

Bitterne Local

History Society



ESTABLISHED 1981

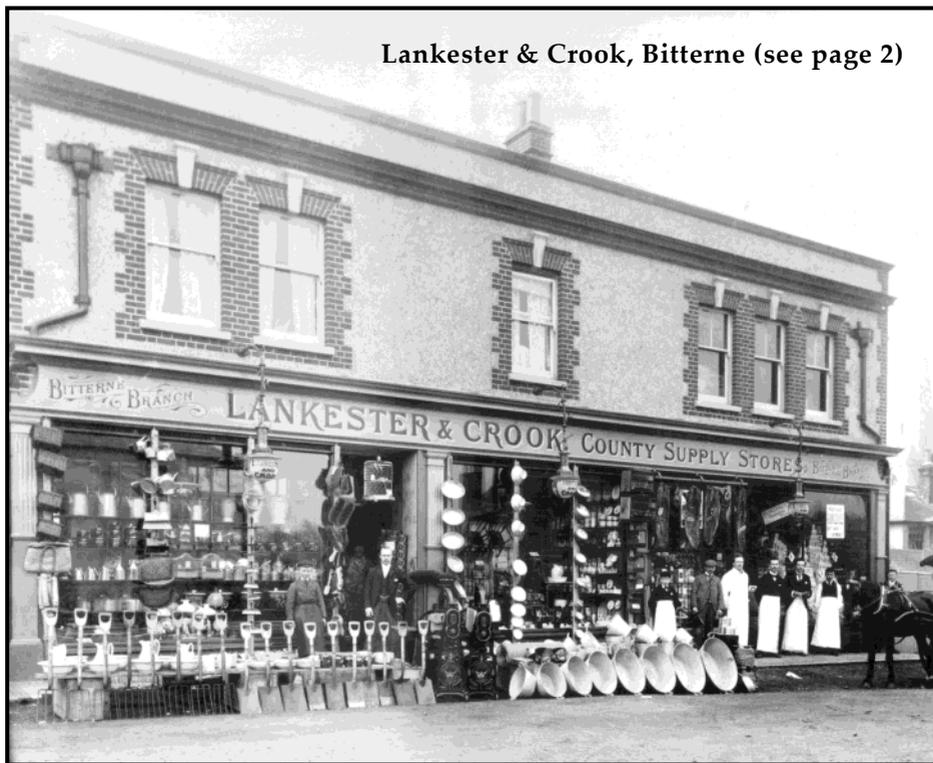
'Keeping Bitterne's History Alive'

REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1005127

BYGONE BITTERNE

SPRING 2020 VOLUME 149

Lankester & Crook, Bitterne (see page 2)



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

Annual membership subscription - £14.00; second person at same address £6.00 (no magazine)
Concessionary (under 18 & over 80) - £8.00; Overseas membership - £20.00

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 OR ELECTRONIC FORMATS
PLEASE CONTACT THE EDITOR

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The cover photograph is one of those referred to by Ian in his Presidential Patter, page 30.

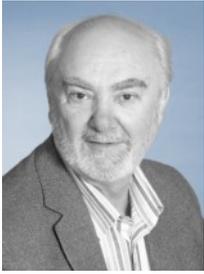
Advertisers

During these very difficult times for traders, and in the rebuilding phase after the virus, please support our advertisers who are supporting your Society.

Lion Cup Local History writing competition details are now on our website, please consider using your unexpected spare time to write something for it.

A vacancy now exists for a BLHS Treasurer (see opposite) – if you are interested in finding out more please contact Peter or Martyn.





DEAR FRIENDS — From the Chairman

Dear Friends,

At the time of writing there is much uncertainty about the Coronavirus pandemic and how it will affect us in the weeks and months ahead. Any decisions made by the Society will be guided by the government and WHO advice – which seems to change almost daily – apart from washing our hands with soap and water or hand sanitiser for 20 seconds, which remains a constant. We have already cancelled meetings up, to and including, that in May.

I have some sad news – Marion Brown, the wife of BLHS Vice President Jim Brown, has passed away aged 88. She was very involved in the BLHS Charity Shop from 1995 onwards. Marion and Jim moved to Norfolk about a year ago. Our condolences go to Jim and his family at this difficult time. Mary Huggins has also recently passed away. I have fond memories of working with Mary in the Museum (when it was located at 225 Peartree Avenue) and also of her dressed as Queen Victoria on Heritage Open Day. A wonderful lady – I will miss her. Condolences go to all her friends and family.

On a more cheerful note, I am delighted to inform members that BLHS member, Spencer Millard, who has been working in the web development industry for almost twenty years, is now in the process of redesigning and modernising the BLHS website to bring it right up to date with many exciting new features. As you can imagine this involves a great deal of work but the site is expected to be ready to go live within a couple of months. Watch this space!

The BLHS Lion Cup Competition for 2020 is now open. Members and non-members alike are encouraged to write about their experiences, or research local history, and submit an entry. The closing date is 31 July 2020. Full details can be found on our website: www.bitterne.net.

Now we come on to fund raising. As you will know BLHS has a large collection of historic photographs of the area dating back some one hun-

dred and forty years. Due to their age and varying condition we would like to ensure that these are preserved for the future and make them more widely available for use and research. As a first step we wish to digitise all of our photographs and so we have launched a fundraising effort to raise £1500 to purchase the necessary equipment. We already have an anonymous donor who has very generously agreed to give us up to half of this amount as long as we can raise the other half by 31st July; he will match equally any money we collect. A collection box will be made available at meetings and donations in cash or cheques can be deposited there or sent to the Heritage Centre for the attention of the Chairman. We hope to come up with other fund raising ideas.

My thanks go to Jo Stacey, who has kindly responded to a request in the previous issue of the magazine for a Committee Minutes Secretary and offered to take on the role. The Committee are very grateful – welcome aboard Jo!

Sadly I have to report that our Treasurer, Carol Masters, has decided to resign from her post. I consider Carol's resignation a devastating blow as she was a highly valued member of my team. I will take this opportunity to offer a massive thank you to Carol for all she has done for the Society, I think her contribution has been immense. As far as I am concerned she has always acted with professionalism and integrity, I have always found her easy to work with and it has been a pleasure having her as part of the team. I am now considering my position but in the meantime I am prioritising keeping the finances of the Society on track with the help of the Secretary, trying to fill the position of Treasurer, and helping to organise the clearing of the flat to reduce our overheads. A number of people indicated to me that they thought Carol's departure is a great loss to the Society.

On a more positive note I have heard on the grapevine that a substantial donation from the estate of the late Bob Lavington, is on its way to BLHS, adding to our already healthy reserve fund. That's great news.

Recent BLHS meetings have included the talk by Dawn Perrier Baker on the *Mary Rose* in January this year, which received much positive feedback; the evening being considered a very successful and interesting one.

In February Andrew Negus treated us with *Winchester: Bishops Buildings and Bones, Part 2*. Andrew is an engaging speaker which is why I have booked Part 3 for 2021.

Future plans for the coming year include collaborating with Bitterne Library with VE and VJ day displays in May and August respectively, although the planned VE day display in May is now unlikely due to the temporary closure of the library. We are also planning to be involved in the Bitterne Festival in the precinct again this in August and will be taking part in the Peartree 400 event on 19 September, celebrating 400 years of Peartree Church. Social Historian, Researcher and Broadcaster, Emma Muscat, has kindly offered to collaborate with us at this event using her historical and culinary expertise.

We have been pleased to receive organised visits from the 1st Itchen South Beaver Group on two evenings earlier in the year. The group were lively, noisy and boisterous, as you would expect of 6-7 year olds, but hopefully we have instilled some interest in local history.

Some people have seen our display in a shop in West End Road, Bitterne, where the 'Block Party' shop was until recently and asked, "Are you moving premises?" The answer is no we are only using the empty shop space with the kind permission of the owner until a new tenant is found and then we will vacate. We hope that this display will encourage people to visit our Museum in Peartree Avenue – if you haven't been lately why not come along and see what is on display. However, please check opening times before coming.

As a result of the Covid-19 virus pandemic, our Shop/Museum is temporarily closed. We will endeavour to keep the website up to date to tell you when it opens again and also with any revisions to the Saturday meeting plans. I hope this magazine will offer an interesting diversion in these unprecedented times, especially to those who are self-isolating.

Keep calm and carry on. Best wishes

Peter



Is it in Pevsner? — Peter Jones

Sir Nikolaus Pevsner (1902-83) was one of Britain's most eminent architectural historians. He was born into a Russian-Jewish family in Leipzig. His promising academic career was cut short by the rise of the Nazis. Pevsner fled to Britain and went on to become a distinguished scholar, writer and broadcaster. Those keen to know more about the man can read Susie Harries' excellent though lengthy biography *Nikolaus Pevsner: The Life*.

Pevsner is best known for his 46 volume county-by-county guide *The Buildings of England* - the result of decades of work. To research it the dogged Pevsner, often with Lola, his long-suffering wife and various assistants, travelled around the country in unreliable cars staying in cheap, insalubrious pubs and hotels. To be included in the guide is an honour and means a building is significant in some way. Indeed, such is its standing, enthusiasts of architecture habitually inquire 'Is it in Pevsner?'

The Hampshire and Isle of Wight volume was first published in 1967. For Pevsner, Southampton's primary architectural merits were its medieval and modern buildings. The Bargate, for him was 'probably the finest, and certainly the most complex, town gateway in Britain'. Alt-



though many buildings he admired are long gone such as the swimming baths on Western Esplanade which he regarded as excellent.

The volume also covered the suburbs. Pevsner was rather hard on the Eastern side of Southampton calling it a 'suburban wilderness'. However, he did list Bitterne police station designed by borough architect Mr. L. Berger who was also responsible for Bitterne Library. Now vacant and rather forlorn, Pevsner noted the station's fine proportions. The nearby and recently truncated Christ the King Church is commented on too with Pevsner comparing its steeple to 'a fireman's practice tower'.

Glenfield Infants School, built in 1952 is mentioned, but strangely not Cobbett Road Library. But not being recorded didn't mean a building was not of merit. Susie Harries in her biography of Pevsner notes that in regard to an omission, he remarked: 'Ten to one I didn't even know it existed'. Yet, he was aware of the Clock Tower at Bitterne Park Triangle which he deemed 'very effective' and 'right in scale'.

Up the road on Cobden Avenue, the now drastically altered Church of Ascension gets nearly two pages and is described as 'the most rewarding post-medieval church in Southampton'. Pevsner was also enthusiastic about Bitterne Park School in Dimond Road: 'A compelling, sensitively designed building, subtly related to the topography'. One wonders what he might have made of school's demolition and its new jazzy replacement.

Slightly further afield, Harefield housing estate met with approval due to its numerous green spaces and trees. The 17th century Peartree House and Peartree Church are both listed with the latter described in some detail. Pevsner also visited Bitterne Manor House that had been restored by local architect Herbert Collins in the early 1950s. Pevsner wrote that it seemed 'a real oasis'. So next time you are looking around Southampton or some other place, you might ask: *Is it in Pevsner?*



BITTERNE MOVING INTO THE BOROUGH OF SOUTHAMPTON

This year marks one hundred years since Bitterne changed to become a part of the Borough of Southampton. There had been at least ten years of debate before this actually happened, for the main part with Bitterne opposing the scheme. The report of the Council Sub-Committee below marks the end of negotiations about the gains for Bitterne. Overleaf there is a newspaper report of the time.



BOROUGH BOUNDARIES SUB-COMMITTEE .

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

Thursday, 8th January, 1920. At a Meeting of the Sub-Committee.

PRESENT.— The Mayor (Alderman Kimber), Aldermen Dunsford, J.P., and Hollis, J.P.. and Councillor Bonner, The Mayor (Alderman Kimber), Chairman, presiding.

1 NON-ATTENDANCE

Reported apology from Council Blakeway.

2 EXTENSION OF BOROUGH BOUNDARIES—BITTERNE PARISH.

The Sub-Committee again conferred with Representatives of the Bitterne Parish Council, the deputation consisting of the Chairman (Mr. J. Brown), Messrs. J. Bailey, H. Small, W. Haines, E. Seymour, and Mr. P. Small (Assistant Clerk), when the following points of Agreement were arrived at between the Sub-Committee and the Deputation, subject to confirmation by the County Borough Council and the Bitterne Parish Council : —

1. NORTHAM BRIDGE.—Corporation to promote Bill in Parliament within five years of the contemplated Borough Boundaries extension coming into operation, for the purchase by them of this undertaking.

Tolls to be continued. Profit to go to sinking fund for amortization of the cost of acquisition.

2. ELECTRICITY.—Within twelve months of the extension and subject to the approval of the Board of Trade or other Department of State, Corporation to provide at Bitterne (1) public lighting in principal roads, (2) power supply for commercial purposes, and (3) supply for lighting and heating for domestic purposes.

3. OMNIBUS SERVICE.—On extension : service to be instituted at once from Bitterne to Itchen; and *via* Northern Bridge when the same has been acquired and municipalized by the Corporation, but subject then to the payment of tolls.

4. PUBLIC HEALTH.—Southampton's Isolation Hospitals and Clinics, Health and Food Inspectors and Health Visitors to be available for the Added Areas immediately on the extension.

5. EDUCATION.—Like facilities and scholarships for both elementary and secondary education, for the Added Areas as in the County Borough.

6. POLICE.—Extension of County Borough Police Force to Added Areas.

7. FREE LIBRARY.—Branch Library for Bitterne to be established in the Martin Parish Hall and to be opened twice a week, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

8. SCAVENGING.—House Refuse collection within six months of the extension. Collection of Trade Refuse to be paid for in the usual way.

NOTE. —The above points are contingent on the Parish Council undertaking to support the proposed extension. They are memoranda only of the understanding arrived at and are not to form the subject matter of any articles in the Extension Order.

(Signed) S. G. KIMBER,
Mayor of Southampton,

(Signed) J. BROWN,
Chairman, Bitterne Parish Council.



'We are country folk and desire to remain so'

The proposed amalgamation of the parish of Bitterne, the urban area of Itchen, and parts of the district of North and South Stoneham with Southampton has been the subject of many lengthy and heated debates by the authorities concerned during the last few years.

Before the war the consensus of opinion was against such a proposal, and Itchen, which is the most important area affected, was particularly bitter against any suggestion of amalgamation with the borough. The alteration in the constitution of the governing body during the past 12 months, however, has had a decided effect upon the question, and although in September 1918, the Itchen Council passed a resolution urging the Hampshire County Council to oppose the scheme for the extension of the borough boundaries, a motion to rescind is to be moved at the next meeting of the authority and it will in all probability be successful.

It may be merely said of Bitterne that the general opinion is not averse to being included in the borough.

The position at South Stoneham is particularly interesting. The Parish Council recently decided to take a poll of the electors, but the result suggests that the parishioners are not greatly interested. Less than a third of the total number of voters took the trouble to record their views, and of the 213 votes cast 146 were in favour of the amalgamation and 66 against.

In North Stoneham the situation is quite different. The residents have many of the modern conveniences without the heavy rates of the town, and many of them very definitely state that they totally disapprove of Southampton's project. In effect they say: "We are country folk and desire to remain so."

Southampton, of course, is taking a very definite attitude. The heads of the municipality have given every consideration to the very many vexed questions, involved, so that there is no likelihood of the reconsideration of policy.

Though the facts recorded indicate that the amalgamation is not regarded with animosity, yet objection, though it may be merely formal, is bound to be raised by the local governing bodies of the districts affected, with the perfectly natural view of obtaining the best possible concessions and improvements.

Hampshire Independent, 3rd January 1920





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THE LOST DAYS OF 1752 — *Jim Brown*

Those BLHS members who research their family history will find that none of their ancestors, indeed nobody in the British Isles, was born, baptised, died or married between the 3rd and 13th September 1752. In fact, everybody who went to bed on the night of Wednesday 2 September 1752 woke up next morning on Thursday 14 September. No, they were not all Rip Van Winkles, it was because of the Calendar (New Style) Act, 1750. This changed the previous Julian calendar to the new Gregorian calendar.

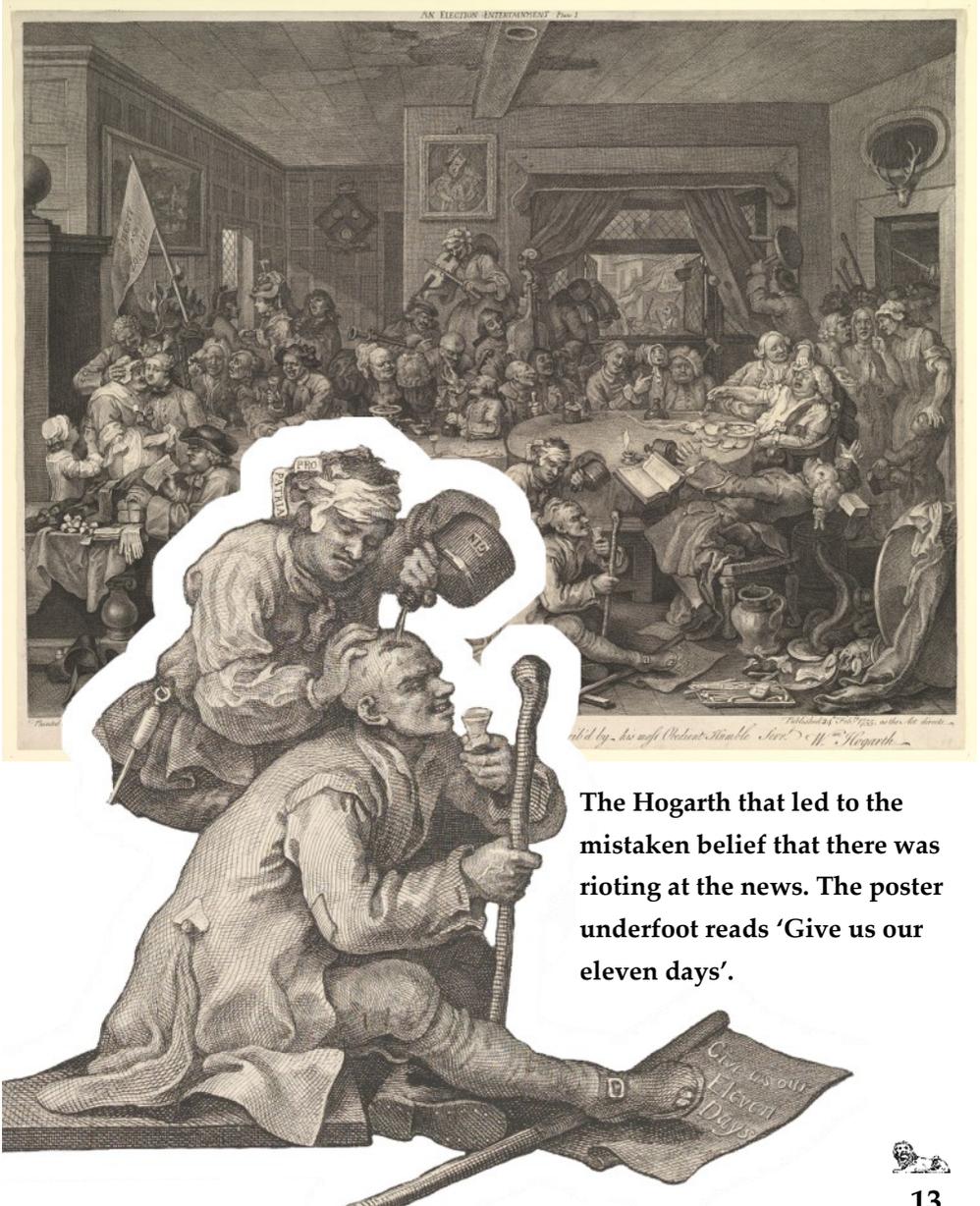
The Julian calendar, as the name suggests, was created during the reign of Julius Caesar and was used throughout Western Europe for the next 1,500 years. However, it contained a tiny flaw believing the length of a year to be 365.25 days instead of the actual 365.2422 days. This small difference meant the calendar dates and timings of the equinoxes increasingly diverged over the centuries, from minutes to hours and finally by days. This created a real problem for the church as Easter is calculated using the date of the spring equinox.

The problem was solved by Pope Gregory XIII in the 16th century, who issued a new calendar, the Gregorian. Spain, Portugal, France, Poland, Italy and other Catholic states adopted it in 1582, but Protestant countries, such as Britain, rejected it. Over the ensuing 200 years most Protestant countries converted to the Gregorian calendar, but Britain (there were Brexiteers even then!) held out against the rest of Europe. But by 1750 there were 11 days difference between dates in Europe and those in Britain, hence the Calendar (New Style) Act of 1750.

This also had the side effect of changing the date of the New Year. The official Christian New Year, under the Julian calendar, started on 25 March. This meant that on 31 December 1750 it remained 1750 until 24 March, when it changed to 1751.

To resolve this issue the new Act stated that 1751, that had begun on 25 March, only lasted 282 days, finishing on 31 December, so that 1752 could

begin on 1 January. This change means that the year date of birth, baptism, death and marriage in the first three months of the year prior to 1752 can often be a year out relative to the modern date, so worth checking in your family tree.



The Hogarth that led to the mistaken belief that there was rioting at the news. The poster underfoot reads 'Give us our eleven days'.



A GROCER'S LIFE — George Parsons
contributed by Denise Hacking (his daughter)

I was born in Darra, Queensland, in 1914. My father, Sidney Parsons was born at the Blue Boar Inn, East Street, Southampton, the son of publican John Parsons. Sidney served in the Boer War and on his return to Southampton he worked as a steward at the Polygon Villa where he met my mother.

They married and, with the hope of bettering their lives, they emigrated to Australia in 1908 to work on Queensland's sugar plantations and later my father was employed on Brisbane docks. I was the fourth child to be born in the family home, a wooden house in the outback. I remember being scared of the Aborigines who came around our home but we eventually became friends. School was eight miles away and we four children made the journey together on one horse.

Two more children were born and life became a struggle so eventually in 1920 my uncle paid for us to return to Southampton on the SS *Orsova*, a seven-week journey to Tilbury. By this time my grandfather was landlord of the Salisbury Arms in French Street and the family moved in, complete with kangaroo skins which were used as rugs. I will always remember their awful smell. Another memory was being taken up to the top of the spire of St Michaels church on the shoulders of a steeplejack!!

In 1923 my mother died of pneumonia followed soon after by my father and grandfather so at the age of nine I was an orphan. The family spent a time living with my maternal grandmother in Milton Road. My two older brothers joined the Merchant Navy; my two sisters stayed with grandmother but my younger brother Frank and I were too much of a handful and so we were fostered by an elderly couple living at 54 Whites Road, Bitterne. And so we became Bitterne boys.

We went to Bitterne C of E school and were choirboys at the Church of the Holy Saviour where I used to pump the bellows for the organ on

Sundays. I was an errand boy for Lankester and Crook and so when I left school at fourteen Mr Crook offered me an apprenticeship. He thought I had the makings of a grocer.

I was indentured for four years working at the Victoria Road, Woolston branch. The weekly wage was 7/6 for the first year, 10/- the second year 12/6 the third year and finally 15/- for the fourth year. Working hours were 7.30 am until 9.00 pm and to 10.00 pm at weekends.

Wednesday was half day and so I was able to play football for the Woolston Wednesdays. There were four other apprentices. We wore

long white aprons and white coats, which we had to buy ourselves, and they were laundered twice a week.

The duties were always the same. Every Monday we



wrapped bags of sugar and dried fruit, weighed and packed tea, which came in large wooden chests. Butter was in 56 lb slabs and this had to be cut and packed into one pound, half pound and rounds marked with a stamp. We also weighed and packed loose tobacco and cut 'black twist' on a board. The hardest job was wrapping two pounds of soda in newspaper, but everything was checked by the manager, Mr Ring, and, if not perfect, had to be done again. We learnt to bone and slice bacon and to skin cheeses. The method for this was to wrap the large round of cheese in a damp cloth overnight so the rind would come off more easily. There was a staff of sixteen at the Victoria Road shop. Marble counters were on one side for the provisions and on

the other side mahogany counters with drawers containing dried fruits. The floor was wooden and had to be scrubbed every day. Overhead was a system of cannisters on wires: money and invoices were put in the canister and sent to the cashier upstairs who returned the change and receipt. We had an annual staff outing and the directors, Mr Herbert and Mr Harold Crook knew every one of their employees by name.

When my apprenticeship finished I became a traveller or journeyman at the Portswood branch. Every day I would cycle around the area with my Gladstone bag advising customers of any new line and taking orders. I was always on the lookout for removal

vans so I could follow up with a price list for a potential new customer; there was a bonus for new business.

This was my job until the outbreak of the Second World War and in 1940 I was called up to join the Hampshire Regiment. Although I served in various regiments in North Africa and Italy my main duty was in the Quartermasters store. Once a grocer, always a grocer!!

When I was demobbed in 1945 Mr Crook offered me a job as manager of the Bitterne store, plus the incentive of renting a company house. I jumped



at the chance as housing was so scarce after the war and I was now married. Bitterne was my home and I knew so many of the customers who brought their ration books to me, hoping for a little extra. I always gave a personal service.

After about ten years I moved to be manager of the Obelisk Road Head Office store. Although there were still stables at the back of the building by this time orders were delivered by boys on bicycles, not horses.

I later moved to the Victoria Road branch which was to become the first Lankester and Crook self-service shop. At first customers were not keen to accept change; they still wanted a personal service requesting their favourite cut of bacon or a piece of cheese cut from the middle. In fact we were still taking weekly order books and delivering groceries well into the 1960s.

I finally retired in 1980, leaving the shop where I had started my career as a grocer in 1928. My only regret is that my indentures had prevented me joining the Royal Navy with my younger brother. I had always wanted to travel but it was not to be.



**How shopping changed –
Lankester & Crook 1950s and 1970s**





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HISTORY AND HERITAGE CLUB — *Mary Abraham*

Please note that all or any of these may be affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, please check directly with Mary.

Day trips out:

TUTANKHAMUN EXHIBITION - TREASURES OF THE GOLDEN PHARAOH

A fantastic visit to see Howard Carter's Discovery, the Egyptian treasures, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the tomb's discovery and the boy king's priceless tomb artefacts. Many pieces have never left Egypt before and this will be the last time they will visit England. Coach and allocated tickets £40 each.

BOWOOD HOUSE AND GARDENS

Day trip to see the wonderful gardens including the Woodland Garden which is only open for 6 weeks of the year, to include the spring flowers and the bluebell wood. Leisurely visit to the BOWOOD house and tour in the afternoon. Join us for an enjoyable day to a fine house and gardens in Wiltshire. £30-£32 depending on numbers

HOLIDAY IN THE NORTH EAST

A 4-day trip from Thursday, 30 July to Sunday, 2 August, to visit the North East and see the fabulous history pageant, KYNREN, an epic tale of England, which has received numerous awards. This show has a cast of 2,000 held at Auckland Castle and has already won 5-star rating and won awards. We will be staying in Gateshead and includes a visit to Beamish which had a new 1950s village added and opened last year. Join us for an enjoyable time. Please ask for more details

Mary Abraham, 02380 394930 or
email maryabraham_22@yahoo.co.uk



"Old Rubbish" — Emma Ayling

Have you ever wondered how objects come to be in a museum and what happens to them once they get there? If so, please read on!

An object's entry into the museum often starts with a phone call or visit from a would-be donor and the immortal words *'I was going to throw this away ...'*, *'It's only rubbish ...'* or *'You probably won't be interested in it, but ...'*

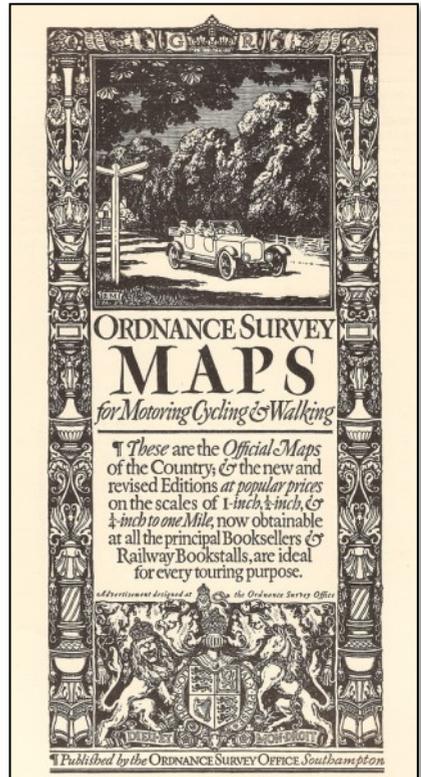
The museum's aim is to save, care for and use local history items to tell the story of the people of Wimborne Minster and East Dorset. People are therefore often surprised when we say *'yes, please'*. The 'old rubbish' may turn out to have valuable social and local interest.

Once in the hands of the curators the 'old rubbish' becomes a cosseted item, part of the museum's important collections. After all, without these objects there would be no exhibitions, no education work and no museum!

So the object's new life commences. It is first taken to the computer room and assigned its own special identity number. It is then carefully documented on to the museum's collections database known as Modesplus, with every little detail painstakingly recorded.

When this task is completed, the object is carefully marked with its new number and packed away in a box (only acid-free tissue and acid-free boxes are used) before being taken to the stores.

So why do we mark each object, I hear you ask? Well, should it be required to make an appearance in an exhibition or someone enquires about its well-being,



we can look it up on the computer, assess its life history and (hopefully!) know exactly where it currently is in the museum. Occasionally, some objects leave the museum against their will or simply disappear; the number can then be used to trace it back to us. There is no escape.

So what kinds of objects are donated to the museum? In the last year we have accepted a vast range of items, including a toilet roll and tights dating back to the 1970s, Bovril jars, gloves, a deck chair, enamel flour bin, Women's Land Army coat, breeches and tie, medical equipment and chemists' items, sheet music, a Teletubby (Tinky Winky), children's games, local advertisements, toiletries and a gas boiler, to name but a few.

So next time you are clearing out your old rubbish, do think of the museum. But please don't be offended if we say no - it is usually because we



already have something similar, or the object does not fit into our collecting area and policy. I can, though, say with certainty that we already have plenty of typewriters, flat irons and sewing machines ...

Emma Ayling is Assistant Curator at Priest's House Museum, Wimborne; this article first appeared in Newsletter of the Friends of the Priest's House Museum. Text reproduced with permission; images from our collection.



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for menu and delivery details

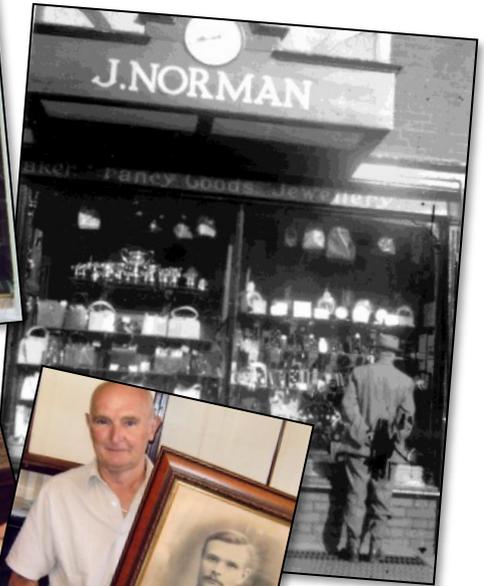
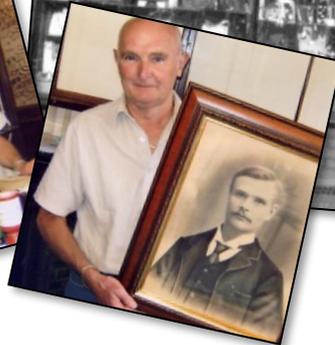
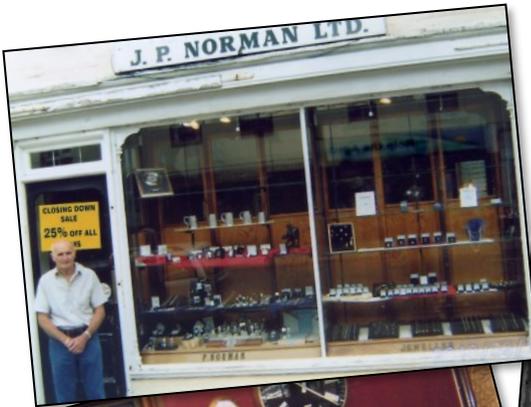


J.P. NORMAN JEWELLERS Ian Abrahams

J.P. Norman moved to Southampton in 1946 to manage the Jewellery Shop at 26 Victoria Road, Woolston. According to records the business had been established in 1897. Mr Norman purchased the business in 1948 and continued to run it for the next thirty-four years. His son Patrick purchased the shop in 1983 and carried on trading until his retirement in 2010, completing over sixty years in the same family.

Patrick is pictured just prior to closing, both in and outside the shop, also holding a picture of his grandfather (also presumably a jeweller). Sadly, Patrick passed away in November last year aged 76 years. The family also had a shop at 435 Bitterne Road from 1962 (between Haytons Flower Shop and Garretts Chemist), unfortunately we do not have any photographs of the Bitterne premises.

I am grateful to Pauline Holmes who has kindly provided information for this article.



WHAT HAPPENED TO THE COALMAN? — Beryl Varilone

After sending off the article, that appeared in *Bygone Bitterne* Vol. 147, about street traders, I thought of quite a few other familiar faces which have now disappeared, such as the Accumulator Man.

Our Father had built a wireless set which ran off batteries, called accumulators, which needed to be charged up at the garage. Each week the man called to collect the one that needed charging, leaving a fresh one in the set. If something went wrong and the new one didn't last the week, then we had to take it to Mr. Cook's workshop in Portsmouth Road and borrow another one. This was quite a hazardous undertaking, because unless it was carried carefully, the acid spilled out and burned our socks or even our legs.

In Essex where I lived as a child there had been the wonderful Salvation Army Brass Band which came regularly, playing on a piece of spare ground at the end of the road. They were always assured of a good audience.

Another important man was the chimney sweep. He came to us every autumn to make sure the chimney was clean and safe for the coming winter. Even so, we used to have truly magnificent chimney fires with sparks and flames shooting out of the chimney up into the sky. Indoors the fire-grate would be full of flames roaring up the chimney. Then we'd smother the fire with either salt or wet ashes and dense clouds of smoke would appear as the flames subsided.

With so many wood burners now in use he must surely still exist, although in a cleaner version. What intrigues me is the question of what happened to the coalman.

Do people still use coal? I'm sure they do. In which case, how is it delivered? There are definitely no patient old horses plodding round the streets, pulling carts filled with sacks of coal. There are no men with split sacks over their grimy heads and shoulders tramping coal dust into the

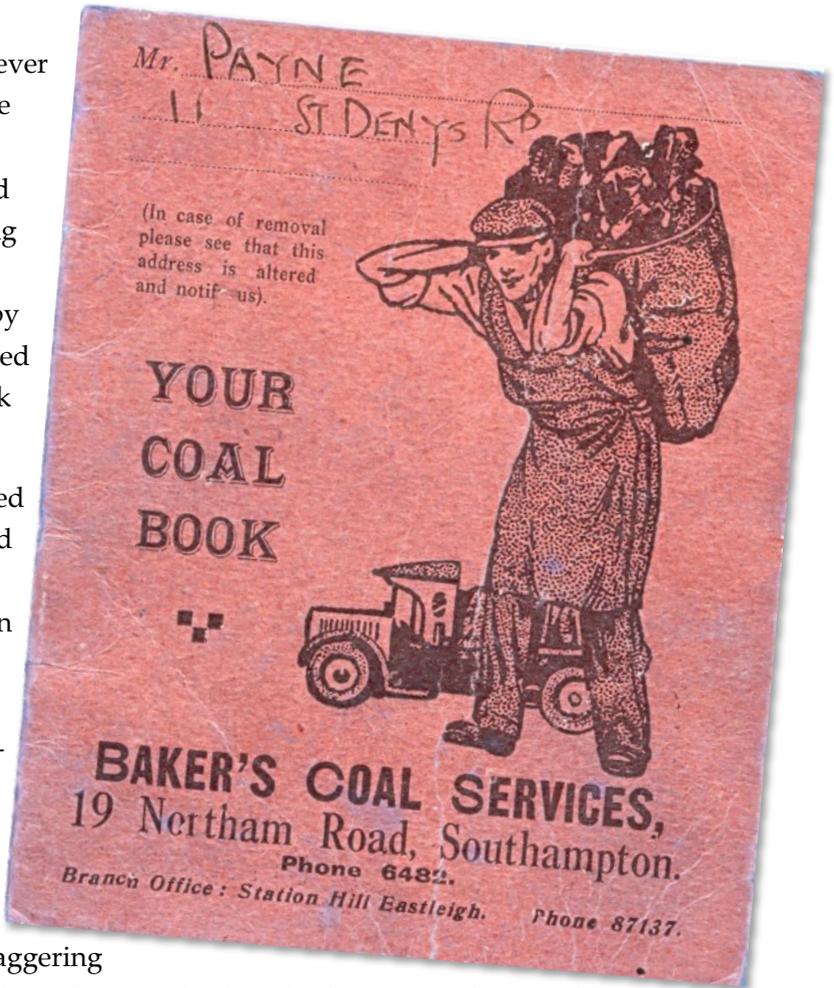
house. I never see anyone pushing a shabby old pram along the street with a baby in it perched atop a sack of coal.

Is it ordered on line and delivered next day in hygienic, sealed bags guaranteed to be leak-proof? I never see

anyone staggering from a delivery lorry with a hundredweight package on his back. Even if this happened, what would they do with it? Knock at the door and hand it over to the householder?

And what would the recipient do with it? I don't suppose any houses now have coal cellars. Would it be hauled upstairs and stored in the bath !! ?

All very impractical, which brings me back to my original question – what happened to the coalman?





From July 1995— Extracts from letters written in 1945

by Joan Holt

12.30 pm Monday May 7th 1945

Most people seem to think it will be V.E. Day tomorrow, so here's hoping it will be sunny like this. You'll see me up to Basingstoke on the first train.

2127 hrs V.E. Day+1 Wednesday 9th May 1945

I was so thrilled to see you and I really did have a lovely time, especially yesterday afternoon.

I am so glad you came to the station with me and saw me off. For the first time I was really sorry to see that train come in. I do hope that you didn't get into trouble for being out.

The town (Southampton) is quite gay, but they haven't got half so many flags here as they have in Basingstoke. Crowds were dancing in the Civic Centre forecourt, and the fountain was working. I had a job to catch a bus home. Yesterday mum, dad and Tony went to the service in the Guildhall. Then last night about 2230 hrs, they decided to go to town to see the fun. They wanted to take me tonight, but I feel too tired.

There are lots of bonfires, fireworks and fairy lights around, and the whole place seems very gay.

We've got floodlights, fairy lights and tons of flags in our road (Porchester Road), now Tony and I have just been to the gate to have a look. Tony has even got my Morse code flag hanging out of the window.

All yesterday the ship's hooters kept blowing and dad thought the Queen Mary was in, but when Tony went down to Weston Shore to see it was only an old oil tanker coming up.

Today they have cleared out the shed, and now you can actually turn



around in it. They have also taken down the blast wall of the shelter and made the shelter into a wood shed.

This evening they have all been to Peartree Church, where dad took the collection, and Tony was confirmed by the Bishop of Southampton.

V.E. Day+2 1230 hrs Thursday 10th May 1945

I was very thrilled to see you for eight hours on Tuesday (V.E. Day) and for nine hours yesterday. I was especially thrilled to go out to lunch with you.

Last night I went to bed at 2300 hrs and I couldn't get to sleep. Some people had their wireless out in the road, and were dancing and singing entirely different tunes to those on the wireless. It was a terrible din, and one of the ships was hooting out the V sign until well after midnight, it nearly drove us mad. Tony said he wished it would pour with rain, so they would all go in.

V.E. Day+2 1910 hrs Thursday 10th May 1945

The letter you wrote yesterday has bells, a V. Sign and --- all over the stamp.

P.S. Victory Postmark --- is V in Morse code.



OTHER LOCAL SOCIETIES

At this time all local history societies have closed down their programmes. Instead of the normal list of dates here are the contact details so that as things improve you can check for yourself what is taking place.

West End Local History Society

Meetings in West End Parish Centre, Chapel Road, SO30 3FE at 7.30 pm
Contact: 02380 471886 www.westendlhs.co.uk/meetings/

Bishop's Waltham Local History Society

Meetings at St Peter's Church Hall, SO32 1EE at 7.30 pm
info@bishopswalthamsociety.org www.bishopswalthamsociety.org.uk/

City of Southampton Society

Meetings at Edmund Kell Church Hall, Bellevue Road, SO15 2AY at 7.00
Contact: info@coass.org.uk www.coass.org.uk/

Millbrook Local History Society

Holy Trinity Church Hall, Millbrook Road at 7.30 pm
Contact: 023 8077 0148 millbrookhistory.webs.com

Hampshire Industrial Archaeology Society

Meetings at the Underhill Centre, St. John's Road, SO30 4AF at 7.45
Contact: 01962 855200 www.hias.org.uk/meetings.htm

Nursling and Rownhams History Group

Meetings at Nursling and Rownhams Village Hall, Nursling Street,
Nursling, SO16 0YL at 7.30 pm
Contact: 02380 738552
nandrhistorygroup.wixsite.com/nurslingandrownhams

Botley, Curdrige and Durley History Society

Meetings at Diamond Jubilee Hall, Botley, SO30 2ES at 8.00 pm
Contact: 01489 691777 www.botley.com/history-society

Hamble Local History Society

Roy Underdown Pavilion, Hamble-le-Rice, Southampton SO31 4RY at
7.30 pm

Contact: 023 8045 7189

www.hamblehistory.org.uk

Hound Local History Society

St Edwards Church Hall, Grange Road, Netley, SO31 5FF at 7.30 pm

Contact: 023 8045 3641

www.hugofox.com/community/hound-local-history-society-13390

Hampshire Genealogical Society

Meetings held at Roman Catholic Hall, Commercial St, Bitterne at 7.30 pm

Contact: 02392 387000

www.hgs-familyhistory.com/

God's House Tower

GHT were due to start a series of Lunchtime Lectures on 6 March but have now decided to run them online instead. You can still view the past talks and live talks are streamed at 12:30 on the listed date.

27 March TRANSITION – THE RESTORATION OF GHT
by Dan Crow

3 April TITANIC & THE CITY OF WIDOWS IT LEFT BEHIND
by Julie Cook

10 April POWDER, PRISONERS AND PAINTERS
by Dr Cheryl Butler

godshousetower.org.uk/event/lunchtime-lectures

Friends of Southampton Museums, Archives and Galleries

Contact: info@fosmag.org.uk

www.fosmag.org.uk/events/

The Friends of Southampton Old Cemetery

www.fosoc.org/news



PRESIDENTIAL PATTERN — *Ian Abrahams*

Dear Friends,

Since I wrote the article about Lankester & Crook in our last edition I have been fortunate in being introduced to Lesley Hallet, nee Crook, who has loaned an album containing pictures of all their stores. This is a fascinating insight into the retail trade of many years ago and of an institution which has become part of our area's history. We thank her for her kindness in getting in touch and hope to write more about Lankester & Crook in the future.



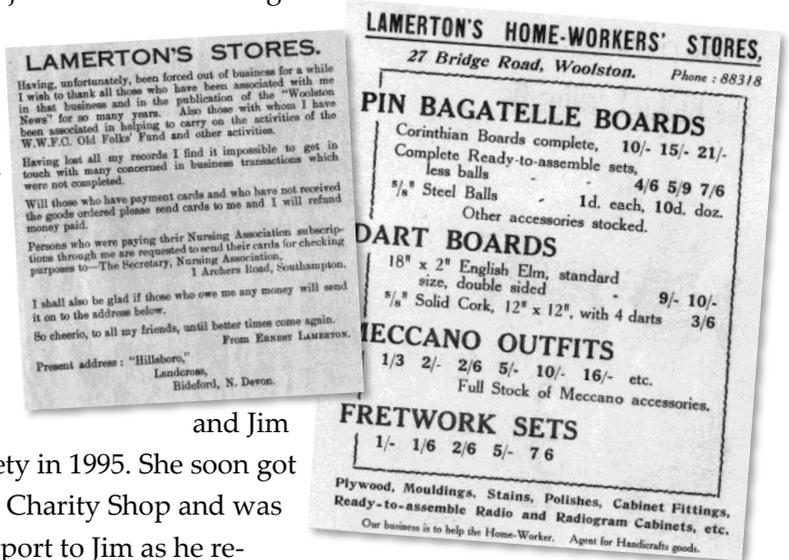
Sadly, long-serving member Mary Huggins passed away suddenly in December. Mary, and her late husband, Doug joined our Society in 1998 and were both actively involved with our Shop and Museum. Mary much enjoyed 'dressing up' for special occasions and will be remembered for her portrayal of Queen Victoria at our open days.

More recently we lost Brian Lamerton who had been a member for 20

years. He was born in Bitterne 89 years ago and attended Bitterne School. Brian was brought up in the Methodist Church where his family had attended for generations. He also joined the Boys Brigade and Youth Club at the Congregational Church. Brian's grandparents had a shop in Woolston for many years and reproduced here are two items from "Woolston News", a local publication of the time. One is from 1933 and the other 1940 – just after the bombing in WWII.

We were sad to hear of the passing of Marion Brown recently in Norfolk where she and Jim had lived since last year, Marion and Jim joined our Society in 1995. She soon got involved in our Charity Shop and was also a great support to Jim as he researched and wrote books, She came from a very old Sholing family (Parker) and was a kind and gentle lady, we shall miss her.

It is with great sadness that I have to record that member Keith Marsh has resigned from our Society. Keith had been with us for over thirty years, serving two periods as our treasurer, and was very much involved in the running of our museum, setting up displays and doing maintenance, since its inception in 1993. He was also involved in the production of several of our publications and gave talks and led guided walks around our village. We thank him for his long and loyal service, he will be very much missed.



Jan



2019/20 BLHS CALENDAR

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Currently meetings are suspended due to the Covid-19 virus but we are looking at them a month at a time. Please check on our website for the latest information.

www.bitterne.net

9 May	CANCELLED — Talk postponed until 2021	
13 Jun	BUILDING SPITFIRES WITHOUT A FACTORY	Alan Matlock
11 Jul	NOOKS & CRANNIES OF ROMSEY	Phoebe Merrick
8 Aug	THE GREAT EXHIBITION OF 1851	Simon Gomm

**Deadline for contributions to the Spring Edition
is Saturday, 13th June**

Please send contributions to the Editor, Steve Adams
blhs.editor@gmail.com
or address them to The Editor at the Heritage Centre
231, Peartree Avenue, Southampton, SO19 7RD

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BITTERNE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

CHARITY SHOP

including viewing of M... displays
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Saturday, 10... 1pm

CURRENTLY CLOSED
PLEASE WATCH OUR WEBSITE
FOR RE-OPENING

HERITAGE & RESEARCH CENTRE

Stewards available to help at
times listed on our website

www.bitterne.net

or by arrangement — telephone 023 8063 7967
231 Peartree Avenue, Bitterne, Southampton
SO19 7RD

Printed by:

**John
Buttler**
PRINTING

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