

*Bitterne Local  
History Society*



Established 1981

*'Keeping Bitterne's History Alive'*

Registered Charity No. 1005127

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# Bygone bitterne

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Winter 2016    Volume 135



'Bridging the Itchen' Exhibition - page 25

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# BITTERNE LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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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;

Concessionary (under 18 & over 80) - £8; Overseas membership - £17

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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### FUTURE ISSUES OF THIS MAGAZINE

For those members of the Society that live outside of Southampton, either in this country or overseas, the Committee has decided to offer you the choice of receiving future issues of 'Bygone Bitterne' direct to your inbox in PDF format instead of in print. You would receive your copy on the same weekend that each issue is published.

To try it send an email to the editor, [blhs.editor@gmail.com](mailto:blhs.editor@gmail.com), and he will send you this issue. When you have compared the print and electronic version you can decide whether to continue or not.



DEAR FRIENDS - From the Chairman

Readers will join me in welcoming Steve Adams to his new role as editor of *Bygone Bitterne*. I think you will agree he is off to a great start with this issue. Well done Steve!

As local residents will know, Bitterne is undergoing considerable changes at the moment: the Red Lion has been taken over and a 1.6 million-pound redevelopment is underway; work on the precinct has begun including removing planters and a new line of trees is intended to give the precinct the feel of a boulevard (we shall see); the Police Station, Bowling Green, and HSBC have all closed. If any members have photographs of any of these changes we would be pleased to add them to our archive.

Sadly, Joan Rolfe, a long-standing member, passed away in October. Joan was a regular contributor to our magazine and often submitted interesting articles and moving poems. One of my favourites is *Lost at Sea* about the sinking of *HMS Hood* (Vol.121). Joan also carried out research and wrote BLHS Paper No 31, *Memories of Merry Oak Estate*, a very valuable piece of local history. On behalf of the Society, I would like to offer our condolences to her family and friends; Joan will be greatly missed. (See page 4).

In other news: Barbara House, one of the charity shop management team, is currently undergoing medical treatment; we wish her well and hope she will return in due course. Bob Lavington, a Museum Steward, is out of hospital and has moved into a new home; we hope he is settling in well.

In September we had a Heritage Open Day at our Museum with the theme 'Crossing the River Itchen'. Heritage bus trips ensured we had regular visitors throughout the day. Volunteers, many in period costume, were on hand to provide information and guidance. A quiz was open to children and they had fun and enjoyed learning about the past. Despite the weather the event was a great success. Thank you to all those who helped prepare for the event and on the day (page 25). On the same day we had our AGM at which Carol Masters (Treasurer) was pleased to note that we are showing a small surplus this year - better than a deficit!

Keith Worthy, was due to give a talk after the AGM but apologized as he was unable to attend due to ill health.

In September we celebrated our 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a slide show and talk by Ian Abrahams. We enjoyed delicious home-made cake courtesy of Jill Abrahams; all-in-all it was a splendid occasion.

Whenever possible BLHS like to engage with the local community and the SAGA show was one such event (page 24) and another opportunity came when we invited a group from Eastleigh Mencap to visit our Museum. Joy Bowyer talked to our guests about her childhood memories of WWII, we gave a practical demonstration of a stirrup pump (page 25) and Celia and John Mayo displayed and discussed the contents of our WWII box and I think everyone had an enjoyable day.

With all good wishes for Christmas and the New Year,



Peter

Obituary of Joan Rolfe - *Ian Abrahams*

Joan was a long standing member of the Society; she worked at Supermarine in Woolston during the war and had vivid memories of that time. She lived at Merry Oak for a number of years from the age of ten and it was her knowledge and memories of this area which led, in 2001, to her writing 'Memories of Merry Oak Estate'. This publication is a much-valued reference book and still in demand as new people move into the area and want to know more about Merry Oak.



Joan will also be remembered for her contributions to our magazine, not only memories but some excellent poems which she so obviously enjoyed writing.

Joan led a very long and active life and her support of our Society was much valued – I shall miss her telephone calls saying “My magazine hasn’t been delivered yet, I do look forward to reading it!



FROM THE <sup>NEW</sup> EDITOR - Steve Adams

Hello All, I am your new Editor - but I now believe that I should never have agreed to take on the job! Whenever you take on a job that somebody has done before, you should make sure that the person you are taking over from was making a bad job of it so that you can shine. Exactly the opposite seems to have happened here, I have taken over from Barbara McCaffery who has done a wonderful job for ten years and so my time in this seat will seem rather dull by comparison. Well done Barbara, your efforts as Editor have produced the excellent results we have all seen and I am sure the Society as a whole are very grateful.

Just to let you know, I am not going to tear the heart out of the magazine and start from scratch. It has been running very well for a number of years so apart from adding a little oil to the machinery I won't be making many changes although you may notice the odd tweak here and there. One thing I would love to achieve though, is to encourage more of our members to make a contribution to the magazine. I am sure a lot of people promptly switched their attention elsewhere when they read that—but as a Steward I talk to so many members who have an interesting story to tell that they have never recorded. I would love to set aside an area within the magazine for short stories, from a line or two to a paragraph or so. The short article on the bomb landing in Manor Farm Road illustrates this exactly although that is accompanied by photographs which your article need not. Of course, if you have a long story to tell then I will be very happy to help! Either way, *please* put your memories on paper.

How do you get your words to me? Either email to [blhs.editor@gmail.com](mailto:blhs.editor@gmail.com), handwrite or type if you wish and drop them in to the BLHS shop in Peartree Avenue or just leave them with a member of the committee at one of our monthly talks. Please make sure that your name is attached and a number or address so that I can contact you (not for publication of course). Your memories are just as valid a record of our area as those whose stories fill books. 

## **BLHS MONTHLY MEETINGS - *Jill Neale***

### **OCTOBER - The History of Itchen Ferry Village with Dr Cheryl Butler**

The speaker declared herself a descendant of one of the best-known of the village families, the Diapers, who have been notable in the area since the middle part of the 16th century. Dr Butler centred her talk on her grandfather, Tom Diaper, and his father, also Tom. He became very successful as a racing yacht captain and his son and grandsons followed in this profession. The Itchen Ferry men were noted for their seamanship, and for centuries they had worked the Itchen Ferry boats taking passengers across the river from what is now the Woolston foreshore to the town and back. In earlier times people wishing to go to church would have to be rowed across to Southampton, then walk to St Mary's Church. In 1620 a chapel-of-ease, St Mary Extra, was built on Peartree Green to cater for the people of the eastern side of the town.

Not all the men were entirely reliable as ferrymen, there are stories that they liked to spend more time in the public houses than was good for their trade. There was no timetable and transport depended upon demand but the boats would be rowed across in all weather and water conditions although there were tragedies where the boat was overwhelmed and people drowned.

The ferries were designed and built by the families and were particularly distinctive in their lines. They attracted the attention of wealthy yachtsmen in the area and their design was incorporated into many yachts of the period.

The Itchen Ferry yacht captains and yacht hands were known throughout the yachting world. Tom Diaper and many of his fellow skippers spent more time working abroad than they did in this country. Tom was employed by Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm II to master his yachts, METEOR and GERMANIA. The Kaiser was keen to develop yachting in Germany to a level to rival Britain's Cowes Week.

Photographs show Captain Tom, and other members of the racing crews,

in the uniforms provided by the yacht owners and these were worn with pride. Captain Tom is there, wearing a hat which would denote his status. The clothing was issued for each yachting year - and last year's could be cut down at home for the children.

Tom Diaper raced for Sir Thomas Lipton, whose ambition was to win the America's Cup for this country. Lipton used his immense fortune to have designed and built four famous yachts to challenge for the Americas Cup between 1899 and 1930, SHAMROCK I, II, III & IV.

Women were a powerful factor in the life of the village and photographs of them show stern, stalwart people capable of carrying heavy packages of fish considerable distances to market. The women were also able to match the men in the public houses - there was a ditty (one of many invoking the times of the village history) - which tells of the women taking their whisky like the men.

Dr Butler was a very knowledgeable speaker and a large number of visitors were attracted to the talk.



VISIT TO CHATHAM DOCKYARD: SALUTE TO THE 40s -

*Mary Abraham*

We had terrible wet and cold weather when we visited Rochester and Chatham Dockyard in September, but made the best of it. The guides were good in Rochester town centre but it was a very wet day! Later we were treated to an armchair view of some of the sights in London and an interesting talk about what you might pass by on a visit.

Our day in the Historic Chatham Dockyard was made fun by the re-enactors 'Salute to the 1940's' singing and telling stories all day long. A visit to the Victorian Ropery is a must and just amazing that they still continue to make ropes from hemp there today. Although the original ropery closed in 1986 it still has a handful of staff working and includes their first female qualified rope maker having served her apprenticeship! The museums and the new "Hearts of Oak" exhibition was really good,

even showing the original plans for the building of the HMS Victory as it told the story of the designer and family.

We had a good hotel which had enjoyed a revamp since we last stayed there. The trip was rounded off on the Sunday morning with a guided tour of the area with Peter and taken to Brabourne House and Maidstone museum before returning home. 🐾



Salute to the 40s —  
Historic Dockyard Chatham

Hum Hole Revisited: some memories - Alan G. Clark

*This article won the 2016 Lion Cup which is BLHS' annual open competition for writing on local history.*

I've often heard it said that we who were born just after the war lived in a time of austerity, and maybe by the standards of today, we did. However, if you have never known anything different, then there is nothing to compare your life and times with and I, for one, never had any sense of deprivation. With loving parents and plenty to eat, I certainly would not complain - well, not much anyway, and life just got better and better!

One of the wonderful aspects of life as a child growing up in the late forties and fifties was the freedom to roam that seems so sadly lacking for children today. In the school holidays we could leave the house straight after breakfast, only returning for lunch, tea and bed. There was no fear that we would be abducted by paedophiles or, if there was, I certainly wasn't aware of it, although the sex offender is certainly not a new phenomenon.

The nearest place of fascination for me as a child was Brownlow House, right next door to my home at 234 Peartree Avenue, Bitterne. Often as a young child I would stand on our coal shed roof and watch a garden fete held in those grounds, and I have vivid memories of Mrs Bucknill as she swept along the gravel drive in her invalid carriage, past the lodge with its exotic chimney pots and out into Peartree Avenue, surrounded by her collection of cavorting, yelping dogs. These were of various varieties, sizes and colours but I particularly remember a very handsome Red Setter among them.

As boys we were certainly not averse to a little trespassing but wouldn't have dared to trespass in the grounds of Brownlow House. This was because Brownlow Lodge was occupied by Mr and Mrs Burns. Mr Burns was a local policeman. I can't remember now whether he was a constable or a sergeant and would hate to either promote or demote him. He always seemed a rather stern character to me. although he did tell my father on one occasion that I could climb over the railings in Peartree Avenue early one morning in order to collect conkers from his garden. His wife was always very kind to me. I

would often call at the lodge in the summer holidays and she would show me her greenhouse, which was filled with the scent of tomatoes and which also housed her collection of cacti. I was very keen on cacti at the time and had a tiny plastic greenhouse of my own which I kept on the windowsill at home. Mrs Burns gave me little cuttings to pot up. She also took me to visit her beehives on the other side of the drive close to Brownlow Avenue.

When I was a very young boy, Brownlow Avenue was still unadopted and there was a patch of spare land on the corner of Brownlow and Peartree Avenues where I would sometimes play. This was situated just about opposite the premises now occupied by the Bitterne Historical Society. I'm not sure whether this was a bomb site or not but I remember the house that now occupies the site being built in the early fifties.

Freemantle Common was a very popular playground, of course, and it is good that it remains much as it was, although some of the trees appear a little smaller to me now! I spent a lot of time there as a child and the only problem I recall was the quantity of dog mess to be encountered there at that time. There seemed to be many more unaccompanied dogs around in those days, sometimes roaming in packs. These could occasionally be aggressive and their mess was a constant problem. There were however, other areas where small boys could find adventure in the fifties and which were perhaps more exciting at the time. One such was the patch of land which was later developed as Fine Fare. Once again, was it a bomb site or just spare land? Another was the land on the West End Road, upon which Apollo Place and adjoining houses were later built. Then of course there was Cutbush Lane and the surrounding woods and fields further up West End Road, but the most exciting of all was undoubtedly Hum Hole.

When I returned home after playing at Hum Hole it was invariably with shoes caked in mud or full of water - usually both. I remember so many times crossing the road by Stonier's (later Kendrick's) at the top of Lances Hill to the billboards with their Guinness advert, and making my way down the gravelly, sandy track past tall bracken and blackberry bushes before bearing right, close by the exit to Glenfield Crescent, towards the broken pond. The pond was

concrete sided but great slabs had been smashed and lay at angles at the point where a stream exited. The pond was practically empty, with what water that remained, covered in duckweed, beneath which lay deep oozing mud. In the Spring my great school friend Ken Rickards and I caught tadpoles and frogs and in those days there were always plenty of newts of different varieties to be found. One night, just recently, I was thinking of this pond and just for a moment I experienced once more the steamy, buzzing vegetable heat generated by the moisture held within those concrete walls and I was back there in the moment all those years ago. It was merely half a glimpse into the past and, as is the nature of these things, lost the moment I gave this vision my full attention.

I was only dimly aware at the time, of Beechwood Junior School being built, although I know that a number of Bitterne C of E school pupils were transferred there when it opened in January 1953. I do however remember walking with my father the wooded path along the high wire netting fence that marked the boundary of the school around the time of its opening. There were of course several easy ways around the drier perimeter of Hum Hole, but for my friends and me, crossing the centre was the challenge and it required a good sense of balance, for the ground was a swamp where odd spindly saplings grew amongst tufts of reedy grass. The trick was to step determinedly from tuft to tuft without hesitating, for to hesitate resulted in yet another shoe filled with muddy water. Seldom did we make it across unscathed.

Back on firmer ground, on the far side of the swamp, through denser trees, one came upon the dump. It was obviously common practice at that time for some to discard their rubbish down the steep side of Hum Hole; this was situated at the rear of the parade of shops in West End Road, behind what later became Best's Fish and Chip shop. It wasn't just garden waste that was dumped but just about anything. As young boys we were always on the lookout for useful things like wheels of any sort or bike frames but I can't recall finding anything worth retrieving. There was a rumour about the remains of a German aircraft lying there but whether there was any truth in this I don't know, although we did once come across what appeared to our inexperienced eyes to be part of an aluminium engine

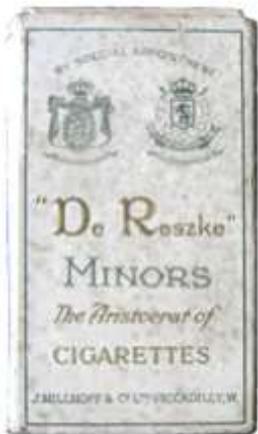
cowling. This part of Hum Hole, true to its name, stank in Summer and I remember standing on the lip at one time watching large rats scurrying about amid the rubbish below.

Around the age of ten, Ken and I developed a shared obsession with matches. We would make dens and light candles or small fires in the way that certain boys do. One evening after school we lit a small fire at the dump, which unfortunately swiftly grew beyond our power to extinguish and we were forced to retreat, emerging from Hum Hole at a point further up West End Road. This was at a time shortly before the bungalows were built at Mersham Gardens and we were able to stroll with assumed innocence down West End Road, past the gorse bushes to watch with an equal measure of shame and relief as the Fire Brigade hosed down our handiwork. We didn't do it again!

Instead, we found a new use for our matches in smoking and so started a hobby which in my case lasted for forty years. Little was known of the dangers of cigarettes in the nineteen fifties, or if it was, it was little publicised. Our favourite brand was De Reszke — I don't know why, perhaps we just liked the sound of the name. We would buy a packet of ten De Reszke Minors ("Are they for your father, son?". "Yes".) from one of the

numerous tobacconists in Bitterne. and smoke five each, one after the other at Hum Hole. If funds didn't run to ten cigarettes, we would buy four Dominoes in a domino shaped paper packet for sixpence. Each packet had a different domino piece printed on the reverse, which one could collect to make a set. I can't say I really enjoyed smoking at the time. It made me queasy and my fingers smelt horrible afterwards, but it was something that had to be done! I remember an incident one morning in the Christmas holidays around New Year 1957. Ken and I must have become careless about where we lit up. We were

standing amid the blackened skeletons of the gorse bushes



(recently burned - but not by us) bordering Hum Hole in West End Road, when we were caught unaware by a large policeman who gave us a very stern lecture on the illegality of our actions. This lecture seemed to last forever. He took a note of our names and addresses and made us tear up our remaining cigarettes, which seemed at the time to be a tragic waste, as we'd only smoked one each. Sad to say we remained unreformed, although certainly more careful about where we practised our habit in the months that followed.

I referred earlier to the bungalows built around 1956 at Mersham Gardens, off West End Road. This must have necessitated the felling of a considerable number of mature trees, which presumably were then bulldozed over the edge of Hum Hole, for I well recall coming upon this huge tangle of timber one day and being thrilled by the discovery. It was like one massive climbing frame and offered endless play opportunities. Looking back sixty years I can appreciate how dangerous this play might have been, given the weight of wood and the precarious way in which some of it was balanced.

But time was moving on for Hum Hole, as of course it does for us all. A car park, gravel at first but later tarmac covered, was established in West End Road on the land where previously gorse bushes flourished, but by that time Ken and I had long been separated by the Eleven Plus Examination, and with new friends and interests had inevitably, in our different ways, ourselves moved on. Yet I had the notion that Hum Hole would remain as it was, as indeed it did, for quite a while. It all changed of course with the building of the bypass which affected so many aspects of Bitterne life. The parkland area which now bears the name is nice enough, in its way but lacks the wildness that made it so exciting to me in those now far-off days. Of course we can all feel nostalgia for the lost places of our youth – I most certainly do. But perhaps it is not so much the loss of place that we mourn, but more the loss of youth itself. 

RIDGEWAY HOUSE - *Bryan James*

Further to the article by Jim Brown (*Bygone Bitterne*, Vol. 133, p. 22) which reached me in Bairnsdale, Victoria, Australia. I was very interested to read Jim's article and I thought you might be interested in some information I am able to add.

George James came from a family of Vintners in the East End of London and arrived in Australia in January 1838 at the age of 25. He became very successful as a merchant (wines and general goods ranging from crockery and paint to a buggy and a whaleboat) and as a land speculator. He married in Melbourne in 1840 and the first 7 of their 11 children were born there. In 1853 George had accumulated sufficient wealth to retire back to the UK with his wife and children.

We believe George James was buried at Pear Tree Church and, while there is a James monument in the grounds of the church there is no indication that it is the exact site of his burial. George's youngest child Robert, my grandfather, was born at Ridgeway House but life in the colony was not financially kind to him despite a substantial inheritance because, when he died in 1943, he had no Will, no bank account and one pound note and a few coins in his wallet!

Here is a little about "Ridgeway", home of George James, overlooking the Itchen River at Southampton, Hampshire, England.

It seems that, prior to 1855, the building at the Ridgeway was known as "Ridgeway Castle", a castellated mansion built for T. Lewin in about 1795 (although I have heard that there was something there much earlier).

George James bought the land from Mr F.M. Lewin on 16 August 1855 (about 22 acres which extended down to the River Itchen until the railway line was built close to the water's edge) and replaced the old building with "a much smaller house with only five principal bedrooms" and he and some of his family lived there until about a year after his death on 18 January 1877.

The 1861 Census shows George and eight other members of his family

*Woodys home and garden  
maintenance*

*Honest, friendly and reliable  
No job too small*

*All aspects of home improvements*

*including:*

*Painting*

*Decorating*

*Flooring*

*Tiling*

*Decking*

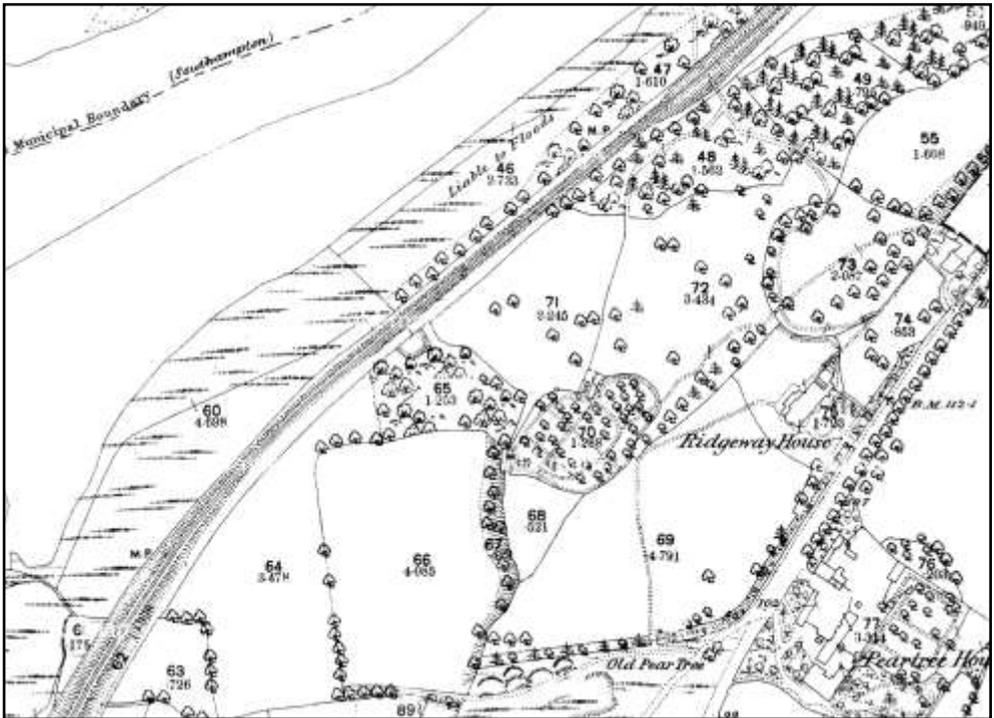
*Patios*

*Gardening*

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living there as well as fourteen servants (which included three nurses! - four of George's children were under six years of age, which probably explains the nurses).



The property came up for sale by auction on 27 September 1912 (vendor not clear) and the sales documents contain references such as:

"The Ridgeway Estate" "22 acres of Freehold Land including 900 feet frontage to River Itchen and Railway and 1,000 feet frontage to main road, substantially built Residence of over 20 rooms, Gardener's Cottage etc."

"On the Ground Floor :- Entrance Hall; Circular Inner Hall; Gents' Cloak Room, Lavatory and W.C.; Double Drawing Room, 41' x 19' 6"; Dining Room, 23' 6" x 19' 6"; Morning Room, 17' 3" x 14'; Billiard Room, 24' x 22', including Bay.

On the First Floor :- which is approached by two staircases : 11 Bed and Dressing Rooms; Bathroom, h. & c.; W.C. etc.

The Domestic Offices :- Are all on the Ground Floor and include : Servants' Hall; Housekeeper's Room; Butler's Pantry; Kitchen; Scullery; Dairy; Larder; and numerous outhouses.

There are also several Glasshouses and a Gardener's Cottage in the Grounds".

In a separate reference (I don't know how accurate) there is mention that "the Ridgeway Estate was owned by the Ford Motor Company in February 1915 (bought for £5000), subsequently sold to the Knellers in April 1926. It then became a golf course and subsequently a housing estate. The name Ridgeway House survives as the name of a school for children with special learning needs, about 2 km along Pear Tree Avenue".

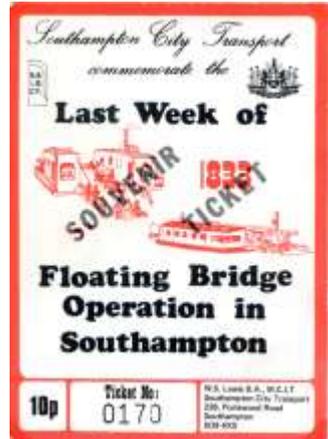
[The school closed several years ago - Editor]



YET MORE MEMORIES – *Jim Brown*



Hoare's Bakery - where was it?



Ticket for last week of Floating Bridge operation - when was it ?



The Village Pound - where was it?

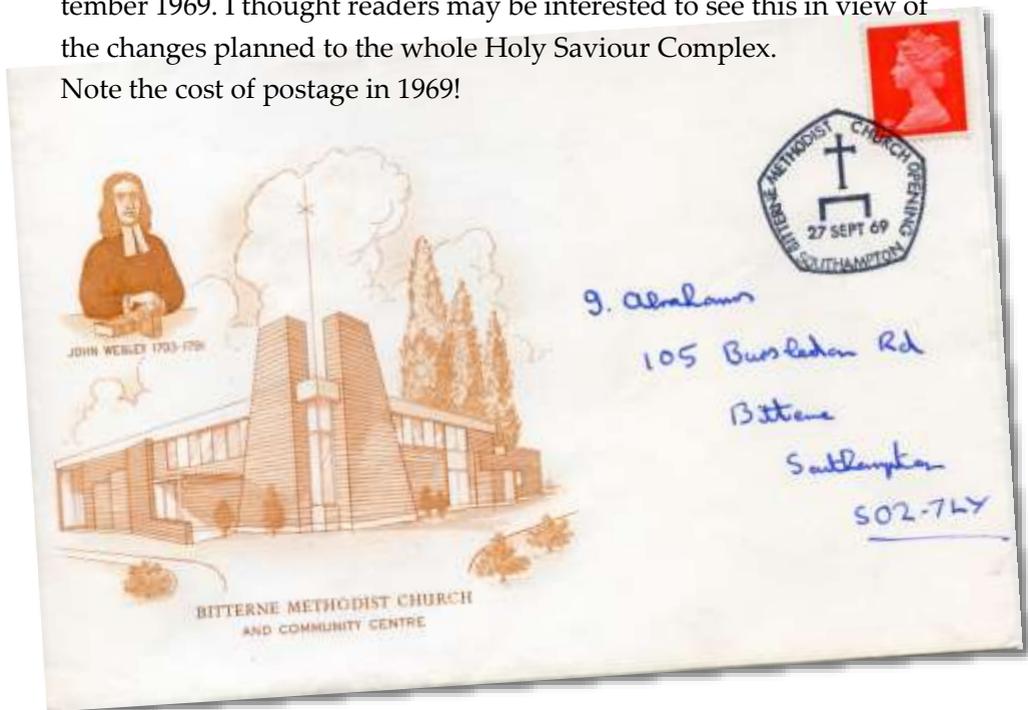


FROM OUR ARCHIVES - *Ian Abrahams*

### **Bitterne Methodist Church**

Here is a facsimile of the First Day Cover envelope issued by the Bitterne Methodist Church on the occasion of its opening on Saturday, 27th September 1969. I thought readers may be interested to see this in view of the changes planned to the whole Holy Saviour Complex.

Note the cost of postage in 1969!



### **80 Years Ago**

I am sure there will be members who have memories of H. & W. Hague, Cabinet Makers of Dean Road—even some who may still have items of furniture made by them.

As you can see they were established in 1840 and according to Kelly's Directory were still trading up until around 1957.

This bill [opposite] shows the cost of a bedroom suite purchased by Mr Derham (of Pound Street?) on 9th October 1936 for £11-0s-0d.

p.s. For more information about the Hague family see Irene Pilson's 'Memories of Bitterne', page 235.



FACTORY AND SHOWROOM:

115, DEAN ROAD, BITTERNE

ESTABLISHED 1840.

M<sup>r</sup> *Derham*

*Oct 9<sup>th</sup>*

1936

To **H. & W. HAGUE.**

**FURNITURE MANUFACTURERS  
AND REPAIRERS.**

UPHOLSTERY AND BEDDING

*Bedroom Suite to  
Bedstead, Polished  
Walnut - 4ft 6 Spring £ 11 - -*

*Approved by  
The  
9-10-36  
W. Hague*



*The Bitterne Local History Society Committee  
would like to wish all our members a very*

*Happy Christmas*





DEAR EDITOR . . .

I was extremely interested to read the short article in the last issue (Vol.134, p.30) about the WWII bombing of Bitterne Park. The third one in the list, 51 Manor Farm Road, was in fact my grandparents' home. I had not yet been born but I grew up hearing the stories of that event. I was told that it was one of the first residential properties to be hit in Southampton. It made front page news in the Echo (although of course the exact address was not given) and apparently town dignitaries visited. The bomb fell in daylight, on the back of the house but, thankfully, my gran & uncle (very young) along with a neighbour were in the air-raid shelter at the bottom of the garden so no-one was hurt . . . just shaken! The house had to be demolished so the family moved to 2 Newton Road, a house they rented from Mr Addis until 51 Manor Farm Road was rebuilt after the war.

*This is taken from a front page article in the Southern Daily Echo, dated Thursday, August 15<sup>th</sup> 1940. It read:*

## **SOUTHAMPTON'S SECOND DAYLIGHT AIR RAID SAVED BY ANDERSON SHELTER**

The great value of Anderson shelters was again demonstrated in another suburb, where a bomb which fell only five yards from the shelter, demolishing the rear of the house and making a huge crater, caused no injury at all to the three occupants of the shelter.

The wife of the occupier and her three years old son had been joined by her next-door neighbour, who had returned from Australia five weeks ago.

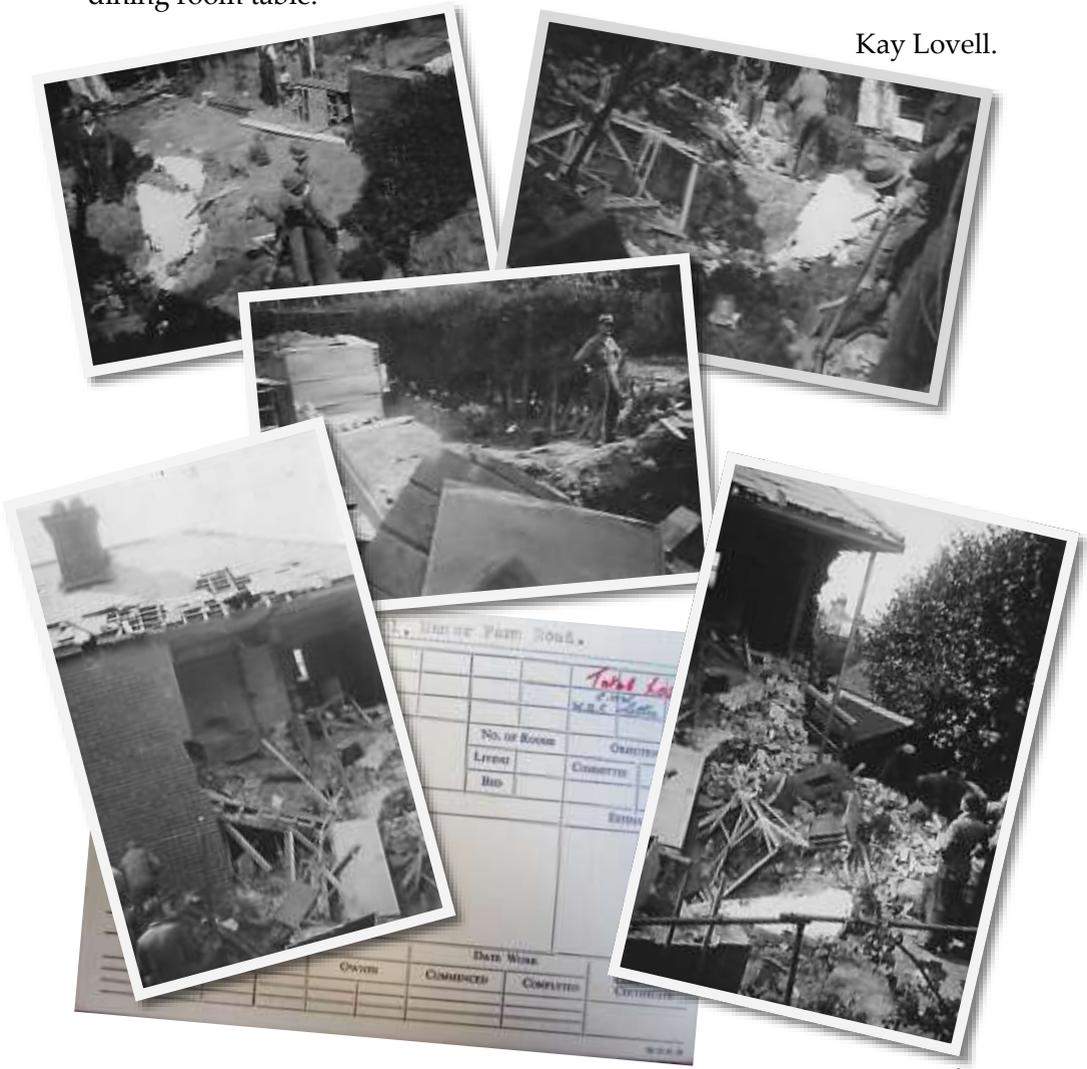
"We heard the scream of a bomb and a loud explosion, but had no idea until we came out of the shelter that the house was so badly damaged," she said. "It is the finest advertisement for an Anderson shelter that you could imagine.

"Beyond being covered with dust, we were untouched. My little boy's great concern was for his toy train."

The bomb ripped off the back of the house, and furniture was hanging crazily from wrecked rooms.

The air raid had occurred on the previous day, Wednesday August 14<sup>th</sup> 1940. The “wife of the occupier” my grandmother, Elsie Urquhart (née Lucas), and her little boy, my uncle, Alan Urquhart. The next-door neighbour was Mrs Ogilvy. At the time it happened, my grandfather, Reginald, and my mother, Brenda, were both at work. Reg cycled home at lunchtime to find his house in ruins rather than his dinner on the dining room table!

Kay Lovell.



HELP WANTED



### **Ivy Cottage - Jan Cowan**

I am trying to find more information on a property where my ancestors lived from 1790's to 1900's. From 'Memories of Bitterne' by Irene Pilson I have discovered that Ivy Cottage, 10 Pound Street, was built in the 1790's by James Vare and left in a will to his descendants. I have been able to confirm from census records that the Vare's lived in the house up until 1876 when it was transferred to Captain John Unwin Diaper, who inherited by marriage, through his wife Elizabeth Vare. In the 1940's James Diaper was living there, the son of John Unwin Diaper.

As it was destroyed to make way for the bypass, I am wondering if anyone in the Society might have any memories or information on the property. I would like to hear from them. I know that when someone visited in 1960 they saw a very large ship's wheel in the living area which must have belonged to Captain Diaper. Thank you.



### **Fairmile B Motor Launches - Stephen Fisher**

I have a query that I was wondering if members of Bitterne Local History Society may help with. I'm currently researching the building of Fairmile B motor launches in Southampton. Camper & Nicholson had a yard in Northam, but on the east side of the river I've discovered that Risdon Beazley Ltd, whose yard was on the Itchen at the end of Hawkeswood Road built launches as well.

The other builder I'm researching is Southampton Steam Joinery Co Ltd, who built 6 Fairmiles. I've tracked their main works down to Kingsbury Road off Bevois Valley and been in correspondence with the owner's great grandson who recalls visiting this works in 1942, and that it was still in operation even after it was bombed in 1940. However, being some distance from the river, it is not a suitable place to build 112ft launches. An Admiralty reference to this company places them at a different address; 83 Whitworth Road (and also states that they had 2 slips, ruling out Kingsbury Road); Kelly's doesn't list any building numbers this high in

their directories for the 1930s, '40s or '50s, but the numbers continue onto Whitworth Crescent. There the two likely suspects that are listed that fit the location next to Cobden Bridge in the 1940s, the Phoenix Boat Company and F. Blandford's boat building works.

The great grandson of Southampton Steam Joinery's founder recalls that the business had some interest further up river, but doesn't recall any more than that. I'm guessing that the interest must be one of these boatyards (and that this is where the Fairmile's were built. It seems possible that the overall ownership was in the Steam Joinery Company.

I was wondering if any of your members may have any knowledge of these firms or the construction of these Fairmile launches.



### **Wanted - Society Stewards**

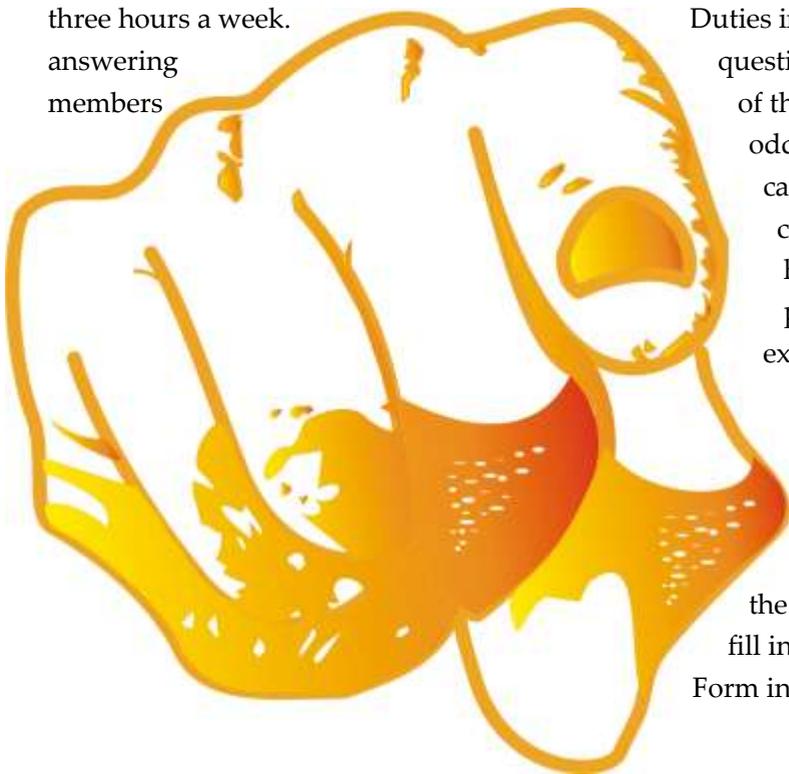
Your Society has need of more Stewards to man the Heritage Centre for three hours a week.

answering  
members

Duties include

questions from  
of the public and  
odd jobs of  
caring for our  
collection and  
helping to  
prepare  
exhibitions, etc.

Please speak  
to either  
Peter, our  
Chairman,  
or Martyn,  
the Secretary, or  
fill in a Volunteers  
Form in the shop.



RECENT EVENTS



**Southampton  
Allotments  
and Garden  
Association  
Show**

Trish and Peter  
manned our gardening themed  
stall after Ian set it up.





### **MENCAP Visit**

A group from Eastleigh MENCAP visited the Heritage Centre as part of their World War II project. Peter and Steve demonstrate how a leaky stirrup pump can dampen the knees.



### **Heritage Open Day**

With lots of visitors to our 'Bridging the Itchen' Exhibition Ian and Celia explain our exhibits.





## December 1991— Bitterne Village's Communal Well

by Eric J.A. Thompson R.P

Does anyone remember using the well behind “Fancy’s Shop” (66 Pound Street—formerly 4 Cardigan Place)?

When I was negotiating the purchase of 66 Pound Street (in 1971), my solicitor called me into his office told me to sit down. Then he said “Do you know that if you purchase this property you will have to allow everyone who lives within the bounds of Bitterne Village, access to the garden at any time of the day or night, every day of the year?” Then he told me that the communal village well was in the garden. This fact is recorded in the deeds to 66 Pound Street (a copy of the entry is shown here).

*“TOGETHER with the dwellinghouse shop and building erected thereon or on some part thereof as the same are now known as Number 66 Pound Street (formerly known as Number 4 Cardigan Place Pound Street) Bitterne Southampton aforesaid and TOGETHER with the right in common with all other persons entitled thereto to go to and from and to use the Well situate on the East side of the said premises as the same forms part of the property comprised in a Conveyance dated the Tenth day of July One Thousand Nine Hundred and Twentynine and made between Thomas Hatley of the One part and the Vendor of the other part TO HOLD the same unto the Purchaser in fee simple.”*

But sadly the exact position of the well is unknown. Unless there is someone who can remember it?



1897 map. Note the number of wells—marked by ‘W’

## FUTURE EVENTS

**SOUTHAMPTON & DISTRICT NUMISMATIC SOCIETY** invites you to  
“**LIFE AND DEATH OF A TUDOR SAILOR**”

An illustrated talk about the ‘Mary Rose’, with artefacts, by Trevor Sapey from the “Mary Rose Trust”. Friday, 19 May 2017 at 19.30, in the Hall at CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH, Devonshire Road, The Polygon, SO15 2GY. Admission Free, Refreshments. Enquiries: 023 8055 6648



## **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.*

I would like some feedback as to where BLHS members would like to visit. We are lucky to have a wealth of historic places and interesting events to visit in Hampshire — so many that are worthwhile.

**Saturday 25th March 2017** A guided tour of our area ‘East of the River’; a stop in Hamble, Cricket Camp in Manor Farm Country Park and lunch on The Ferry Restaurant (the old Floating Bridge) at Swanick. With a few other visits, costs to be announced. £5 deposits to confirm places.

**Proposed trip to Newquay, Cornwall** Tuesday 28th February - Saturday 4th March. Blow the Winter Cobwebs away! Details on request.

**Day trips out** - I would like to go to Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill House in Twickenham. After his death the collection was dispersed but has now been restored and many thousands of items collected for a new exhibition for 2017. Possibly after Easter in 2017. Prices and dates TBC.

**Weekend 14-16th July** The Royal International Air Tattoo RAF Fairford Group prices are very competitive so worth booking early.

I have had a request for a trip to National Trust houses and gardens — I know a lot of you are members. We can get a group booking into areas that are often not open to the public.

Thank you - Mary Abraham Tel 8039 4930.





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I came across this advert in my 1912 copy of the *Southampton and District Pictorial*. The new suburb advertised was, of course, The Chessel Estate, a full account of which is given in the late Keith Le May's BLHS Local Paper No.39, published in 2010. As Keith explained in his Introduction:- Lying within the triangle formed by the River Itchen foreshore, Bitterne Road West and Pear Tree Avenue as far as Athelstan Road, these 93 acres have had a separate identity since David Lance acquired them in the last decade of the 18th century. It was to be his retirement estate after service with The East India Company. He called it Chessel and near its highest point built Chessel House, a modest mansion. Centuries before, the site had been traversed by the Roman road linking Clausentum and Chichester, now known as route 421. At the invitation of the Lance family, Jane Austen and her sister visited the house during their stay in Southampton and David Lance's legal right to the estate was confirmed in the 1812 Enclosure Act.

Almost a century later, in 1911, the estate was bought from the then owners, the Richardson family, by the company called 'The Southampton Garden Suburb Limited', with offices in Yeovil. It was associated with John Fox, estate agent of Bournemouth, the business we know today as Fox & Sons. This firm became the agents for the SGS Limited. In 1911 the only buildings on the estate were the mansion and detached conservatory, three lodges, agricultural buildings in the vicinity of Chessel Avenue and similar ones on what is now Bitterne Road West, just beyond Bitterne Manor School. 

Dear Friends,

Firstly, I hope that you managed to identify the location of the Post Boxes pictured in our last edition – both are in Middle Road and incidentally both have different collection times!

It seems a long time ago now but I would like to say ‘thank you’ to those friends who participated in the annual Heritage weekend at our Museum. Despite appalling wet weather, we welcomed a number of new visitors and were pleased to have the classic Southampton buses stopping outside on a regular basis throughout the day.

We have recently had to say goodbye to our most senior Steward at the Museum, Eddie Croxson, who is coming up to his ninety-fifth birthday. He has decided to stop coming to his regular Wednesday duty but we do hope he will call in from time to time. Eddie has been a Steward since our first Museum opened twenty-three years ago and we do thank him for his very long service and wish him well.

Another of our regular Stewards, Bob Lavington, has been having health problems recently and although his mobility is not good we do hope he also will be able to call in from time to time. We also had news that one of our Vice-Presidents, Jim Brown, had been unwell and we have sent our best wishes on behalf of all his friends here in our Society.

I close with a few words of tribute to another of our senior members, Joan Rolfe, who recently passed away at the grand age of ninety-six. She will be remembered for her contributions to our magazine, including a series of articles about her time at Supermarine and some excellent poems which she so obviously enjoyed writing. You can read a fuller appreciation on page 4. 



## **MOBILE FOOT HEALTH CLINIC**

**Do you suffer discomfort from ...**

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- Athletes Foot**
- Corns**
- Ingrowing Toe Nails**
- Verrucas**
- Fungal Infection**

**ALL ASPECTS OF FOOT CARE TREATED  
TREATMENT IN THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN HOME**

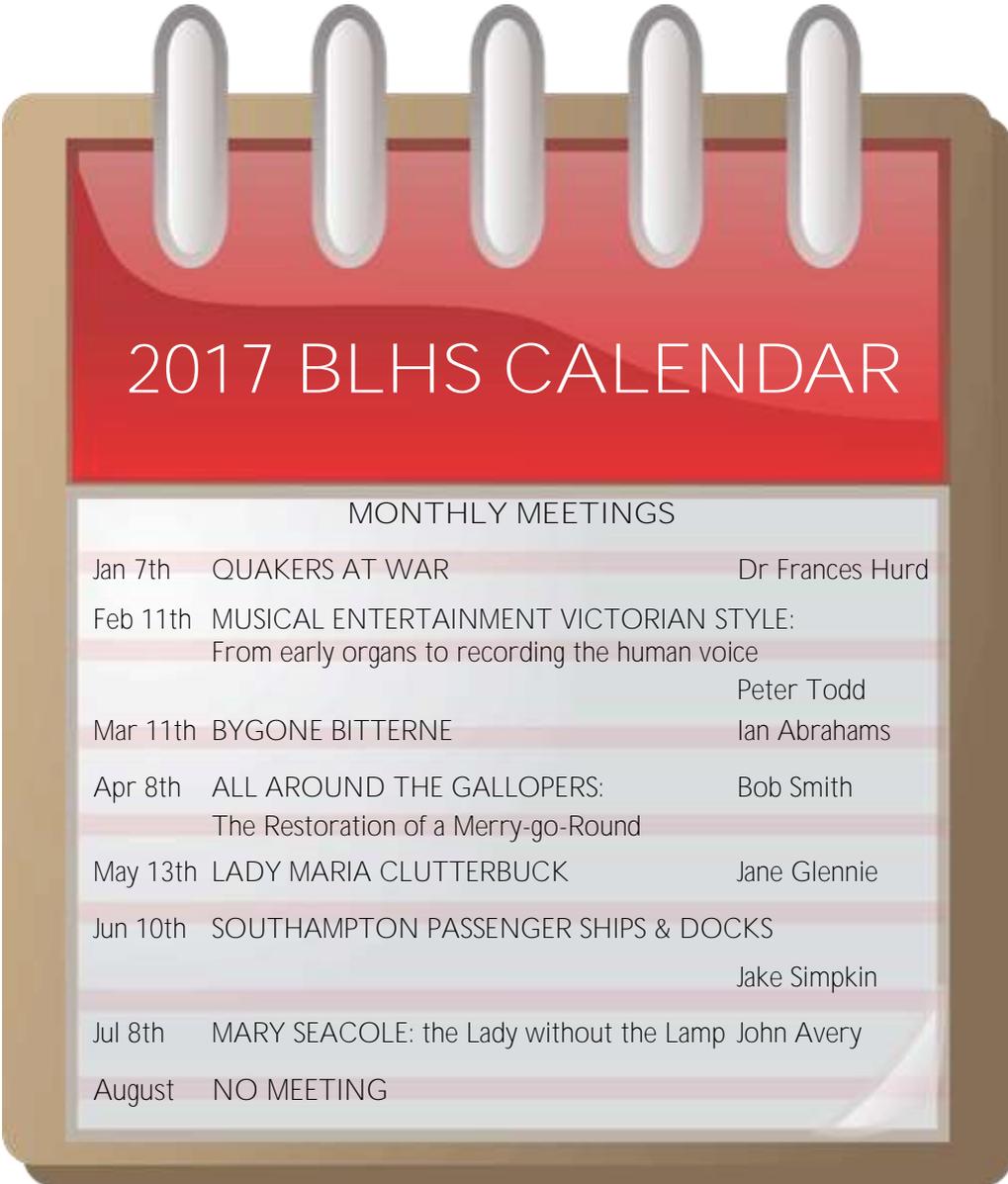
**CONTACT:**

**MELLOWJANE ROSALES**

**S.A.C .Dip FHPT S.A.C Dip FHPP**

**078 4368 6239**





# 2017 BLHS CALENDAR

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

Jan 7th	QUAKERS AT WAR	Dr Frances Hurd
Feb 11th	MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT VICTORIAN STYLE: From early organs to recording the human voice	Peter Todd
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	Jane Glennie
Jun 10th	SOUTHAMPTON PASSENGER SHIPS & DOCKS	Jake Simpkin
Jul 8th	MARY SEACOLE: the Lady without the Lamp	John Avery
August	NO MEETING	

Deadline for contributions to the Spring Edition  
is Saturday, 11th February

Please send contributions to the Editor, Steve Adams  
[blhs.editor@gmail.com](mailto:blhs.editor@gmail.com)  
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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