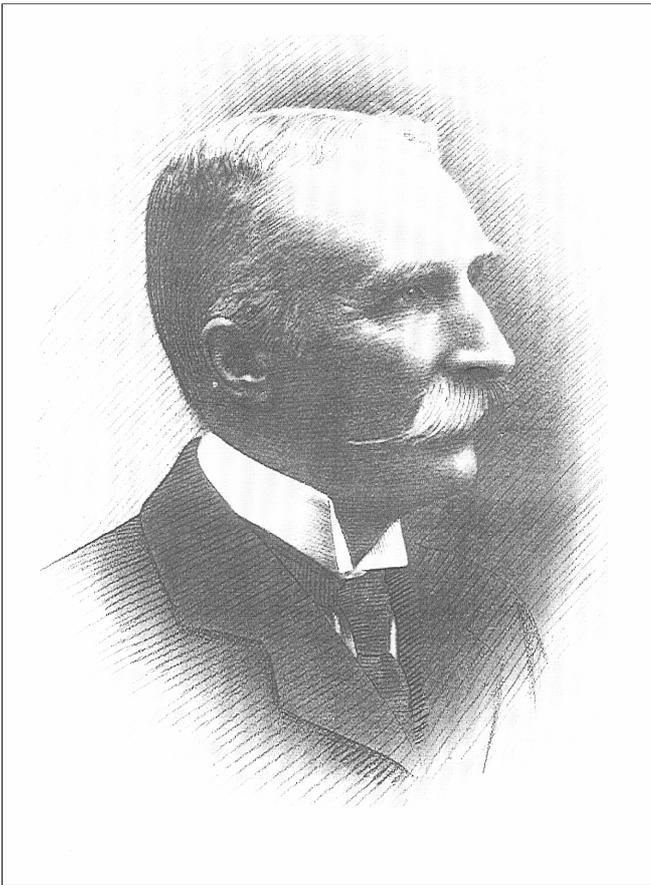
"Mr Tony Fray spoke of the big freeze which occurred during the late 19th century, freezing Hatch Farm pond solid and many people came to skate there. The river at Gaters Mill also froze and the cold lasted for quite a time rendering the men in the building industry and various other trades to be out of work with no pay. This proved a disastrous period for these families, as the pay was so low, that very little money could be saved for such events. I remember my mother recalling the freeze, and saying that but for the generosity of some gentlemen, many people would have died. Mr St. Barbe Baker (John) and his wife (Charlotte), set up a soup kitchen and took soup around to the elderly and needy. The trades people were obliged to give a considerable amount of credit, a good deal of which they never recovered. It was about this time that Jim (James Biles), the landlord of the New Inn, himself an Oddfellow, and very aware of the situation, offered a Clubroom free at the Inn, to a few of the more responsible men of the village so that they might form a Branch to ensure they had a small income whilst sick. The weekly payment during sickness then being 8 shillings per week for 12 months and half pay thereafter—this club proved most popular and thrived well.

On one occasion when the Oddfellows were due to entertain their District Officers, it was decided that the event should be marked by a faggot and peas supper, supplied by the landlady. On the appointed day, she put a bathfull of peas to soak in water outside the kitchen door, but one customer who had evidently had too much to drink, and could not find the "Privvy" in time, urinated in the bath. The landlady was quite worried as she had no more peas in sufficient quantity to replace them, but Jim, undaunted by the episode, laughed and emptied the polluted water away and refilled with clean. The Oddfellows sat down to their supper, quite unaware of what had happened. After the meal, a vote of thanks was unanimously carried, thanking the landlord for his trouble, and complimenting his wife on a most excellent meal."

Visitors to our museum can see the Oddfellows regalia for the West End branch on display Ed.

THE END OF HATCH GRANGE HOUSE

Extract from "Hatch Grange...a Stroll Back in Time" by Pauline Berry



RALPH WARNEFORD FLETCHER 1851-1928 WHO OWNED HATCH GRANGE FOR OVER 50 YEARS AND THE FAMILY CREST

Following the purchase of Hatch Grange on July 1st 1938, the Parish Council soon encountered similar problems affecting today's Parish Council. Their minutes recorded that the degree of vandalism was so great that a letter was sent to the Police stating that the Parish Council "*would be obliged if the Police will...prevent further damage*". Very little has changed in the last sixty years! The Parish Council also recommended someone to tidy up the grounds, for the sum of £2.

By the 12th July, so deep was the concern of the Parish Council about the dangerous dilapidated state of the old Hatch Grange house that it was decided to advertise in the "Echo" for tenders to demolish the main house only, not the outbuildings.

The whole problem was resolved by a dramatic turn of events which occurred only 12 days later! The minutes of a special meeting of the Parish Council on July 1938, reported that, "*the large house had been gutted by fire on Sunday 24th July, the fire having been discovered about 12.30pm when the roof was well alight*".

This momentous event must have occurred just before the young Elsie Cardy (Mrs Goman) and Iris Boyt (later Mrs Ellis) suddenly stopped playing in Chapel Close which was being constructed at the time. They are two of the many residents who remember that sunny Sunday the summer of 1938 when palls of smoke appeared above the trees of Hatch Grange. They ran across to join the large crowd who were gathering to witness the sad sight of the derelict Hatch Grange house burning to the ground.

Mrs and Mrs Blow were amongst those who remembered being in the crowd watching the flames darting into the sky. It was a long difficult task for one fire tender to put out the fire so the crowd settled down to view the activity, some even bringing a picnic! It took all day for the fire engine to put out the fire because the water connection was in the High Street and the hose had to stretch two or three hundred yards up the avenue of lime trees. The pressure was so poor that by the time the water reached the fire it was almost reduced to a trickle!

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It must have been frustrating for leading fireman George Rollins. West End had its own Fire Brigade at the time and its one fire engine was garaged in an old tin hut behind the old Parish Hall. The present fire station (now used as the Local History Museum & Heritage Centre) was built in the High Street in 1939 and the Hampshire Fire Brigade took command soon after.

In spite of the fire-fighters efforts, the house was gutted and rumour had it that local boys had started the fire in the empty building. Who knows? When the house was eventually demolished, Mrs Goman recalls that her father was paid for every dozen bricks that he cleaned up and stacked for removal. He was also instructed to remove glass from the old greenhouse on the rear slopes and use it to repair broken windows in Hatch Lodge. Many offers came in to purchase edging tiles, rockery stone etc., but the Parish Council did not take them up.

The terms of the insurance policy were read to the Parish Council but they excluded any reinstatement of the house itself. So an insurance claim was submitted for £580, which included only the value of the building materials lost plus £30 for the firemen's expenses.

The twelve firemen on duty that fateful Sunday, claimed for ten hours labour at three shillings (15 pence) per hour (four shillings or 20 pence for the Captain). This sum also included ten shillings (50 pence) for cleaning and rolling up the hose the following day and £10 to cover wear and tear plus the use of the fire tender.

Council members testified in the minutes to "*the splendid way the firemen worked*" and requested the erection of "Danger" signs at the site of the fire to keep onlookers away. It was a sad ending for a once attractive Victorian residence whose former glory had long faded. Such is the fate of many neglected old buildings when they are left empty and derelict.

Recommended reading:

"Hatch Grange....A Stroll Back in Time" by Pauline Berry - available to purchase at the museum.



THE ONLY KNOWN PICTURE OF HATCH GRANGE PRIOR TO THE FIRE TAKEN IN 1929

LOCAL HISTORY WEEKEND AT BURSLEDON



Billed as “Making History at GAF”, the title puzzled me until we visited the event at Greyladies Chapel in Bursledon on Sunday 13th August this year. A redundant Catholic Chapel of quaint old world charm, complete with wood panelling and stained glass windows, has been purchased by the locally organised Greyladies Arts Foundation, and an event to help celebrate this featuring a local history exhibition, guided walks, Treasure Hunt and children’s activities was held on Saturday 12th & Sunday 13th August. In spite of the mixed weather it was well worth the visit, especially with the excellent cream teas being served. The multitude of photographs from their archive showing various aspects of the area was excellent, although a few more captions would have been helpful for those of us not local. The aim of the centre once refurbished will be to provide an outlet for local artistic talent, and provide a home for the Bursledon Archive. In spite of the weather, there were quite a few people on site during our visit and we went away pleased that we had “made the effort”. If you would like more information about GAF and the gallery try their website on www.gaf.org.uk or phone 02380 406604 for more information and details for joining the Friends of GAF.

THE WORK OF TUBBY CLAYTON & TOC H A Review by John Avery of our September meeting Talk by Geoff Watts

I joined Geoff Watts on a trip to Ypres for Armistice Day a couple of years ago and we shared a visit to Talbot House in the village of Poperinge, so the talk brought back some of those moving memories. I am sure for those in the audience who had not visited the venue, Geoff portrayed a full and interesting insight into the personality and determination of Philip “Tubby” Clayton.

Neville Talbot, the son of the Bishop of Winchester and the former Portsmouth chaplain Philip Clayton decided to open a refuge for soldiers a few miles away from the front line in the Belgian village of Poperinge. The premises, previously used as merchants house and a store for hops was originally to be called Church House. Our troops were subjected to a horrific attack as German flame throwers were used against the Allied trenches and Gilbert Talbot, the brother of Neville, was killed in the attack. Neville crawled out to recover his brother’s body and he was buried in the cemetery known as Sanctuary Wood.

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TALBOT HOUSE TODAY IN POPERINGHE



Above: LOFT CHAPEL AT TALBOT HOUSE Below: Sanctuary Wood



In dedication to the memory of Gilbert, they decided to call their own sanctuary in Poperinghe Talbot House. Geoff explained that in the phonetics of the WW1 signal code Toc stood for the letter T and H for House and the organisation was later to be known as Toc H.

Tubby Clayton ran the house in which all ranks were treated equally. Benches, seats, library books. Billiard tables etc were begged or borrowed from various sources and a chapel and altar was fitted out in the loft of the building.

Geoff's slides showed the various rooms, library and the garden where men, living in rat filled wet muddy trenches daily seeing the horrors of colleagues dying, could for a short few weeks enjoy peace and moral support in reasonably peaceful surroundings. From time to time Poperinghe was shelled by the Germans but the imposing tall building escaped major damage.

After the war Toc H was set up at All Hallows by the Tower and within a year 'marks', as branches are known, were set up in other parts of London, Manchester and Southampton and began to spread across the empire. Southampton was Mark 5 and Geoff reminded us of the large house at Bassett [The Firs] and the accommodation in Queensway near the then Edwin Jones premises that became a hostel for young vulnerable seamen.

The organisation still has branches throughout the world but now operates on a smaller base, Geoff showed us on a recent trip to Looe in Cornwall that he had spotted a banner with the Toc H lamp hanging in a building. The lamp with the double style cross was lit at each Mark throughout the world. Ex-servicemen returning to the battlefields after the war began to call in to see Talbot House, by then returned to the Belgian merchant, to try to recreate the peace and comforts that they had experienced. The owner eventually decided to move away and through the generosity of Lord Wakefield [the owner of Castrol motor oil] the building was purchased and turned into a visitor's centre, re-creating the theatre and the chapel where our troops once enjoyed sanctuary from the horrors of the frontline. Geoff and I sat in the old kitchen enjoying a mug of tea with the Toc H manager. They have a small number of rooms and young people stay in them whilst touring Europe so even today they extend the hand of friendship.

HERITAGE TRAIL WALKERS WELCOMED AT MUSEUM



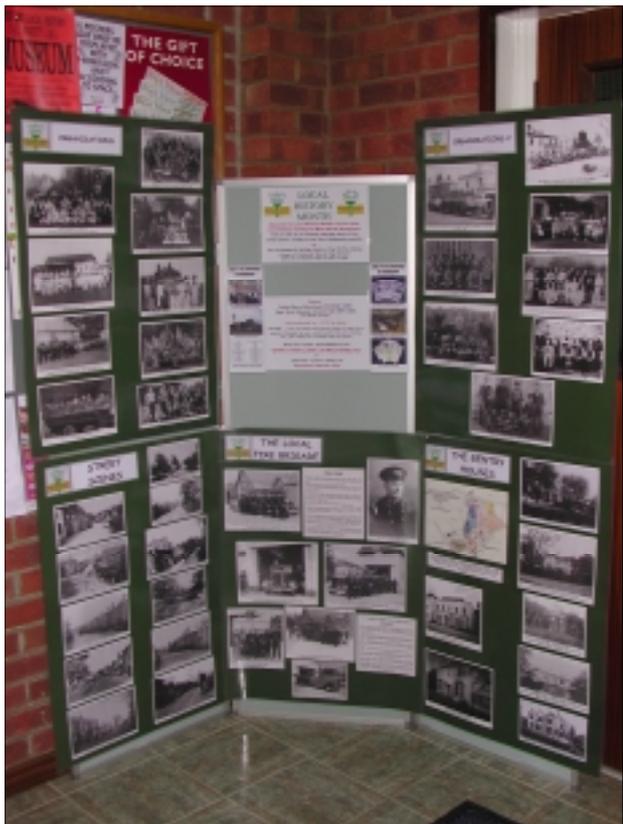
Eric Read, an Eastleigh Borough Council Heritage Guide along with some ten visitors in his walking party completed their Heritage Walk around West End on Sunday 30th. July with a visit to our Museum. Especially opened for the Heritage Walk by prior arrangement the party arrived around 3.30pm and after being plied with soft drinks, and publicity leaflets were left to browse the newly refurbished museum and archive. We were lucky with the weather which was hot and sunny and the soft drinks went down a treat. We are always prepared to open the museum “out of hours” to accommodate parties of visitors by prior arrangement. If your group would like to visit the museum contact the Curator on: 023 8047 1886 to make arrangements.

THE SOCIETY HERITAGE WALK AROUND WEST END

This year we decided to bring back the August meeting as an outdoor meeting. At 7.00pm on August 2nd around 30 members and guests of the society met in the Parish Centre car park and commenced “A Walk Around West End’s Heritage”, the walk was led by Pauline Berry and Nigel Wood, and took in the lower part of the village. Various archive pictures were shown at the appropriate places to show what the village was like and a “potted” history of the various locations was given. The evening was such a success that we hope to do a similar walk next year in August covering the upper part of West End. Watch this space for details!!



NATIONAL LOCAL HISTORY MONTH 2006



Normally held each year in August, this year the national “Local History Month” was moved to the month of September. West End Local History Society was asked by Eastleigh Library if we would like to put up a small display promoting local history at our local West End Library.

Situated in the Parish Centre in Chapel Road, our small display was situated in the lobby just before you enter the Library. Thank you to Cathy Sargeant and Linda Glasspool at Eastleigh Library for suggesting the display and to our local librarians headed by Sandra for their help and assistance.

We hope this will generate some interest within the community and perhaps stimulate some people to “get involved” and even join our society, not a bad deal for £10 a year!

At the end of the day it is a worthwhile thing to preserve the memories of our yesterdays for our childrens tomorrows. We are what our history dictates!

On this day (4th October) in.....

- 1626** Richard Cromwell, born the third son of Oliver Cromwell.
- 1669** Rembrandt, famous Dutch painter, died at Amsterdam.
- 1883** The Boys’ Brigade organisation was founded in Glasgow, by Sir William Alexander Smith.
- 1892** Engelbert Dollfuss, Austrian statesman, Chancellor and dictator, born.
- 1895** “Buster” Keaton, American comedy actor of the silent film era, born at Piqua in Kansas as Joseph Francis Keaton.
- 1924** Charlton Heston. American film actor and Oscar winner, born at Evansville in Illinois.
- 1931** Basil D’Oliveira, Worcestershire and England cricketer, born at Cape Town.
- 1948** Sir Arthur Whitten Brown, British aviator of Alcock and Brown fame, died.
- 1966** Basutoland became an independent Kingdom, having been a British Protectorate since 1868—now called Lesotho.

THE NEXT MEETINGS ARE

November 1
THE HISTORY OF SPECTACLES
Ivan Downer

December 6
CHRISTMAS BUFFET, QUIZ, ENTERTAINMENT AND RAFFLE
Members only

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