

Bitterne Local

History Society



ESTABLISHED 1981

'Keeping Bitterne's History Alive'

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BYGONE BITTERNE



Auxiliary Fire Service wedding- page 2

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Meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month (September - July) at 7.00 pm in the United Reformed Church Hall, Bitterne Village. Visitors are welcome (£3.00 per meeting).

Annual membership subscription - £14.00;

Concessionary (under 18 & over 80) - £8.00; Overseas membership - £17.00

Opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily the views of the Society but those of individual contributors

THIS MAGAZINE CAN BE PRODUCED IN LARGE PRINT FORMAT IF REQUIRED
PLEASE CONTACT IAN ABRAHAMS 023 8043 1067 OR THE EDITOR

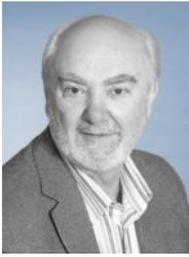
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COVER

A photograph of a group of Auxiliary Fire Service personnel outside a church, presumably at a wedding. The picture has recently been added to the Society's collection. At least one of these people is from the Woolston AFS section. The AFS existed between 1938 and 1941 but we have no idea of a more exact date for this group or which church. If anyone recognises any member of this group, or even better, whose wedding it was, then please tell us.





DEAR FRIENDS - From the Chairman

Dear Friends,

Congratulations go to Steve on a superb start to his editorship of *Bygone Bitterne*. Thanks are also due to Steve for his sterling work on producing a chronological index of

Bitterne Magazine Articles from issues 1 – 135. Using this index we can track any article by title or author and find out in which issue it appeared – a very valuable resource – now accessible from the membership page of our website www.bitterne.net.

A warm welcome is extended to our two new Heritage Centre Stewards, Marc Lawrence and Peter Shawyer, who have recently joined the team and are settling in well; but we could still do with more volunteers.

One of our long serving Stewards, Bob Lavington, has moved in to Rosewood Care Home in Swift Road, Woolston and is very happy there. Since then he has had his leg amputated and has returned to the Care Home. The Dial-a-Ride service may give Bob an opportunity to visit the Heritage Centre in the near future and we are hopeful this can be arranged.

Barbara House, one of the BLHS Charity Shop management team, is still undergoing chemo and is responding well to treatment. Our best wishes go to Barbara.

The Lion Cup Essay Competition is open again this year until 31 July so come on you budding local historians - get writing. The winner will receive a prize of £30 and have the honour of holding the Cup until the 31 July next year. More details can be found on the BLHS website and in this issue of the magazine. (See page 5)

The arrival of a new container at the rear of the Heritage Centre (See page 24) has enabled us to transfer items from the Church store, which we have been informed we need to vacate. I would like to thank all those who helped to prepare the access route and carry out the ground work prior to delivery and also to those who helped with the transfer of

artefacts on 'work party' days.

And now for a bit of local news: The Big Cheese pub in West End Road, Bitterne (formerly known as the Bitterne Brewery) closed its doors for the last time in February this year and, according to local newspapers, is to be turned into flats. (See page 28 and Ian's piece on page 30)

Sadly the former owner of the Red Lion pub in Bitterne, Christopher Milner, died on 15 January this year; his funeral service was held at Wessex Vale Crematorium on Monday, 13 February.

The Ukulele Jam entertained us once again for a cracking pre-Christmas party in December 2016 and we started 2017 with an interesting talk on 'Quakers At War' by Dr Frances Hurd in January. This was followed up in February by Peter Trodd giving an informative talk, enhanced by practical demonstrations, entitled 'Musical Entertainment Victorian Style'.

Forthcoming events for this year include Riverfest at Riverside Park on 27 May; 'Make Bitterne Better' in Bitterne Precinct on 10 August; Southampton Heritage Open Day at our Heritage Centre on 9 September; and The Hampshire Field Club visit we are hosting at the URC on 30 September. Finally we have a four piece folk band, 'The Fogeys', to entertain us at our last meeting of the year in December. According to their publicity:

'The Fogeys' are a quartet of musicians who are also members of the Birnie Boozle Band. They perform songs and melodies from England, Scotland and Ireland, Country, and Skiffle, featuring guitar, banjo, whistle, mandolin and harmonica.

So we have plenty to look forward to in the rest of the year and if you feel you can lend a hand on any of the forthcoming events please let us know. Welcome to all those who have recently joined the Society and many thanks to all our members who continue to support BLHS.

Best wishes,

Peter





The Lion Cup 2017

Bitterne Local History Society organise this competition to encourage people to write about their experiences or to research local history

The Society is running the Lion Cup Competition once again this year and invite previously unpublished essays of no less than 1,000 words on any factual topic of local history; this may be memories of the writer, or others, or a piece of original research about people, places or events east of the river Itchen.

Anyone over 14 years of age is encouraged to enter, as long as they are not a published author of a local history book, including past entrants to this competition. Correct citing of references is essential as is obtaining permission to reproduce any photographs, maps, diagrams, etc. used to illustrate the article.

All entries must be typed and accompanied by an entry form, which can be downloaded from the Society's website or picked up from our shop. The full rules of the competition are on our website at www.bitterne.net.

Closing date for the competition is Monday, 31st July 2017 and the Cup and prize of £30 will be presented at the Society's AGM in September. BLHS will have the right to publish any entry or parts of it, either in their own magazine or anywhere else, although full credit will be given to the author.



BLHS MONTHLY MEETINGS - *Jill Neale*

NOVEMBER - Elements of the Civil War in Hampshire with Don Bryan

The Speaker stated that religion was at the root of the Civil War, compounded by the obstinacy of James the First and then Charles the First. At the outset of the War the common people did not realise what was going to happen and still less did they know which side they would be fighting on, distinctions came later. A man joined the army of his overlord, on whichever side he supported.

Portsmouth had been defended by its governor at the time, George Goring, who managed to convince both sides of his loyalty and as a result received funds from both the King and Parliament. In 1641, Goring began to work on the town's defences and then declared for the King. The Parliamentary forces led by Colonel Richard Norton led a surprise night attack on the strongpoint of Southsea Castle, which was inadequately defended and easily captured. They then used the Castle guns to lay waste to Portsmouth and the town surrendered. The Parliamentarians then sailed to Southampton and sent a message to the Mayor asking "do you want the same fate as Portsmouth?" To which the Mayor could only respond "No, you can have the town" and he handed over the keys. The town could have been battered from the seaward side as most of it was within the guns' range.

The majority of Hampshire was staunchly Parliamentarian. Winchester, however, became a Royalist stronghold and began to prepare itself for a fight. Winchester would soon find itself the victim of siege from the armies of Sir William Waller, known as The Night Owl as he moved his soldiers at night to gain advantage.

The Castle at Winchester was one of the strongest in England, it controlled travel from London to the West Country. The main road crossed a narrow causeway, which the castle controlled, with flood plains on either side.

After much skirmishing the Parliamentarians got into the city near the West Gate where the walls had been neglected. Some Cavaliers surrendered,



others went to the Castle, with no defences. They offered £1,000 to the Parliamentarians to spare the city, but it was ransacked anyway.

The Parliamentary troops were supposed to be Puritan, but they rode to the Cathedral and destroyed it after heavy drinking. Smashing the west door, the organ and the altar, they lit a bonfire of church furniture, ancient documents were burned and bones from the coffin chests thrown down.

The Speaker explained much of the happenings in the final battle of Winchester and at many other notable Hampshire War landmarks such as those at Basing House, Romsey, Oliver's Battery and Cheriton, a battle fought near Winchester which was a turning point in the whole Civil War.

Everything was to be taken from the Castle, Lord Ogle decided that all the beer and wine should be drunk. He and his followers saw to this.

The South Gate (Winchester), was broken to pieces and Winchester Castle was then destroyed.

King Charles was captured and taken to Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight. A Captain Burleigh attempted to help him escape, but the plot failed and Captain Burleigh's trial was held in the Great Hall at Winchester; he was found guilty and hung, drawn and quartered. Charles was moved to Winchester before being taken to London to face trial and execution.

The appalling situation of the populace of Winchester came over very strongly during the talk - they suffered greatly from the Cavaliers' command in the area.





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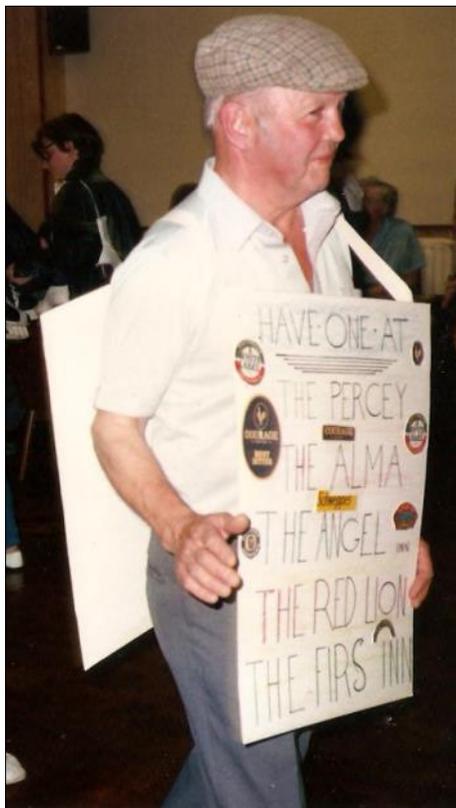
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BITTERNE FANCY DRESS – Peter Richards

Local Bitterne resident Doris Moore showed me these photos of her and her late husband Alan, dressed up for a fancy dress event at Bitterne Conservative Club. The theme was 'Bitterne' and Alan's idea was to wear a sandwich board advertising the local pubs. Doris decided to dress up



as a Ritz cinema usherette. Doris can't remember the actual date but there are clues in the pictures.

All the pubs listed apart from the Red Lion (i.e. the Percy, the Alma, the Angel, and the Firs Inn) have now closed down and the Ritz cinema is long gone.

Note also the sign on Doris' tray showing Swan matches on sale at ½ d – another clue.

I will leave you with that one to ponder.



OH NO, NOT RAT PIE AGAIN ... ! - Audrey Spiers neé Eckton

I was six and had just learned to tell the time when I was bridesmaid at my Auntie Molly's wedding. About every half hour I would announce to my mum, and anyone else in earshot "It's ten past four" or "It's five fifteen." In the end my mum got so fed up that when she said she had to pop home from the wedding she told my Auntie Peg "I'll leave Audrey with you, and if she tells you the time again give her a good hiding." So I kept the time a secret! What I didn't know was that the reason mum had gone back home to our house in Bluebell Road, Swaythling, was to put up the blackout curtains.

War was imminent, and the next day the Prime Minister told the nation we were at war. I didn't realize how different life would become.

Soon I saw what I thought looked like a huge silver elephant in the sky. It was a barrage balloon, and all the neighbours were out and talking about it - they called it Jumbo.

Another day a lorry came down our road and left a pile of corrugated iron sheets outside the houses for us to make Anderson shelters. Once dad had dug a hole and erected the iron sheets over it, he covered the top with the excavated soil so it looked like a small hill, ideal for playing on. Inside were four bunkbeds and a small shelf for a clock and a candle.



Then our gas masks were delivered. I had a conventional mask and my sister Gwen had a Mickey Mouse mask, these fitted over our faces; but my baby brother John had a special mask which would be big enough to put him inside. We would have to pump air into it and take him out to feed and change. We had to practice wearing our gas masks at school whilst we were writing – it was very uncomfortable.

Often, during an air-raid warning we had to go into the school air-raid shelter, sometimes for hours, so our teachers would teach us poetry or mental arithmetic.



This Babies Gas Mask has been donated to the Society by Audrey Spiers

Food was rationed during the war, and I often had to do the shopping for mum. I remember the grocer weighing biscuits from large, glass-topped tins. Occasionally as he put them on the scales one might fall underneath and I used to try to knock it off the counter when no-one was looking. But I only managed this a couple of times!

When my father was called up for the army, mum made us a bed under the table so we did not have to go upstairs to sleep. When the siren sounded she would decide if it was quiet enough for us to stay under the

table or if we should go to the air-raid shelter. One night when we went into the shelter the bombing was very close, and suddenly there was a really loud explosion. The shelter shook and the candle fell on the floor. I was very frightened and wondered if it was our house that had been bombed. I thought we might have to live in the shelter for ever and was scared that, if we had to move somewhere else, my dad would never know where we were. But the bomb was not as close as it sounded, and our house was still standing. However this incident made mum decide we should sleep in the shelter every night, and she took all the bed-clothes, food and water, a kettle and primus stove in there. Gwen and I had books, puzzles and games to play.

There was a lot of bombing now, and one night I heard a lot of shouting outside. My mother looked out and saw flames coming from the roof of our house. She went out to see if she could put out the fire with a bucket of water, but it was a very cold night and the water had frozen and the ARP warden couldn't put out the fire until they had used the sand from

our sandpit. The next day I went into my bedroom, I could see the sky through the roof, and the incendiary that had caused the fire had burned a big hole in my bed.

In 1942 I was proud to win a scholarship from Bassett Green Junior School to St Anne's School, Southampton. However, the school had been evacuated to Bournemouth and so it meant that I would be evacuated too. By this time my younger sister Gwen was six years old and my little brother John was nearly three. When the day came for me to leave, my mother took me to Bournemouth on the train. It was the first time we had been out together without the rest of the family.

The house that I was going to live in had been a guest house. My mother rang the doorbell and a mangy dog appeared round the corner of the house. "You can keep away from that thing" said my mother sharply, just as the hostess opened the front door. What a start!

There were 15 of us in the billet and I was taken to a bedroom on the ground floor, which contained a Morrison shelter and a camp bed. Five of us had to share the room. When we went to bed that night the five of us exchanged information. We were excited at first but that gradually changed. We became quieter and quieter, next came a sniff, then another sniff, and in the end we all cried ourselves to sleep.

The school we had to attend was Talbot Heath, where we had to share lesson times. They had the classrooms in the morning; we had them in the afternoon. We had to attend six days a week and had to go to church on Sunday. We were not allowed to open the desks because the Talbot Heath pupils kept their books in them. We had to carry our books in our satchel each day. It was quite a long walk to school but it did not worry us as most of the journey was through the woodland chine, and we enjoyed seeing the squirrels and rabbits running through the trees and the undergrowth.

The age of the pupils in our billet ranged from 10 to 16. They were all friendly and helpful and we did our homework upstairs, where we also ate our meals. We soon got used to living there and were each given our own rations which we kept in a long sideboard. We had two ounces of butter, two ounces of margarine, a small jar of sugar and a piece of

cheese. Other items such as jam or Marmite had to be brought from home. Everybody was honest and didn't touch other people's food.

We only had cereals and toast for breakfast but dinner was a normal meal. We used to have names for the meals which I've forgotten except for one that was a minced meat pie, nicknamed "Rat Pie" which we had several times a week. Because our meals were eaten upstairs and it was quite a trek to the kitchen, we had a rota for two girls at a time to bring the food to the table. One day when it was my turn to be a waitress I was waiting in the kitchen for the food to be dished up and saw our hostess bring a meat pie out of the oven. "Oh no," I exclaimed, "Not rat pie again!" "What did you say?" our hostess turned and glared at me. Talk about embarrassing! I wished I could have fled home.

When we didn't have to attend school we used to go down into Alum Chine to play. The American soldiers use to do their training there and they had a lot of ropes hanging from and between the trees. They allowed us to swing on the ones that weren't in use, at the same time they kindly gave us chewing gum. We loved it – and I still do (the chewing gum that is!)

Another pastime was to walk along the top of the cliff between Westbourne and Bournemouth. It was barbed-wired off, so we could not get to the beach, which was immaculate and looked very inviting. It made us quite sad and I still get that feeling when I see those cliffs today.

We returned to Southampton when the war ended. It was very strange being back with my family especially as I had a new little sister. My life in Bournemouth was an experience never to be forgotten and I have remained friends with some of the other evacuees to this day.



Compare this image of a United States Child's Disney gas mask with the image of the UK one on page 10. I think children would be more impressed by this one! Of course none of the US ones were ever used and only around a thousand were made. This is now the rarest gas mask for collectors.



WHERE IS THAT GRAVE? - Bryan James

My great grandfather George James, born in M.E.O.T., Middlesex in 1813, was very successful as a merchant and land speculator in Melbourne, Australia from 1838 until he returned to England in 1853.

In 1855 he bought, from Mr. F.M. Lewin, an old castellated mansion known as *Ridgeway Castle* on 22 acres of land which extended down to the Itchen River until the railway was built close to the water's edge.

George replaced the old building with a two storey home able to accommodate his large family and a number of servants – see article in *Bygone Bitterne, Winter 2016, Volume 135*, for more details.

The new building became known as *Ridgeway House* and George lived there until he died on 18th January 1877. A local researcher and member of BLHS was, quite some years ago now, kind enough to obtain for me a Death Certificate for George James and told me that he was buried at “Jesus Chapel, Parish of St Mary Extra, Southampton on 22nd January 1877” but I do not know the source of that information and it is the only information I have on his burial.

The strange part of this story is that there is a substantial ‘monument’ in the grounds of Pear Tree Church on which there are the names of twelve descendants of George James (including a number of his children) but no mention of the man himself! I know for certain that seven of those named descendants died and are buried in Australia, most of those near where I live. My sister visited Bitterne in 1999 and was given a lot of help by members of BLHS especially Mr Jack Hasler and Dr Graham Wood who both went with her to the monument and held back the over-growth to enable her to photograph the wording on every one of the (marble?) memorial ‘plaques’ – there are three of those plaques on each side of the structure and one on each end.

I have a feeling that this 'monument' may have been put there fairly soon after WW2 because the names of George's children still living then are not on any of the 'plaques'.



Who designed that structure? Who supplied all the names and dates of birth, death etc? Who paid for it? Was its erection authorised by the church authorities? and so on.

Perhaps the names and dates were provided by Catherine Annie James

(1876-1936) and/or Charlotte Elizabeth James (1877-1935) who were the first two children born to Charles James, a son of George James and one of the Executors of George's will in Australia?

That would seem reasonable because those two of George's grandchildren, although born and died in Australia, lived together for much of their lives in the UK where they were evidently recognised as talented and prolific artists in oils and watercolours – Charlotte (known in the family as Dot) evidently also produced a number of illustrated children's books.

Dr Wood told me that he believed the structure is nothing more than a memorial and that no person was ever buried there – he thought it was possible that George James was buried inside the church building in an area where there is (or then was) a wooden floor.

I wonder if there is any way of finding out exactly where George James is buried?



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CLOSURE OF THORNHILL ROAD POST OFFICE 'NEWSMART' - Mary Abraham

The owners Jean and Wally Rice-Adams have retired from the business and shop after 51 years in the retail business. They originally moved from the site of the old Post Office at 63 Thornhill Park Road, 28 years ago and moved the whole business there a year later. The site of number 63 has been converted into 2 flats. Original photos are seen in Jim Brown's wonderful book, and on the cover, *The Illustrated History of Southampton's Suburbs*, (Breedon Books, 2004).



When they purchased Number 15 from Mr Shergold they extended the shop 3 times in total. Their son, Michael, and his wife, Diane Rice Adams, ran the Post Office between them and together with daughter, Jenny Thompson, built up a friendly and successful business for the local area. We have had various shops and businesses along this stretch of retail

premises including Len's Barbers (at No. 1) that was here for a number of years and O'Dell's Hardware (at 3 to 5) before becoming a Bed and Furniture shop.

They will all be sadly missed and we await what will be in the pipeline for us all in the coming months. 

[In my youth (1960s) after Len's and O'Dell's at numbers 1 and 3/5 there was Brading's the Grocer at 7, Baxters' the Butcher at 9, Smeeds' the Wine Merchant at 11, Sims' the Fishmongers at 13 and Machim's the Newsagent at 15 - Editor]

YET MORE MEMORIES ANSWERED – Jim Brown

Answers to picture questions in Volume 135

Hoare's Bakery - was at 38 St Catherine's Road, Bitterne Park but from the picture the shop entrance was obviously in Bond Road.

Ticket for last week of Floating Bridge operation - the last day of operation was 11 June 1977.

The Village Pound - was near the junction of Pound Street (Pound Lane before 1897) and Bitterne Road and moved several times. 



NON-LOCAL MEMBERS REMINDER

Just a short reminder to overseas and other non-local members that they can enjoy their copy of Bygone Bitterne a lot quicker if they opt to receive the electronic version instead. You can test it out by contacting the editor at blhseditor@gmail.com and having the two to compare. One member who has taken up this offer has told me that the only disadvantage is that he can no longer read it in bed! 



REMINDER FOR ALL MEMBERS

Just a quick reminder that Membership Renewals were due at the beginning of January. The Membership Secretary would welcome more returned to him at our shop address (see back cover). 



DONATION THANKS

We would like to thank the unknown person who left a bag of buttons on the shop step as a donation. Doesn't sound like much? Well Marion has been sorting through them and has filled about 150 button tubes already and has only done about half of them. We will probably not be buying buttons to resell for many years; a much valued gift. 

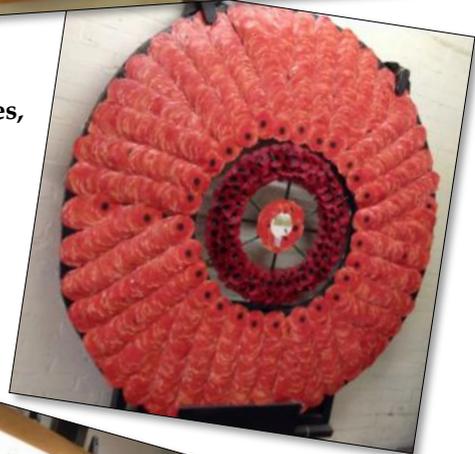
**VISIT TO BRITISH LEGION POPPY FACTORY RICHMOND -
Mary Abraham**

The factory continues to hold the Royal Warrant to supply poppies and wreaths to HM The Queen. The Queen's wreath takes approximately a week to make and the corsages take a few hours.



Above: Wreaths of (left to right)
H.M. The Queen, H.R.H. The Prince of Wales,
H.R.H. The Duke of Cambridge,
H.R.H. Prince Henry.

Right: The large wreath was made of cards
filled in by members of the public
commemorating the 95th anniversary of the
Somme.



Above: Iris has worked
in the factory for 30 years (taken with permission).



FLY AND CAB REGULATIONS 1878

I found this in a Southampton Directory for 1878 recently donated to the Heritage Centre, at present undergoing repair, and I thought members may be interested in these edited Regulations.

The Proprietors are required by the Bye Laws to keep their carriages clean and in good order; to have lamps affixed, and to provide check strings.

FARES FOR DISTANCES.

TWO HORSES. For every carriage drawn by two horses for any distance within, and not exceeding one mile, 1s. 6d.; and for any distance exceeding one mile, after the rate of 4d. for every quarter of a mile, and for any fractional part of a quarter of a mile over and above any number of quarter of miles completed.

ONE HORSE. For every carriage drawn by one horse only, for any distance within, and not exceeding one mile, 1s.; and for any distance exceeding one mile, after the rate of 3d. for every quarter of a mile, and for every fractional part of a quarter of a mile over and above any number of quarter of miles completed.

FARES FOR TIME.

TWO HORSES. For every carriage drawn by two horses for any time (employed in going from any stand, and returning to the nearest stand after being discharged) within and not exceeding thirty minutes, 2s.; above thirty minutes and not exceeding forty-five minutes, 2s. 6d.; above forty-five minutes and not exceeding one hour, 3s.; and for any further time not exceeding one hour, then after the rate and proportion of 8d. for any fractional part of the period of fifteen minutes.

ONE HORSE. For every carriage drawn by one horse only, for any time (employed in going from any stand, and returning to the nearest stand after being discharged) within and not exceeding thirty minutes, 1s. 6d.; above thirty minutes and not exceeding forty-five minutes, 2s.; above forty-five minutes and not exceeding one hour, 2s. 6d.; and for any further time exceeding one hour, then after the rate and proportion of 6d. for every fifteen minutes completed, and 6d. for any fractional part of the

period of fifteen minutes.

Such Rates and Fares to include Luggage not exceeding one hundred weight for a carriage and two horses, and half a hundred weight for a carriage with one horse. Driver to produce Rates and Fares on demand.

EXTRA FARE. Proprietors are entitled to charge one half the ordinary fare in addition if hired before six o'clock in the morning, and after twelve o'clock at night.



COMPUTATION OF

DISTANCES. The distance is computed from the Stand or place where the Carriage is hired; but in case the Carriage is taken from any place of public assembly or amusement, the distance is then computed from such place and not from the Stand.

DETENTION. If the driver of any carriage is detained above fifteen minutes at any place or places, except when detained by the hirer for the purpose of returning as hereinafter provided, he is entitled to charge for every fifteen minutes' detention if the Carriage has two horses, 6d. ; and if one horse, 4d.

DETENTION AND RETURN. That in any of the following cases it shall be at the option of the hirer to detain the Carriage and return in the same, on the payment of half the ordinary fare, without any charge for detention :—

"Where the hire by distance, of a Carriage with two horses, shall amount to 4s. and upwards, or a Carriage with one horse to 3s. or upwards, and the detention shall not exceed half an hour.

Where the hire by time, of a Carriage with two horses shall amount to 3s. or upwards, of a Carriage with one horse to 2s. or upwards, and the detention shall not exceed a quarter of an hour.





A double dose of nostalgia for this edition.

March 1992 – Death of an Eyesore by Senex

Often, on a sunny Sunday morning in those far-off days before World War I, a small boy might have been seen setting out with his Dad from their Bitterne Park home to visit his Grandma in Bitterne Village.

Their favourite route began by way of Midanbury Lane, followed by Monks' Path. This ran between Bitterne Grove (now St. Mary's College) and the edge of Glenfield Farm, where Jersey cows peacefully grazed. They then crossed a stream by a neat little plank bridge. (During holidays, the lad and his mates often visited this stream with jam-jars in search of tadpoles). A stile, which stood at the foot of narrow, tree-lined Lances Hill, was reached by a well-trodden footpath. To the left of this footpath was a hedge of hawthorn (bread and cheese) and to the right lay an untidy over-grown area which had once been a brickfield. That unpromising patch is the crux of our story.

Years passed. The farm fields were sold to developers. The stile, the stream and the plank bridge vanished, and the footpath became part of a new road (Glenfield Avenue). Other roads followed, and many houses were built.

Homes mean children, and children need schooling. Existing schools in the district had steadily overcrowded and the need for a new school could no longer be ignored. But where should a new school be built?

Authority spotted the former brickfield and acquired it in 1948. The price is interesting. It cost precisely ONE POUND. The disreputable spot was cleared of its weeds and the litter which had been dumped there over the years.

Work in preparation for the new school began in April 1950, but soon ran into difficulties. From higher ground nearby rain water had for years drained into the low-lying site, and so the foundations demanded greater attention and expenditure that had been expected. In consequence the building was not ready for occupation until January 1953.

The name, Beechwood Junior School, was chosen for its association with neighbouring Beechwood House and the Beechwood Housing Estate.

At the school's official opening on 20th January 1953 the Mayor of

Southampton presided over a distinguished gathering.

Such are the whirligigs of time that the first headmaster was that little boy who forty years before had crossed the stream by the plank bridge with his Dad.

And soon another forty years will have passed since the school came into being.



Local History Curiosities by Ken Prior

Did you know that:-

In 1869 Emma Batt won a prize for a nosegay at the horticultural show in the grounds of Merry Oak House

In 1903 The skipping contest at the Bitterne Carnival was won by Ethel Whitlock, Annie Collins, Ada Thorne and Nora Henning each receiving a Silver brooch.

In 1913 A recent addition to Peartree Green was the horizontal and vaulting bars, a special attraction for the younger generation.

In 1920 Southampton Council received £8 for the sale of hay!

In 1930 N. Cozens won the 100 yards, 220 yards, Half Mile, Quarter Mile and Mile races at the Itchen Secondary School sports day.

also in 1930 A letter appeared in The Echo critical of a speeding car in Bitterne Road.

In 1938 'The Echo' commented on the lack of tree planting along the new avenues "If care is not taken, the new parts of Southampton will be dreary treeless stretches of bricks and mortar".

also in 1938 Mrs Thorne won a special prize for best ankles at the Woolston Carnival.

In 1960 Landscaping at Harefield was praised in the book "Garden Design" as "Blocks of flats and terraces standing amid trees, shrubs and verges.



NEW STORAGE SPACE



As you will no doubt have heard we have installed a second container in the garden behind the Heritage Centre to replace the storage we had in a building owned by the church that is due for redevelopment.



Top left: the existing container is moved over
Top right: the new container arrives supervised by Mike and Peter
Above: the secretary doing some housekeeping!
Right: the new container about to be unloaded





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OTHER LOCAL SOCIETIES

West End Local History Society

Meetings in West End Parish Centre, Chapel Road, SO30 3FE at 7.30 pm

5th April SOUTHAMPTON'S LAMMAS LANDS by Geoff Watts

3rd May THE MILLIONTH YANK by Jake Simpkin

7th June FROM SILK TO SOAP by Dr Andy Russel

Contact: 02380 471886

Botley, Curdridge and Durley History Society

Meetings held at Reading Room, Curdridge, SO32 2HE at 8.00 pm

17th March WW2 FLYING BOATS by Trevor Richer

28th April - LOUIS PASTEUR & RABIES VIRUS by Dr Tim Mason

Contact: 01489 691777

City of Southampton Society

Meetings at Edmund Kell Church Hall, Bellevue Road, SO15 2AY at 7.00

27th March WILLIAM WALKER - the diver at Winchester Cathedral
by Margaret Braddock

24th April THE LOST PUBS OF SOUTHAMPTON by Dave Goddard

22nd May BERTHON AND HIS BOATS by Barbara Burridge

Contact: info@coass.org.uk

Hampshire Industrial Archaeological Society (HIAS)

Meetings at Underhill Centre, St John's Church, St John's Road, Hedge End, SO30 4AF starting at 7.45 pm.

3rd April QUAKER BUSINESSES IN BRITAIN by John Avery

8th May GUN WHARF AREA OF PORTSMOUTH
by M Underwood

Millbrook Local History Society

Holy Trinity Church Hall, Millbrook Road at 7.30

6th April HUGUENOTS OF SOUTHAMPTON AND THE SOUTH
COAST by John Avery

4th May MY RAF FIGHTER PILOT FATHER'S RECOLLECTIONS
IN A POW CAMP by John Hall

Contact: 02380 770148



FUTURE EVENTS

SOUTHAMPTON & DISTRICT NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

“LIFE AND DEATH OF A TUDOR SAILOR” an illustrated talk about the ‘Mary Rose’ with artefacts by Trevor Sapey from the “Mary Rose Trust”
19th May at the Central Baptist Church, Devonshire Road, SO15 2GY.

7.00 pm, Admission Free

Enquiries: Tel: 02380 556648

HISTORY AND HERITAGE CLUB

A group of friends, mainly BLHS members, who go on outings to historical and heritage sites, organised by Mary Abraham. All are welcome to join them.

Next day trip is Saturday 25th March guided tour and exploring our area ‘East of the River Itchen’. Early Spring break away to Newquay Cornwall has been put back to Tuesday 28th March - Sat 1st April. Please enquire for details.

Future days out to be confirmed at meetings. Friday 14th July The Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford. Proposed trip to visit this great airshow. Details to follow. Mary Abraham Tel 8039 4930.

LOCAL EVENTS IN WHICH BLHS ARE INVOLVED

27 May **Riverfest** at Riverside Park; a new community party to celebrate our river in Southampton and all the communities around it.

10 Aug **Make Bitterne Better** in Bitterne Precinct aimed at boosting pride and community spirit in the neighbourhood.

09 Sept **Southampton Heritage Open Day** at our Heritage Centre and across Southampton and the country.

30 Sept **The Hampshire Field Club** Local History Section, AGM and Autumn Outing that we are hosting at the URC.



BITTERNE LOSES ANOTHER PUB – Peter Richards

The Big Cheese pub in West End Road, Bitterne closed its doors for the last time on Sunday, 12 February 2017 and according to local newspapers is due to be turned into flats. This local watering hole was previously called the Cat and Mouse, but many of you will remember it, as I do, by its original name of The Bitterne Brewery.



This is how the Big Cheese looked not long before it finally closed down.

A potted history of the Bitterne Brewery can be found on the BLHS website which reads:

Opened in 19th Century as a brewery. Brewing ceased before WWI and the brewery building was demolished in 1926.

The original pub was damaged badly by air raids in WWII, killing

the then landlord, William Sly. Victor Sly (William's son) was made landlord and continued using the same (patched up) building until 1952 when the present pub was built.

One of the earliest pubs to have its own matchboxes manufactured for advertising. In 1902 one advert was for Whiskey at 14s/9p (73p) per GALLON!! For many years a free house but associated with Courage's Brewery since 1955.¹

The picture (top of next page, from the BLHS collection) was taken about 1920, when Mr W. J. Sly was the landlord. The garages on the left are where Hiawatha & Queen Charabancs operated from.



The bomb damage to the building occurred on 22 June 1942, when the landlord William Sly was killed. When the Bitterne Brewery was rebuilt after the war, it “became a popular place for parties and group meetings - including the local Labour Party and the Young Men’s Group”. A more recent advert for the Bitterne Brewery which appeared in a BLHS publication from 1983 reads:

Mine hosts Mike and Rita Farthing have an excellent beer to sell and very efficient staff to sell it. So come and enjoy a drink and a meal at lunchtime or a drink and a chat in the evening. Pool and darts in the public bar.³



Sadly the Big Cheese now looks like this (18/02/17) - as Bitterne loses yet another pub.

Notes

1. Retrieved from www.bitterne.net
2. BLHS, Images of England: Bitterne, Tempus Publishing Ltd, Stroud, 1999, p.50.
3. BLHS, *Bitterne: A Village Remembered*, Bitterne Local History Society, Southampton 1983, p.73.



PRESIDENTIAL PATTTER – *Ian Abrahams*

Dear Friends,

The sudden closure of the Big Cheese public house in West End Road a few weeks ago has signalled the end of another era in our village, although as we go to print there is a move to 'rescue' it and reopen. To many of us it will always be the Bitterne Brewery, in fact I am sure there are still those who ask for the Brewery when wishing to get off the bus at Mousehole Lane (amongst our archives we have a Southampton Corporation Bus destination blind which actually says Bitterne Brewery).



In the 1840s The Star (a beer house) was listed as being in Dean Road (then Brewery Road) immediately behind the present Brewery, and it was probably here that beer was brewed, entries in the directories discontinue in the 1860s. The Brewery appears as a private residence in 1844 but by 1862 is listed as a public house, run by Mr George Eden (possibly related to John Eden who ran the Red Lion a few years later). By 1888 William Emmanuel Sly was the proprietor, he was to be there for many years until he was sadly killed in a bombing raid on June 22nd 1942. It reopened after refurbishment in the early 1950s with Victor J. Sly in

charge and following several changes of landlord it finally closed in 1998. Following another refurbishment it reopened as The Cat and Mouse, finally changing to the Big Cheese. Interestingly we have in our collection both the Brewery and Cat and Mouse signs. Alongside the Brewery during the 1920s was the home of Queen and Hiawatha Charabancs although those pictured here are Royal Blue.

Some of you will know that in recent months we have been moving many of our stored artefacts from the old Holy Saviour church office prior to it's redevelopment. Thank you to those friends who have helped with this and with relocating them in other stores, sadly we have had to dispose of some items due to shortage of space. If anyone can offer a dry secure garage we would be most grateful. The good news is that some items have come to light after many years in storage, watch for new displays in our museum.

All good wishes,

Ian



The Chairman needs a hand with a shop-fitting rescued from Paynes shop.

2017 BLHS CALENDAR

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Mar 11th	BYGONE BITTERNE	Ian Abrahams
Apr 8th	ALL AROUND THE GALLOPERS: The Restoration of a Merry-go-Round	Bob Smith
May 13th	LADY MARIA CLUTTERBUCK The Story of Mrs Charles Dickens	Jane Glennie
Jun 10th	SOUTHAMPTON PASSENGER SHIPS & DOCKS	Jake Simpkin
Jul 8th	MARY SEACOLE The Lady without the Lamp	John Avery
August	NO MEETING	
Sep 8th	AGM	
Oct 14th	JANE AUSTEN'S SOUTHAMPTON	Dr Cheryl Butler

**Deadline for contributions to the Summer Edition
is Saturday, 13th May**

Please send contributions to the Editor, Steve Adams
blhs.editor@gmail.com (note that this is a new email address)
or leave them at the Heritage Centre

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OPENING TIMES

Monday Closed

Tuesday - Friday 9.00am - 5.00 pm

Saturday 9.30am - 1.00pm

BITTERNE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

CHARITY SHOP

Including limited viewing of Museum displays

Monday - Friday 10am-4pm

& Saturday & 10am-1pm

HERITAGE & RESEARCH CENTRE

Stewards available to help at the following times

Tuesday 1pm-4pm, Wednesday 10am-4pm,

Thursday & Friday 1pm-4pm

1st & 3rd Saturday of the month 10am -1pm

Or by arrangement - telephone 023 8063 7967

231 Peartree Ave, Bitterne, Southampton

SO19 7RD

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