

Alresford Articles No.2

Succeeding 'Alresford Displayed'



Alresford Historical and Literary Society



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About the Alresford Historical and Literary Society

The Society was formed in 1966 to bring together members of the local community and encourage interest in the History, Literature and Archaeology of Alresford and the surrounding areas. It has been instrumental in recording the area's history and events as evidenced by the publication of the original twenty-two original Alresford Displayed booklets. Many of our members have played a pivotal role in the ongoing social and commercial life of our attractive town.

The Alresford Historical and Literary Society holds its monthly meetings in the Methodist Hall, Jacklyns Lane, where a balanced programme of talks and presentations takes place in a friendly atmosphere. Meetings are normally held on the third Wednesday of the month, and it is not necessary to be a member to attend – visitors are welcome at the door for a small fee (refreshments are provided).

Selected topics give an insight into the influence that the political, social and industrial heritage has had on our Community and Hampshire. To stimulate the literary interests of the members, lectures are chosen to illustrate the work of authors and artistic personalities.

We also organise occasional group visits to interesting places.

For further information, please visit our website www.alresfordhistandlit.co.uk

Front cover:

Tichborne picture c.1925 reproduced from *In & Around Alresford in old photographs Vol.2*, plate 90 by kind permission of author Edward Roberts

2012 photo © Glenn Gilbertson

Shield detail by kind permission of the *Tichborne Arms*

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Contents

Welcome		p.2
1. The Old Pinglestone Road	Brian Rothwell	p.3
2. The Bombing of Alresford	Glenn Gilbertson	p.15
3. A Current Assessment of NATT	Robin Atkins	p.18
4 Tichborne & Titchy - Their Original Meaning	Peter Abraham	p.24
(addendum) More about the <i>Tichborne Claimant</i>	Glenn Gilbertson	p.26
5. Thomas Carlyle at The Grange	Brian Tippett	p.27
6 The Date of the Broad Street Fair	Brian Rothwell	p.36
7. The Bells of St John's	Nick Denbow with Elizabeth Johnson	p.38
8. 1953 Coronation Celebrations in Alresford	Glenn Gilbertson	p.42
9. Poetry Corner - Chidiok Tichborne		p.44

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Glenn Gilbertson

Editorial Team

Nick Denbow

Bob Fowler

Brian Rothwell

Brian Tippett

Welcome

Welcome to the second edition of *Alresford Articles*, the successor to the *Alresford Displayed* series that was produced from 1976 to 1997. The aim is to produce a similar set of eclectic publications containing articles of varying lengths, largely related to Alresford and the local area's past, or written by Alresford people. Of course, the opinions expressed herein are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect those of the editorial team.

Alresford Articles no.1 should now be available from the Hampshire library Service, and an index of the contents can be found in www.alresfordhistandlit.co.uk

So, we present the stories of Alresford's river highway and a wartime air attack; an article enthusing about New Alresford Town trust; a new opinion on the origins of *Tichborne* and *titchy*; more information about the *Tichborne Claimant*; Northington Grange in its prime ; chapter and verse on the date of the Broad Street Fair; an update on the bells of St John's, and some Tichborne poetry.



Tichborne House, pre 1910

We hope that you enjoy this edition – please give us your feedback, and we welcome contributions or suggestions for topics to be covered in the future. For instance, we include an article on New Alresford Town Trust that has been written in response to an item in our Issue No.1. We have prepared an advice document on how to style any contribution to make life easier for authors, so don't be shy!

1. The Old Pinglestone Road

by

Brian Rothwell

Introduction

The Old Pinglestone Road is only 300 metres long. It runs, north to south, from a T-junction with the minor-road that connects Old Alresford with the Abbotstone and Pinglestone Farms and the site of an abandoned medieval village. The first eighty metres of this ancient highway consists of nothing but a three-metre wide muddy footpath that merges into a forty-metre gravelled section that has obviously been laid by the owners of the Fulling Mill. The remaining 180 metres of the old right of way is an elongated ford that runs along the bed of the River Alre.

The ford extends from the north riverbank next to the Fulling Mill, a building which has spanned the water flow since the thirteenth century, to the top of The Dean on the south bank. The depth of the water rarely exceeds sixty centimetres or two feet, not above the axle depth on the average horse-drawn trap. The river bed has always been firm enough to accommodate the weight of horse traffic. Historically carts laden with full milk churns have made this short journey without mishap, probably ever since New Alresford was constructed as a market town on the instructions of a twelfth-century bishop.

This ford, however, has proved to be an emotive issue over the last forty years. On several occasions it has divided parts of the community of New Alresford and it may have the potential to continue to do so.



Illustration 1: Having traversed the first 120 metres of the Old Pinglestone Road, a horse and cart enter the elongated ford next to the Fulling Mill around 1900.¹

The existence of the Old Pinglestone Road certainly predates the railway engine and the motor car. It features in the 1805 Alresford Inclosure Act, being clearly shown on

¹ Alresford Heritage, Around the River, reference: GWC 057, www.alresfordheritage.co.uk

the accompanying map as one of only two roads that join the neighbouring parishes of Old and New Alresford.² The only other road to do so in 1805 ran along the top of the Great Weir and this remains the situation today. The old road is also described but not named as such in John Duthy's 1839 book entitled *Sketches of Hampshire*.³ In the days when transport was limited to riding on or behind a horse, the route was obviously more important than some consider it to be today.

John Curtis, who lives in Ladycroft, claims that his family have used the ancient highway running through The Dean River for four generations. 'Our horses pulled carts through the water laden with crates of watercress. They were on their way to the railway station for onward transmission. Using the ford was much quicker than going along the other road via the Great Weir'.⁴

The commercial usage of Old Pinglestone Road was also confirmed in a 1983 letter printed in the *Hampshire Chronicle*:

I can confirm the existence of this right of way. My family lived in the lower part of The Dean from 1904 until 1919. My father was the local fishmonger and he owned a pony and cart that were stabled at the side of Rose Cottage, which is still there. One of his regular rounds was to deliver his fish to Bighton, Old Alresford and The Grange at Northington, ending up at Weir House. He would return home via the Fulling Mill where I would be waiting for him to ride through the river to The Dean ...

Yours, etc.,
D.P. Millard (Mrs),

17, Windsor Road
Alresford.⁵

It was still being used by business vehicles after the Second World War:

The route was still being used by horse-drawn vehicles pulling farm produce when I lived at the Fulling Mill with my family and parents after being discharged from H.M. Forces in 1946. My father worked for Sir Francis Lindley of Weir House and we were granted a short-term tenure ...

Yours, etc.,
Harold Shaw,

7, Tannery Close,
Royston, Herts.⁶

² HRO, 7M50/A12, New Alresford Borough, Alresford Inclosure Act (relating to The Common Fields, 326 acres, and The Common Marsh, 84 acres), 1805.

HRO, 7M50/A13, Copy of the map referred to in the Inclosure Award, 1805.

³ John Duthy, *Sketches of Hampshire, The Architectural, Antiquities and Topography of the County adjacent to the River Itchen from Alresford to Southampton* (Winchester, 1839), 5.

⁴ Interview with John Curtis, 14 January 2013.

⁵ *Hampshire Chronicle*, Letters to the Editor, 31 March 1983.

⁶ *Hampshire Chronicle*, Letters to the Editor, 23 August 1985.



Illustration 2: The entry and exit slope to the ford at the north end of The Dean in the 1910s. The buildings of Pinglestone Farm can be seen in the centre right distance. In contrast to the scene more than a century later, note the absence of trees on both banks of the river as it curves round to the right.

After the Second World War, the use of the Old Pinglestone Road for commercial reasons declined in line with the decrease in the use of horses as power for delivery vehicles. By the 1970s, this had been reduced to virtually zero and the use of the ford had become the sole province of leisure-time horse riders.

Under the reforms of local government that occurred during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Hampshire County Council eventually inherited the responsibility for the development and maintenance of all of the public highways in the county. The immediate post-war definition of the term 'public highway' seemingly included the Old Pinglestone Road.

In January 1945, Sir Francis Lindley, the owner of Weir House and much of the surrounding land and fishing rights, had wires placed across the ford at the bottom of The Dean. Within a month, the legal representative of the county council had forced him to have these obstructions removed because they prevented access to a public right of way.⁷ In the period from 1950-75, the county council repaired the surface of the pathway section of the old road three times and twice their workmen cut back the verges.⁸

⁷ HRO, 108M82/PX4, New Alresford Parish Council, Minute Book, 1937-48.

⁸ Letter from Brian Gush to the Chief Executive of Hampshire County Council, 31 August 1975. This document was contained in 'The Alf White' papers relating to the Old Pinglestone Road given to the author by John Curtis, 4 December 2012.

The first challenge to the Old Pinglestone Road, 1975-6

In August 1975, the Fulling Mill was owned by Brian and Elinor Gush.⁹ After a storm that month, Brian formally complained to Hampshire County Council that a blocked culvert underneath the footpath section of the Old Pinglestone Road had caused a flood in his house. He requested that the council unblock the culvert as part of their duty to maintain the highway. The reply he received indicated that the county council believed that the footpath was a 'bridleway' and as such, they claimed that the old road was outside their sphere of accountability.¹⁰

Gush contacted New Alresford Parish Council where he found an energetic ally in parish clerk, Alf White. White took up Gush's case and wrote a succession of letters to county councillors and officials. After much correspondence, White received a letter from the council acknowledging that 'the stretch of road from the Abbotstone Road leading to the Fulling Mill is part of the ancient highway, which is now classified as a road but is used only as a footpath'. This meant that the council accepted that the blocked culvert was their accountability. The blockage was cleared by council workmen and, nine months after making his complaint, Gush, and presumably his insurance company, had good reason to be satisfied.¹¹



Illustrations 3 The south and 4 the north ends of the ford. Photos 2010 © Glenn Gilbertson

Alf White, however, was far from satisfied and continued to press the county council to admit that the ford from the Fulling Mill to The Dean was also part of the Old Pinglestone Road and, therefore, that it was also the council's maintenance accountability. White was arguing, 'once a highway, always a highway, unless an extinguishing order has been introduced and ratified after consultation with the public'.¹² As no such order had been contemplated or placed before the public, the county council grudgingly admitted that the ford had been part of an ancient highway and still was, therefore, a 'road'. In May 1976, White received a letter to this effect which he filed amongst the parish council records and he retained a copy with his personal papers.

⁹ Until 1968 when he retired, Brian Gush was the Managing Director of Gush & Dent Ltd, manufacturers of tubular steel farm gates. The firm's H.Q. was based in Jacklyns Lane. Brian Gush, 'World Farming Leans on Alresford', *Alresford Displayed*, Issue 1 (New Alresford, 1976).

¹⁰ Letter from Brian Gush to the Chief Executive of Hampshire County Council, 31 August 1975.

¹¹ HRO, 108M82/PX10, New Alresford Parish Council, Minute Book, 1973-75;

HRO, 108M82/PX19, New Alresford Parish Council, Minute Book, 1976-80.

¹² Alex Hankin, 'New Alresford Parish Council, Part II', *Alresford Displayed*, Issue 20 (New Alresford, 1995).

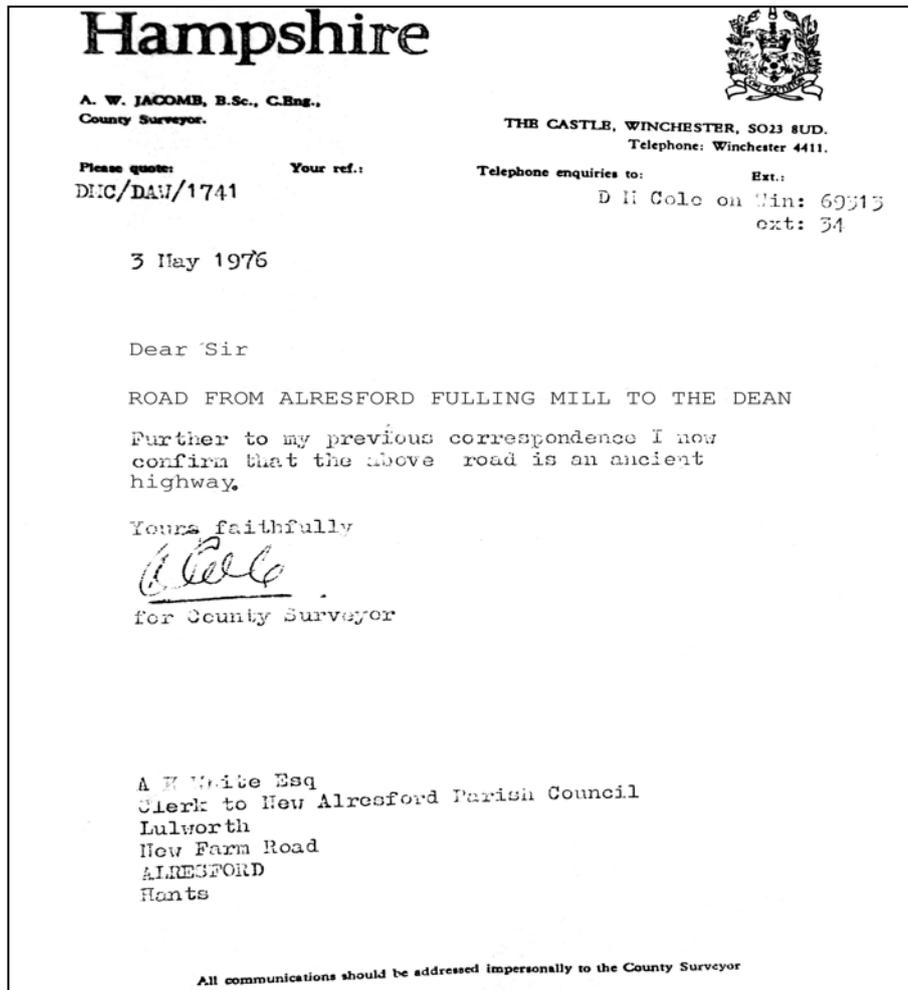


Illustration 5: Letter from the County Surveyor to Alf White confirming that the part of the Old Pinglestone Road from the Fulling Mill to The Dean is an ancient highway. Note the grudging tone of the letter that lacks any degree of politeness or courtesy.¹³

In order to emphasise what had been won in keeping the old road open, parish council notices were placed at either end of the footpath that ran alongside the ford and across a bridge in front of the Fulling Mill. These signs 'prohibited horses from using the footpath along The Dean River'.¹⁴ In essence, they were saying 'pedestrians can keep their feet dry on the Old Pinglestone Road but horses are expected to traverse the bed of the river'.

With the benefit of hindsight and if one had knowledge of only this first challenge to the existence of the Old Pinglestone Road, a cynic could say today that Alf White was acting solely in the interests of his parish council in the 1970s. If he had not been able to convince the county council that the old road was a highway rather than a bridleway, the cost of the maintenance of both the footpath and the ford would have fallen on the parish. And, in view of what happened in the 1980s, the same cynic could also conclude that Brian Gush may well have regretted involving Alf White in his dispute with the county council. When the issue of the possible closure of the ancient highway reared its head again, Gush and White emerged on opposite sides.

¹³ Letter contained in 'The Alf White' papers relating to the Old Pinglestone Road given to the author by John Curtis, 4 December 2012.

¹⁴ HRO, 108M82/PX19, New Alresford Parish Council, Minute Book, 1976-80.

The second challenge to the Old Pinglestone Road, 1979-85

Alf White's campaign in the mid-1970s to keep the Old Pinglestone Road open was his swansong as clerk to the parish council. On 14 December 1976, after being in the job for seventeen years and at the grand old age of seventy-six, Alf retired from his council duties. He was presented with a gold watch on behalf of all the council members with whom he had served and he publicly thanked everyone for all of the courtesy and assistance he had received during his years as parish clerk.¹⁵

Some of the councillors present on that occasion at the end of 1976 might have thought that Alf would gracefully move into activities less associated with local politics. They would, however, have been completely wrong. Within three years, the county council had embarked on another initiative to close the Old Pinglestone Road and Alf White had been contacted by the British Horse Society to help keep the old road open for the benefit its members.

I would like to state that in 1979, on a sunny Sunday morning, I rode my horse down The Dean and tried to enter the route of the highway, but experienced some difficulty due to the stones and iron poles holding up the original roadway. I eventually persuaded my horse to jump off the bank into the water and we then continued on our way. We reached the Fulling Mill at the end of the highway where we encountered yet more difficulties in getting out. I have several photographs and witnesses to this event.

Yours etc.,
Patricia A. White (Mrs),

149, Itchen Stoke
New Alresford.¹⁶

A team of workmen had truncated the tarmacadam roadway and created a vertical drop of about sixty centimetres (two feet) from the road surface of The Dean to the river bed. In addition, railway sleepers had been placed across the road to prevent access to the ford. At the Fulling Mill end, the gradient had been steepened, a drain had been dug down the centre of the entrance/exit point and bushes and shrubs planted to impede the passage of horses and traps.

No doubt wishing to maintain good relationships with his former colleagues on the parish council, for the first three years of this dispute Alf restricted himself to writing to his successor who then communicated with Hampshire County Council. Within the county council, however, there were many denials of departmental responsibility with much dragging of heels and nothing was done to clear the obstructions to the Old Pinglestone Road. The council were in effect saying, 'this ancient highway is used very infrequently and we cannot justify expending our scarce resources on a project that will benefit so few people'.

New Alresford Parish Council also came around to this point of view. Their clerk wrote to Alf on 25 February 1982:

Following correspondence with the Divisional Surveyor concerning the obstructions at either end of the riverbed, the Parish Council decided at its

¹⁵ *East Hampshire Post*, Thursday, 16 December 1976.

¹⁶ *Hampshire Chronicle*, Letters to the Editor, 11 March 1983.

January meeting to cease pressing the Divisional Surveyor to remove the obstructions. The council agreed that the end did not justify the allocation of scarce resources at a time of economic constraint. The council felt it important that the road had been acknowledged as a public highway and therefore, could not be lost, but also felt that facilitating access might well cause unwelcome misuse.

Alf White, however, suspected that if the obstructions remained in place the ancient highway of the Old Pinglestone Road was likely to remain closed to the public forever. He restarted his campaign anew, by writing to individual county councillors, enlisting the support of the British Horse Society and endeavouring to interest the MP for Winchester, John Browne.¹⁷ The issue reached the local press in 1983 and published 'letters to the editor' were numerous both in support of re-opening the road and against. In an epistle to New Alresford Parish Council of 14 February 1983, the owner of the Fulling Mill, Brian Gush, who having admitted his part in blocking the old road from his end, set out his stall against 'The White initiative':

I consider, clearly the County Council considers, and may one hope that your parish council will also continue to consider, that no useful purpose would be served by spending a lot of money to provide access to both ends of what is historically a public highway but which will never, and could never be used as such again. Could not your council endeavour to persuade Mr White, now that he has been retired from public service for many years, that it is time that he hibernate this Bee in his Bonnet?

None of Alf's initiatives from 1980 to the middle of 1984 were successful. They all foundered on the low usage of the road, the cost of the maintenance involved in keeping the highway open and a veiled threat from the county council that, if the ramps to the ford were reinstated, they would be used by four-wheeled vehicles and trial bikes that would impair the habitat of the river's wildlife.

Having exhausted all of the usual avenues for protest, eventually in 1984 and at the suggestion of the Secretary of the British Horse Society, Alf White resorted to the Ombudsman for Local Administration in England and Wales. He submitted a formal complaint on 23 October 1984. Under pressure from the Ombudsman, things that had been sticking for more than four years started to move comparatively quickly.

In January 1985, the Ombudsman indicated to the Chief Executive of Hampshire County Council that he was in breach of Section 56 of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act in failing to maintain the Old Pinglestone Road as a public highway. The Chief Executive relented and arranged for some of his senior officials to meet the parish councillors of New Alresford in February to discuss the detailed alterations that were necessary to make the ford operational. Alf White submitted the following map indicating the changes he required and these were all agreed by all parties.

¹⁷ John Browne was the Conservative MP for Winchester, 1979-92. He stood down before the 1992 election after it had been reported in the press that he had failed to declare a sum of money that he had received from a Saudi Arabian bank to The Inland Revenue.

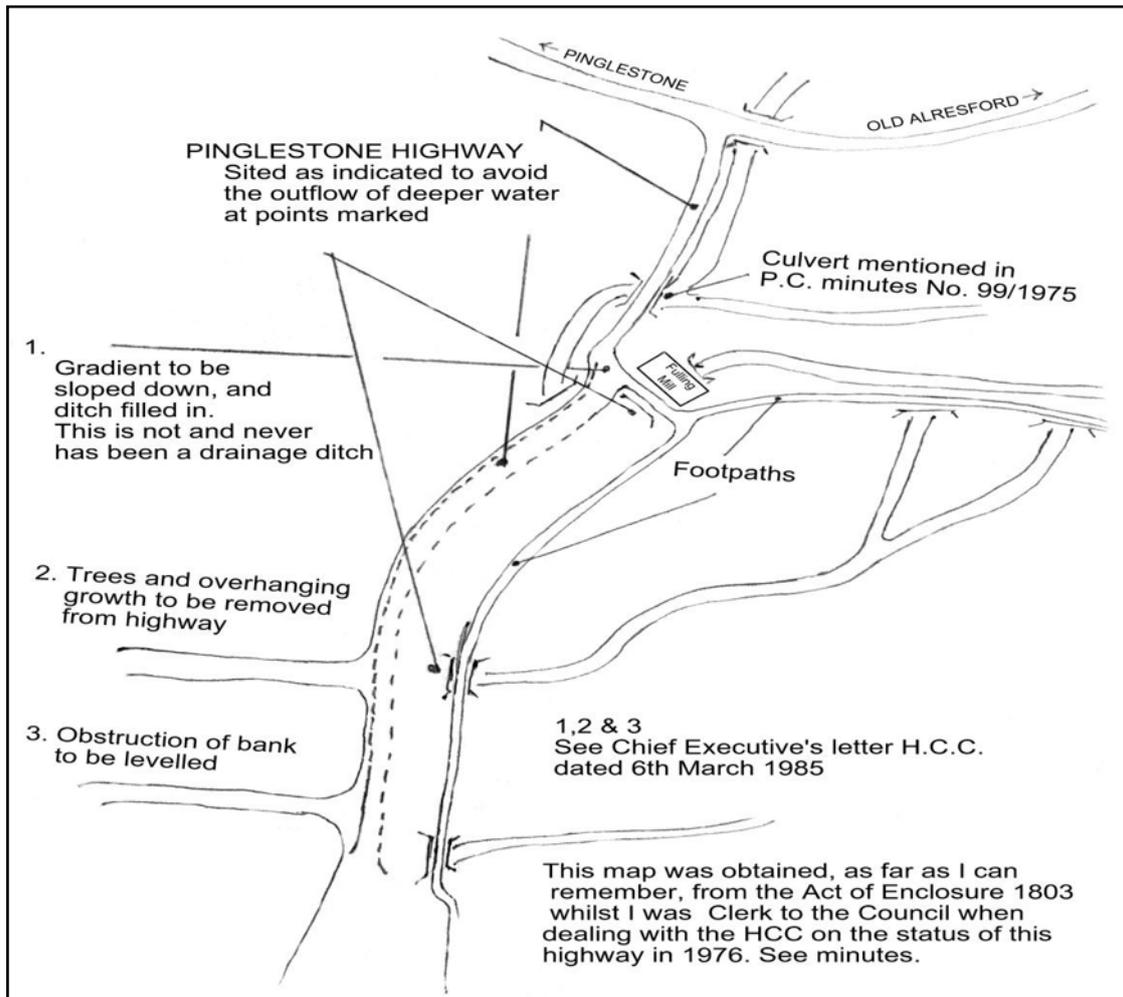


Illustration 6: Map submitted by Alf White to both Hampshire County Council and New Alresford Parish Council in 1985.¹⁸

In March notices were posted up in the town to ensure that there were no significant objections from the public and none resulted. The work to smooth the gradients, the removal of the obstacles at both ends of the ford and the clearance of tree branches to enable a clear ride close to the north bank of the river, so avoiding the flow from the culverts, were all completed by 24 July 1985. It was time for Alf to gloat a little and to invite the local press to the scene of his victory in keeping the Old Pinglestone Road open to the public.

¹⁸ Map contained in 'The Alf White Papers' relating to the Old Pinglestone Road given to the author by John Curtis, 4 December 2012.



Illustration 7: Alf White taking a celebratory horse-and-trap ride from north to south through the ford on the Old Pinglestone Road in July 1985. Note in the background that a number of horse riders had also made the celebration trip in the other direction and that the event had attracted some spectators.¹⁹

Alf had a keen sense of history and he was aware that his actions would be judged by future generations. This is the note that he left in his file of personal papers:

I would like to place my negotiations with Hampshire County Council, New Alresford Parish Council, the British Horse Society and John Browne MP on record and this is my file of papers. My objective was always to have the obstructions, placed by certain people at both ends of the Right of Way through the Ford, removed because they prevented those who wished to use this right of way from doing so.

The correspondence commenced in 1975, whilst I was Clerk to New Alresford Parish Council (see copies of the minutes). It commenced again in 1980, when I was asked to look again into the matter of obstructions. I will leave it to anyone, after reading the correspondence, to draw their own conclusions.

I received no assistance to my efforts for FIVE years to get the obstructions to the Ford removed; that is from 1980 to 1985. Finally I appealed to the Local Ombudsman, and after he had read my complete file of correspondence, he agreed that my Complaint should be upheld. The obstructions were removed and the Public Right of Way to the Old Pinglestone Road was restored on 24 July 1985.

The third challenge to the Old Pinglestone Road, 2004-6

In 1985, Alf White must have thought that he had secured the permanence of this public right of way and at the age of ninety, he died in January 1991, presumably still a

¹⁹ Press photograph contained in 'The Alf White Papers' relating to the Old Pinglestone Road given to the author by John Curtis, 4 December 2012.

happy man.²⁰ Thirteen years later however, in 2004, Hampshire County Council removed the ramp from the end of the roadway in The Dean and installed bollards to prevent access to the ford. Local councillor, Ken Yeldham took up the campaign to keep the old road open. He commented in the press:

It is part of Alresford's history and something unique to the town. We are not asking for the road to be re-opened – as an ancient highway it is still open as no extinguishing order has been issued to close it. I want the bollards removed and the ramp put back.

Two years later, in 2006, the bollards had been removed but the ramp had still not been restored to the roadway at the bottom of The Dean. The county council, when challenged, stated that they had been motivated to take action in 2004 by three factors. The first of them was to make the old road unattractive to opportunistic motor traffic such as four-by-four vehicles and quad bikes.

Led by Ken Yeldham, New Alresford Town Council²¹ responded to this reason for closure by formally requesting that the Old Pinglestone Road become a 'Restricted Byway' under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act of 2000. This was agreed and as can be seen from the sign on the finger post (right), which is on display at the junction of the ancient highway with the Abbotstone Road, all motorised vehicles are now prohibited from using the Old Pinglestone Road.



Illustration 8: The broken finger post at the junction of the Old Pinglestone Road with the Abbotstone Road. Photograph by the author in 2013.

The second reason given by the county council was that they were denied the access necessary to maintain the banks and the bed of the river by both the Environment Agency and Natural England who had declared the location a 'Site of Special Scientific Interest' in order to protect the flora, fauna and wildlife of the river. In this aspect, the county council was supported by some of the town's residents who in 2006 wrote to the local press indicating that they did not want the ford re-opened because it would lead to the wildlife being disturbed.

The third reason, one seemingly ever present in local government, was cost. In 2006, Hampshire County Council estimated that, given the need to comply with the requirements of both the Environment Agency and Natural England, the cost of carrying out works to the ramps at both ends of the ford was £23,400.

²⁰ HRO, 7M50/B9, New Alresford Town Trust: Trustees Minute Book, 1974-2000.

²¹ The parish council changed its name to New Alresford Town Council in 1999.

The situation today

There the situation has rested for the last seven years as complicated talks have taken place between town council, county council, the Environment Agency, Natural England and the landowner. Roy Gentry, a current New Alresford Town Councillor, commented:

We are still trying very hard to balance the conflicting needs to both recognise a traditional right of way and to protect the natural habitat. In order to ensure that it cannot be claimed in the future that 'the ancient highway has never been used', arrangements are made for a pony and trap to make the journey along the Old Pinglestone Road during the Alresford Watercross Festival that takes place every May.

The last thing the Town Council want to do today is to put a concrete ramp from the end of The Dean into the river which could attract off-roaders from across the south. What we do want to do is to ensure that the historic right of passage is maintained but only for horses and carriages. To this end the Town Council has been negotiating with Hampshire County Council and the land owner to establish a formal entry to and egress from the river a few metres to the west of the bottom of The Dean.

This has been agreed by all parties involved but unfortunately the necessary work is not near the top of the highway improvement priority list for the county council at a time of severe budget restrictions. An alternative may well be that the town council will be able to get the land owner to undertake the work as part of his improvement to the river environment but all such work will have to be agreed by the Environment Agency and Natural England. In the meantime, as we demonstrate at every Watercross Festival, it is quite possible for a horse and carriage to enter and exit the river at this point, albeit that it is not ideal.



Illustration 9: The sharp drop from the end of the roadway to the river bed at the north end of The Dean. Photograph by the author in 2013.

It would seem that the modern history of the Old Pinglestone Road has yet to reach a satisfactory final conclusion and that yet more time will pass before it does.

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Hampshire Chronicle, records held on microfiche.

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New Alresford Borough, Copy of the map referred to in the Inclosure Award, 1805, 7M50/A13.

New Alresford Parish Council, Minute Book, 1973-75, 108M82/PX10.

New Alresford Parish Council, Minute Book, 1976-80, 108M82/PX19.

New Alresford Town Trust: Trustees Minute Book, 1974-2000, 7M50/B9.

Documents not contained in an archive

'The Alf White Papers' relating to the Old Pinglestone Road. This file was given to the author by John Curtis, 4 December 2012. It will be deposited at the Hampshire Record Office during 2013.

Interviewees

John Curtis.

Roy Gentry, Town Councillor, New Alresford Town Council.

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Books and articles

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Web site

Alresford Heritage, Around the River, www.alresfordheritage.co.uk

2. The Bombing of Alresford

By

Glenn Gilbertson

Honeysuckle Cottage, formerly Rose Cottage, is found on Pound Hill, Alresford.



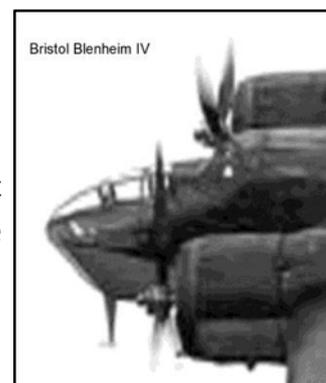
Picture © Glenn Gilbertson

In 1942 Rose Cottage was occupied by the Cornforth family. On 19th August Mrs Cornforth was preparing tea, and children Desmond, Mavis, Eileen and Gerald were looking forward to the rare treat of a chocolate cake. Lodger Arthur Philips (a retired bricklayer) was in bed upstairs. Gerald remembers the day clearly, and has told the story to the author.

It was the day of the Allied raid on Dieppe.

Early rain had cleared, and the afternoon was sunny. A low-flying aircraft was heard.

Everyone went to look, and Mrs Cornforth said ‘look at the lovely aeroplane, children, that’s a Blenheim; you can see the pilot, give him a wave!’



At this point aircraft buffs will have guessed what happened next.

The aircraft circled and the family waved. Then they saw the black crosses and the swastika on the tail. The aircraft was a Junkers Ju 88. It has to be said that gunners of both sides often mistook this type for a Blenheim (and Finland and Rumania operated both types).



‘Take cover!’ said Mrs Cornforth, and the family dived under the kitchen table. Mavis later commented that they must have looked like a flower, with all their heads under the table but all their bottoms sticking out in a circle like petals. The Junkers circled again, released a bomb and flew away west, machine-gunning the Avenue. There was a loud bang, Rose Cottage’s windows were blown out and the roof destroyed.

The cottage was uninhabitable, so an ambulance was called to carry Mr Phillips out. He was the only person to be hurt, when the ambulance crew dropped him on his gouty toe. The family was put up for two nights at Dr Hodgson’s, (*the Lindens*) but Gerald remembers how little help the family received, even having to salvage their own mattresses and bedding. The experience was especially hard because their father Percy Cornforth had been a prisoner of war since June 1940, when he was severely wounded in the gallant rearguard action of the 51st (Highland) Division at St Valéry.

It’s an ill wind – the Cornforth family found that when they returned after *Rose Cottage* was repaired it was much more comfortable, no longer damp from neglected maintenance and with a much better roof. The landlady was delighted that the government had paid for the repairs.

Gerald was given to understand that RAF fighters from Middle Wallop were approaching Alresford at the time of the attack, and the bomber was destroyed by the RAF on the way home. If that is true, then there are three possible identities, all from Fliegerführer Atlantik, a Kriegsmarine rather than Luftwaffe Command based in North-West France. Küstenfliegergruppe 106 was based in Dinard, Brittany :¹

¹The Blitz Then and Now, vol.2 edited by Winston G Ramsey. After the Battle, 1988. p.165

3/Küstenfliegergruppe 106 Junkers Ju 88A-4 (142136). Shot down by Sergeant Clee and Sergeant Grant in a Beaufighter Mk IF of No. 141 Squadron, based at Tangmere. Crashed into the sea four miles south-east of Selsey Bill 6.15 p.m. Gefr. F. Heidsiek missing. Uffz. F. Nottmeier, Gefr. H. zur Nieden and Gefr. W. Bleiber killed. Aircraft M2+FL sank in sea. Is this the most likely candidate?

3/Küstenfliegergruppe 106 Junkers Ju 88A-4 (1534). Crashed at Colworth Farm, West-dean, West Sussex 6.43 p.m. cause uncertain. Fw. P-W. Lehmann, Uffz. R. G. Göhringer, Gefr. W. Otto and Gefr. G. Wagner all killed. Aircraft M2+EL disintegrated.

1/Küstenfliegergruppe 106 Junkers Ju 88A-4 (140718). Hit in the tail and engine over the Solent by AA fire. Crashed at Boniface Down, Ventnor, Isle of Wight 7.30 p.m. Lt. E. Kegenbein, Gefr. E. Oestreich and Uffz. F. Arnold all injured and taken prisoner. Uffz. W. Hase killed. Aircraft M2+FH wrecked.

Rose Cottage was the only building damaged in Alresford by enemy action in World War 2.² *Küstenfliegergruppe* translates as *Coast Reconnaissance and Naval Support Group*; it would appear likely that the units were engaged in armed reconnaissance to find out if there were further invasion forces ready to attack France. It would be common to attack targets of opportunity if intercepting fighters appeared; perhaps Alresford gasworks was the intended target.

Thus ended Alresford's only 'air raid', when it seems that the town was bombed by the German Navy. German air operations over Southern England were normally the responsibility of Luftwaffe Luftflotte 3, based in northern France, but of course the Dieppe raid would have diverted resources to that area. Trust Alresford to be different.

The only other aerial attack was when a V-1 flying bomb glided to a landing in Drove lane in 1944, but it did not explode.³ About a third of the V-1s that were launched at England targeted the Southampton/Portsmouth area rather than London.



How lucky Alresford was to survive almost unscathed, rather than ending as the piles of rubble remembered in childhood by the author and his wife in Southampton and London. For those of us of a certain age Roses and Honeysuckles are unchanged, but the *Buddleia* will always be the *bomb-site plant*, not the *butterfly bush*.

² Unpublished memory of Dave Pullinger

³ Unpublished memory of Dave Pullinger

3. A Current Assessment of New Alresford Town Trust (NATT) and its Distinctive and Unique Role in the Local Area

By

Robin Atkins

1. HISTORY

NATT was formed as a Charity in 1890 to inherit some of the activities of the Bailiffs and Burgesses, who had controlled Alresford since the Middle Ages. NATT has disposed of some of the 1890 activities, with the remaining ones being – (a) The ownership and maintenance of The Avenue; (b) the ownership of the Old Fire Station in Broad Street; (c) the rights to run markets, particularly on Thursdays, in Broad Street and (d) the holding of the October Fair.

2. STARTING OF NEW ACTIVITIES

The Community Minibus was taken over in 1970 and has run successfully since that date. During the last 5 years it has attracted grants and donations totalling over £50K from over fifty different sources, and now runs over six hundred journeys covering 12,500 miles per year. It does weekly runs to most of the local supermarkets, carries Age Concern residents and does leisure trips during the Summer months, organised by The Pigs and Rotary Club. It is the most important activity in Alresford and the surrounding areas, and this is due in the main to Trustee, Pam Stevens.

During the last five years NATT has taken on three new activities :-

- (a) The restoration of the Eel House in 2007.
- (b) The Alresford Museum project in 2011.
- (c) The emergency funding for deserving persons in 2012.

NATT had to face different problems and obstacles on each of the three different activities and Section 3 sets this out in detail.

3. EXAMINATION IN DETAIL OF HOW NATT TOOK OVER THE THREE NEW PROJECTS SINCE 2007

(a) Restoration of Eel House

History

The Eel House at Alresford sits beside the Wayfarers' Way footpath in idyllic woodland in a valley about a mile and a half from the centre of the market town. It straddles the clean clear waters of the tranquil River Arle with a foot on each of its banks. It is a modest but nicely proportioned building with a clay-tiled roof dating from the 1820's when the Harris family of nearby Arlebury Park commissioned this minor masterpiece of 19th century ingenuity. Its purpose was to trap mature eels near to the start of their once in a lifetime three thousand mile journey to breed in the Sargasso Sea.

Buildings constructed specifically for eel trapping are extremely rare in the United Kingdom. There is only one other such house that features in the English Heritage register of listed buildings, and a Google internet search currently throws up no others that now exist. The Eel House at Alresford is certainly a very rare building.

Restoration

In 2006 during work to remove the ivy that completely engulfed the building, it became apparent that the southwest corner of the building was collapsing. The back scouring of the river current, coupled with the energetic roots of a nearby ash tree, had completely undermined part of the building and was making rapid inroads into the rest of the foundations. There was a distinct possibility then that it would soon crumble into the River Arle; all that was holding it up were strands of ivy. As The Eel House is situated at a flow control point, if it had collapsed upstream water levels would have dropped catastrophically, ruining the tranquility of the river walks around Alresford and the wildlife habitat of Old Alresford Pond.

The owner moved swiftly to have the building propped up and consultations between all interested parties then followed. These were somewhat complicated as the building is owned by one party, another owns the surrounding land and a third the river fishing rights. Also involved were the Environment Agency and Natural England as protectors of the delicate and sensitive environment of the River Arle and its surrounds.

Members of the Alresford Society were determined that the building should be saved if at all possible and two individuals underwrote the majority of the £15,000 that was needed for the initial and urgent funding of the restoration. With much goodwill from all parties involved, the eventual outcome was that the New Alresford Town Trust was granted a ninety-nine year lease on the building at a peppercorn rent. This enabled a search for charitable grants and tax efficient donations for the project and it also ensured the future of The Eel House.

A restoration team was set up, under the authority of the Town Trust, comprising three Town Trustees and two members of The Alresford Society plus the owner of the building and the landowner, to manage the repair, maintenance and future safety of the building. Duncan Grant of the Radley House Partnership and Michael Clarke, a senior conservation officer with Hampshire County Council provide this team with expert advice.

Initial funding was raised by grants from Hampshire County Council, New Alresford Town Council and The Alresford Society, augmented by generous donations from more than fifty local individuals and corporate bodies. The first step was to clear the loose and collapsed foundations and replace them with an extensive concrete 'pad' so that the five-foot deep water scoured void beneath the building was effectively filled. An under scouring of the adjacent Wayfarers' Way footpath was also repaired at the same time. The second step was to restore the external structure of the building, repointing the walls and replacing the roof tiles. Once this was done the Mayor of Winchester officially opened The Eel House in April 2008.

The Remaining Challenge

With the building now secure and with exterior structure repaired, detailed plans are being drawn up for the third step of restoring the building to working use. The aim is to make The Eel House, as far as possible, exactly as it was in past. Please note that this is not a restoration with a commercial objective, any eels caught in the traps will not feature on restaurant menus, they will be returned to the waters of the Arle, but the trapping will be used for educational demonstrations.

The Eel House is intended to stand not only as a reminder of the way some of our ancestors made a living but also to be available for present day educational and research uses. This third restoration step will involve the installation of a sluice system and eel traps plus the restoration and equipping of the interior of the building.

The building is open to the public eight days per year (it has attracted over 4000 visitors since opening in 2008) and now has an audio system to help visitors understand the history and operation, as well as the life of Eels. We are indebted to the volunteers who make the Open Days possible

The success so far of the project is largely due to David Woods and the late David Goodman, who have devoted many hours to the restoration and to Trustees Len Orton and Robin Atkins who have been the Trustees responsible since the start of the project. Over £42,000 has been raised from local authorities, organisations and public since the collapse, and it is estimated a further £10,000 will be needed to complete the project.

(b) Alresford Museum

The late Roy Robins set up a Trust in 2007, but with his death in 2008 the Museum Trust became dormant, and then Museum Trustees wanted to distribute the monies (some to the Conservative Party) but were refused by the Charity Commissioners, who insisted that the activity and funds be transferred to another Registered Charity.

The late Arthur Stowell, one of the Museum Trustees became increasingly concerned by this situation and contacted Natalie Carpenter, an old family friend. Natalie and Trustee Robin Atkins reviewed what action was required:-

- (a) Establish the status of Museum Trust.
- (b) Ascertain the amount of money being held.
- (c) Quantify the artefacts being held and their whereabouts.

The Charity Commission were very helpful and had blocked any payments of monies unless made to another Registered Charity. Meetings were held with the Robins family and NATT were informed that there was over £12,500 in the Museum Trust bank account.

Deposits of documents and photographs (mainly donated by Brian Champion) had been made to the Hampshire Record Office, whilst the remaining artefacts were still at the Robins' family home.

The Charity Commission agreed that the transfer of monies, some £12,773 be paid to NATT. NATT agreed to set up a separate designated operation - Alresford Museum Committee and the artefacts were delivered to NATT.

Trustee Roy Gentry has spent many days scanning the photographs for NATT's record.

Since 2012 The Alresford Museum Committee under the Chair of Trustee Roy Gentry has also been busy acquiring Alresford artefacts and developing a new website, which will be launched in 2013.

(c) Emergency Funding for Deserving Persons

By January 2012 NATT had built up the General Reserve with the help and benefit of a strong Treasurer, Peter Middleton, to £44,000 from an initial deficit of £200 when he became a Trustee in December 2005.

NATT had run several Charities for the poor until these were wound up in the 1990s. Several Trustees particularly Peter Middleton, Pam Stevens and Robin Atkins pushed for NATT to restart the giving of grants.

In 2012 NATT made a start by agreeing to pay grants for emergency funding and during the last year has made four such grants totalling over £800.

A specific fund was set up in June with the receipt of an anonymous donation (including Gift Aid) of £1250.

NATT also work with two other local charities, The Pigs and Rotary, when reviewing the merits of each case, so if agreed funding may come from all three charities.

4. CURRENT PORTFOLIO OF ACTIVITIES

NATT is currently a real mix of activities ranging from the purely charitable to the preservation of heritage and traditions. In order to run such a range, Trustees need to specialise in activities they enjoy. They also need experience in running small businesses and working within a small team. Each NATT activity is run separately and has its own targets and objectives, which are reviewed annually by all Trustees.

5. NATT OPERATIONAL CONTROL

There are currently seven Trustees (nine being the maximum) being a mix of nominations from the Town Council and co-optees.

The procedures agreed by NATT are that each Trustee must take an active role and communicate/report to the six Trustee meetings per annum.

The Treasurer produces monthly Management Accounts, which set out in detail, (a) the Balance Sheet and (b) Income and Expenditure Accounts.

6. CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION

The income from all activities is around £35K per annum and is mainly derived from, (a) rent of Old Fire Station; (b) Donations/Fares from Minibus; (c) Market Income and Tolls in Broad Street, and (d) Interest and Dividends from Investments.

NATT produces an Annual Report and Accounts to 31st December. The figures to 31st December 2012 will be approved, examined and published in February 2013. The document runs to nearly twenty pages and will be available to the public.

The Trust has sufficient finances to carry out all of its Activities as set out in the Sections 1-4 above and has strong financial reserves.

7. VOLUNTEERS

NATT has built up volunteers to help the Trustees on many fronts :-
(a) The Avenue; (b) Eel House; (c) Minibus drivers and (d) Alresford Museum.

The total of volunteers exceeds seventy and is open to everyone.

None of the Trustees receive any remuneration and NATT has no paid staff.

8. CONCLUSION

NATT by having a small number of Trustees, all of whom are focussed on their roles, was able to acquire and start the three new projects set out in Section 3, and to run the existing activities for the benefit of the local public.

NATT was able to move swiftly with the help of volunteers and good financial resources to take over these three new activities.

Finally, why has NATT been so successful in the last five years?

Firstly it is run by independently minded and honest Trustees who are willing to devote many unpaid hours to ensure NATT works as efficiently as possible. Secondly, it is non political and a registered Charity, able to secure special tax benefits. Thirdly, it can take quick decisions both to help people in need as well as projects needing its help. Fourthly, it is run professionally and has strong financial controls. Consequently, successes have far outnumbered mistakes.

But, NATT has much more to do locally, and it will be interesting to see how it develops and changes in the next ten years.

Robin Atkins, F.C.A.
Chair, NATT

Notes

(1) This article has been written by Robin Atkins, who takes full responsibility for its contents.

Robin Atkins, is currently the longest serving Trustee, having been elected in October 2005, and has been Co-Chair and Chair of NATT since 2008.

(2) The notes on the Eel House written by the Eel House Committee have provided most of the narrative for Section 3(a).

4. Tichborne and ‘Titchy’ - Their Original Meaning

By

Peter Abraham

titchy/tich/(-ier,-iest) *adj.* very small (*informal*) [Mid 20th C. Formed from Little *Tich*, the stage name of the English comedian Harry Relph (1868-1928), who was very small.]¹

The article on the meaning of the name Alresford (in the previous issue of Alresford Articles in 2012) quoted the AD 701 Grant of Alresford to the Church by King Ina. This spelled out the boundary in the language of the time. Three rivers formed the western portion of the boundary, comprising the river Tichborne [from Cheriton] flowing into the Itchen [from Bishop’s Sutton] which was joined further downstream by the Candover.

This raises the interesting question of the meaning of Tichborne. Eric Coates in his 1989 *Place Names of Hampshire*² gives “[AD]909 *ticceburna*; [AD] 938 *ticceburnan* ... ‘kid stream’, containing the nominative singular or genitive plural of an unattested relative (*ticce*) of the word *ticcen* ‘kid’”. He invites comparison with Tisted which in AD 932 was written *ticces stede* ... ‘kid’s place’ according to that author. As an aid to the pronunciation of *ticcen* it is worth remembering that the Anglo Saxon word for ‘witch’ was *wicce* and *ticcen* was spelt *ticgen* in Lindisfarne.

That the word *ticcen* means specifically a ‘kid’ or young goat as opposed to an adult goat, (which would be *gat* in Old English), is left beyond doubt by the many references for *ticcen* quoted in Bosworth and Toller³ to establish its meaning. Amongst these the most telling are several from the ancient Anglo-Saxon translation of the first books of the Bible. Most notable are Genesis Chapter 27 verses 9 and 16 which describe the personation by Jacob of his brother Esau (at the behest of their mother Rebecca) to secure the blessing of their blind dying father Isaac. For Jacob’s bare skin to have Esau’s hairiness it was covered with the skin of the recently slaughtered kids: an adult beast simply would not serve that purpose.



Esau sells his birthright to Jacob, Zacarias Gonzalez Velazquez, 1800

<http://www.1st-art-gallery.com/thumbnail/185390/1/Esau-Sells-His-Birthright-To-Jacob,-1790-1800.jpg>

¹ Encarta World English Dictionary. Bloomsbury Press 1999

² Richard Coates *The Place Names of Hampshire*, Batsford 1989

³ Joseph Bosworth and T. Northcote Toller *An Anglo Saxon Dictionary* Clarendon Press, Oxford 1898

So the word *ticken* carries with it the notion of small size. Indeed the river Tichborne is relatively titchy where it joins the Itchen. Presumably the river gave rise to the name of the place Tichborne and the name of the family which held the Tichborne baronetcy and estates. So the man named Arthur Orton, who in 1867 claimed to be the Tichborne heir thought to have been lost at sea, came to be known simply as the Tichborne Claimant.

That case, which lasted seven years, was far from clearcut and generated enormous public debate, even after Arthur Orton was sentenced in 1874 to fourteen years penal servitude as an imposter. The case was very much in the public mind and controversy over it raged until The Claimant's death in 1898. Interest continues to this day: Douglas Woodruff⁴ compiled a comprehensive book about him published in 1957. Gill Arnott pointed out in her talk to the Alresford Historical and Literary Society in June 2010 that, though 'Arthur Orton' did not have a **legitimate** claim, there exists a curious possible explanation underlying the case. (See addendum [Ed.]

Next we turn to Harry Relph (1867-1928)⁵ who was a brilliant music hall artist throughout his life, from Gravesend and Chatham at the end of the 1870s, to London in 1884, the United States (1887 - 1889) and Paris between 1896 and 1902 (when he was not performing in his own musical theatre company). He seems to have stopped growing from about ten years old, only ever reaching four foot six inches. He made a virtue of his handicap, for instance by using ludicrous 28-inch shoes, standing on their points and then leaning out at an extraordinary angle, in one of his acts.



Harry Relph ("Little Tich")

Of course publicity was an essential part of Harry Relph's remarkable career. Initially he used the stage name 'the Infant Mackney'. [Relph had used 'blackface' acts at the time and E.W. Mackney was a leading 'blackface' performer of the period]. Next, in the early 1880s, when the Tichborne Claimant controversy was still in full swing, Relph was billed as 'Young Tichborne'. Relph was tiny and

the Claimant was notoriously of **gross** proportions. Not only would the cheeky description as the 'Young Tichborne' in that period have gained instant attention for the performer but the London audience would for a time no doubt have enjoyed the droll contrast between their dramatically different physiques.

⁴ Douglas Woodruff *The Tichborne Claimant* Hollis and Carter 1957.

⁵ Dave Russel *Harry Relph [Little Tich] (1867-1928)* Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

At any rate by 1884 Harry Relph had adopted the title 'Little Titch' instead, and a relatively short while after this he reverted to the name 'Little Tich' by which he was known thereafter.

It is clear that Harry Relph in each case used his dwarfish build to enhance his publicity whether through his acrobatic acts or by alluding to it in his choice of stage name. The question arises: did Harry Relph use the name 'Little Titch' because the word 'titchy', implying small size, was a word which had been around in some form or other in everyday speech (though not in formal literature) for more than a millennium? Or did Harry Relph's music hall fame generate a new English word which then became part of universal English, as dictionaries such as the Bloomsbury-published 1999 'Encarta World English Dictionary' suggests in its entry on the word 'titchy/tichy'?

Perhaps the initial 'tich' element of Tichborne, amongst other factors, drew him to the choice of 'The Young Tichborne' in the first place, but it is interesting that historically 'Little Titch' was replaced by 'Little Tich' early on in the publicity billing. Was this another subtler attempt to draw on the notoriety of the Tichborne Claimant again? Whether that is so or not the 'kid' explanation of the origin of 'titchy' is perhaps more convincing than the 'Harry Relph' one.

Addendum

by Glenn Gilbertson

Lesley Drew wrote a good account of the Tichborne Claimant case in *Alresford Displayed No.16*, available from the library or online at www.alresfordhistanlit.co.uk. One feature of the case that was omitted from that article was referred to by Gill Arnott, talking to the Alresford Historical and Literary Society in June 2010. She referred to a rare physical defect shared by Sir Roger Tichborne and the Tichborne Claimant:

A sensation occurred in the courtroom when a Dr Lipscombe, described as Sir Roger's personal physician, gave evidence of a rare physical defect, that, he said, distinguished Sir Roger. The young aristocrat, he said, had an abnormal penis. It regressed, like a horse's, into his body. The claimant, Arthur Orton, had that same abnormality.

*Orton's previous sweetheart was also called to the stand. She gave evidence that in the course of their courtship she had become acquainted with his penis, and she recalled at times it did indeed regress into his body.*⁶

This defect is extremely rare, as an internet search revealed. Gill suggested that the coincidence could be because the Claimant was not Sir Roger, (we can be sure of that as Orton did not have Sir Roger's arm tattoos), but an illegitimate relative who had been sent abroad to avoid family shame. Thus Lady Tichborne might have actually detected a family resemblance, rather than simply succumbing to wishful thinking. However, the condition can also be brought on by obesity, so we cannot know the truth.

⁶ <http://nursemyra.wordpress.com/tag/retractable-penis/>

5. Thomas Carlyle ‘Doing Without Work’ at the Grange

By

Brian Tippett

In his account of the Grange in *A Brief History of Swarraton and Northington* (1890, reprinted 1997) Rev. William Eyre gives prominence to Thomas Carlyle’s frequent presence there as a visitor and to his ‘special and constant’ friendship with Lady Ashburton. Writing just a few years after Carlyle’s death, he may as rector have been able to draw upon actual memories but what he lacked was access to the mass of personal letters since revealed and now being published by Duke University Press in over thirty volumes. These enable us to throw new light on Carlyle’s remarkable relationship with his hostess and to amplify our picture of the great house and its environs in its mid- nineteenth century heyday.¹



¹ See *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*, edited by Clyde de L. Ryals, Kenneth J. Fielding and others. Also on line at carlyleletters.dukejournals.org. For an excellent complete history see Richard Osborne’s recent *The Grange, Hampshire* (Grange Opera n.d.). It is superlatively illustrated and includes a perceptive account of the Carlyles, drawn mainly from Jane’s letters.

The Carlyles and the Ashburtons

Sometimes separately, sometimes together, Carlyle and his wife Jane paid at least fifteen visits to the Grange between 1844 and 1863, usually staying for weeks at a time. At first their hosts were Alexander Baring, the first Baron Ashburton, a member of the great banking family, and his American wife. They came to the Grange as friends of younger members of the family – Bingham Baring (1799-1864) and his wife Lady Harriet Baring (1805-1857), the Ashburtons' son and daughter in law, with whom they had previously stayed at Bay House, Alverstoke (Gosport). Then in 1847 Lord Ashburton died and Bingham Baring inherited the title and the estate. Harriet had ambitions as the hostess of a circle or 'salon' of friends and celebrities and now, as the new Lady Ashburton, she came into her own with two prestigious houses where she could entertain the writers and public figures from church, state and the professions whom she drew into her orbit. Bath House in Piccadilly was the venue for her London dinner parties and the Grange for her celebrated house parties.

Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) was the star of Lady Harriet's salon. His highly original *Sartor Resartus*, his acclaimed history of the French Revolution and his searching portrayal of England's economic malaise in *Past and Present* placed him in the front rank of contemporary writers. But he was by no means the typical house party guest. For all his intellectual brilliance, he remained an egocentric, plain-speaking Scotsman with a loud laugh and a quirky sense of humour who made no attempt to disguise his humble origins. He relished intellectual debate rather than the superficialities of polite conversation and his engrained habits made him an awkward guest. His letters from the Grange are full of complaints about insomnia and indigestion brought on by unsuitable hours and over-rich food. He grumbles that his time is not his own, that 'legions of flunkies are forever stirring you up at every turn' (CL 21.9.44)² and that 'I am never or hardly ever ... left to my own individual devices (CL 16.9.44). Above all, as a man who normally gave his own work absolute priority and who believed that Work was the one thing needful to a meaningful existence, he was appalled by the pointless vacuity, the 'do-nothingism', of daily life in the country house: 'we have no work here at all, and our work, as it were, is to find ways of doing *without* work'(CL 12.9.44)³

Despite his reservations Carlyle took his part in the social interactions expected of house party guests, and did so with a show of gusto and boisterous laughter. But for him the appeal of the Grange lay elsewhere. Its rural setting and the opportunities it gave for solitude and exercise became increasingly attractive to him as a respite from life in foggy, smoky London. But the one great magnetic attraction which brought him back time and time again was Lady Harriet herself.

² References are to *Collected Letters* (see footnote 1) abbreviated thus: CL followed by date (day/month/year). Original spelling and punctuation retained.

³ For further detail see Fred Kaplan, *Thomas Carlyle: A Biography* (1983), and for Jane Welsh Carlyle see Lawrence & Elisabeth Hanson, *Necessary Evil* (1953)



Thomas Carlyle



Jane Welsh Carlyle

Carlyle's relationship with Harriet was peculiarly close. They first met in March 1839 at Bath House. She made an immediate impression on him. She is, he said, 'one of the cleverest creatures I have met with, full of mirth and spirit' (CL 8.3.39). Initially she did not strike him as beautiful but such was her charisma that in his eyes she became 'the beautifullest creature in all this world' (CL 9.1.47), They did not become lovers and yet Carlyle danced attendance on her and in writing to her expressed his yearnings and adoration in the exaggerated language a passionate lover might have used: 'Principessa ... in all things you are beautiful and good' (CL 22.11.52); 'I kiss your hand, ... I kiss the hem of thy garment' (CL 28.11.51); 'employ me, order me; see if I will not obey!' (CL 4.11.45); and most intriguing of all: 'mine yes, and yet forever no.' Although Eyre thought her reaction unreasonable, it is hardly surprising that Jane Carlyle (his humble 'little Goody', not his 'Principessa') was jealous. She remarks sarcastically that Lady Harriet 'must have her Court about her wherever she goes'; 'she has summoned Carlyle down to the Grange for a week at the least — and he — never by any chance refuses a wish of hers — clever woman that she is!' (CL 7.11.46) Years later, at home in Chelsea, she still sighs: 'Alone this evening. Lady A is in town again, and Mr C of course at Bath House.' 'That eternal Bath House! I wonder how many thousand miles Mr C has walked between there and here, put it all together? setting up always another mile-stone, and another, betwixt himself and me!' And she looks back to a time 'When there was no Lady A to take the shine out of me, in *his* eyes.' Temperamentally Jane may have been insecure and over-anxious, but any woman in a similar situation would have been unhappy. Surprisingly enough she and Lady Harriet discovered how to coexist as friends. But there was always a deep

ambivalence in Jane's attitude towards Harriet and the likelihood that residual bitterness would break out in a sarcastic remark. After Harriet's death she remembered bitterly that she had once felt as if she were merely an appendage of her husband — 'a sort of animated carpet-bag with Mr Carlyle's name on it'. (CL 18.5.57)

Living at the Grange

The sharpness with which the Carlyles' observed life at the Grange was no doubt enhanced by the fact that it contrasted so starkly with their own much more modest home-life. Their rented home at 5 Cheyne Row (now a National Trust property) is a typical narrow London town house, comprising two rooms on each of four floors with a narrow panelled passage from the front door to an archway into the small walled garden and stairs down to the basement kitchen where their only servant, a general maid, lived and worked. This was their home for most of their lives. It was here that Carlyle agonised over his books and, as she relates in many entertaining letters, it was here that Jane conducted her domestic battles helped or hindered by a dizzying succession of maid servants. It was here that the street door was opened for homely hospitality and animated conversation to a wonderfully diverse and ever-expanding circle of friends, including Alfred Tennyson, Charles Dickens, R W Emerson and Joseph Mazzini the architect of Italian unity. It is not surprising therefore that 5 Cheyne Row was rarely out of their minds or that its humble mode of life runs like a contrastive thread through the story of their days at the Grange. This is how Carlyle described their cramped arrangements with Jane ill in bed one cold January: 'We live in the Library place, which is only a step from my own room and fire; I have banished myself aloft to a little dressing- closet, about 8 feet square, in the rear of the house, where I sit, with fire-screen and desk, extremely quiet, hearing only the distant groan of London and the world; looking out over little gardens, sooty trees, chimney-tops, and smoke'. (CL 9.1.47)

By contrast this is his first impression of the Grange from a letter to Jane: 'Our House [meaning the Grange] is built like a Grecian Temple of two stories, of immense extent, massive in appearance and *fronting* every way; the interior is by Inigo Jones with modern improvements. The rooms are full of excellent pictures; and there is every convenience My bedroom (a bedroom and dressing room) has three huge windows, and seems near twenty-feet high.' (CL 4.9.44) On her first visit two years later Jane, echoing her husband's letter, described it as a 'conglomeration of Greek temples' and was amazed at the immense dimensions of her own bedroom suite (she and her husband always had separate quarters), by the scale and magnificence of the dozen or so of public rooms 'all hung with magnificent paintings — and fitted up like rooms in an Arabian Nights entertainment' and above all by the entrance hall and staircases 'which present a view of columns[,] frescos and carved wood and turkey carpet — that one might guess at a quarter of a mile long.' (CL 30.10.46)⁴

⁴ Illustrations of the house's interior in Osborne's *The Grange* bear out Jane's impression, though the photographs are of a later date. See pp. 95, 112, 134-5, 224, 253.

Another dominant impression was of a house crowded with an ever-rotating succession of guests, it being 'the ruling Principle of the Host and Hostess to keep the house always full.' (CL 30.10.46) On one occasion Jane reckoned that from sixty to seventy guests had passed through during their stay. (10.1.56) But while most guests were transient, the Carlyles (one guest noticed) 'have a sort of home here for weeks together'.⁵

The rapid turnover of guests would scarcely have been possible in a remote country house until the age of the railways. The London South West line to Southampton opened in 1840. Guests would leave Waterloo on the 1.00 pm train and arrive two hours later at Andover Road station (now Micheldever) where they would be met, by arrangement, by a carriage for ladies and infants, an open omnibus for gentlemen and maids and a 'break' or dog cart for luggage. Guests like Tennyson who travelled from the south (he lived on the Isle of Wight) would alight at Winchester and be met there. On one occasion the brougham that Carlyle ought to have taken had departed before he arrived and to his irritation he had to pay 14 shillings for a 'fly'. On another occasion everything went wrong: he arrived at Andover Road feeling very cold having kept the window down all the way because the railway carriage was so crowded only to find that his portmanteau had not been loaded. As a consequence he had to dine in his shag waistcoat and then discovered he had not packed his pills. (27.3.53)

A day at the Grange followed a timetable which Carlyle handled as best he could. Rising from his 'huge old-fashioned bed with curtains' at 8, Carlyle would find a valet waiting to bring him hot water. Shaving, dressing and bathing took 45 minutes. There was then an interval to be filled, in his case with a smoke in the 'big portico that looks over the lake and hillside towards the rising sun', until breakfast at 9.30 which lasted about an hour. He then tried, not always successfully, to remain alone in his room reading and writing until luncheon at 2 ('to go down into the drawing room [before this] is to get into the general whirl'). After that 'all go for "exercise"; the women generally to drive, the men to ride'; during this time there was according to another visitor 'a great deal of rowing on the lake and riding on the downs, with runnings away and tumblings off ...'.⁶ Carlyle found the hours at the Grange 'eminently unwholesome'; dinner started between 7 and 8 and the period between dinner and bedtime might be taken up with conversation, readings and charades. He might not get to bed until after midnight. (CL 26.10.50) There followed a restless night when he might lie awake sharing the darkness with an owl hooting far off.

A circle of brilliant talkers

Conversation was the life-blood of Lady Ashburton's house parties. She herself was renowned for her wit and it was said that her aim was 'to form a circle of brilliant

⁵ Henry Taylor, *Correspondence* ed E. Dowden, p. 184

⁶ *ibid.*, p.185

talkers with herself at its centre'⁷ At the Grange even breakfast was an occasion for conversation and under Harriet's regime the large breakfast table was replaced by smaller round tables to facilitate more intimate dialogue. She would dine in her own apartments before a big dinner so that she would then be able to devote herself single-mindedly to her guests.⁸



Harriet, Lady Ashburton and her husband Bingham Baring, 2nd Lord Ashburton

The style of conversation Lady Ashburton encouraged was playful, witty and satirical. She liked to score points, playfully mocking her guests and triumphing in her successes. She dared even to make fun of Carlyle and he would respond with sham petulance. An American visitor observed the interplay between them: 'To see her with Carlyle is better than any play I ever saw; for she turns his howls into the merriest of laughs, and evidently refreshes him, as much as she does the rest of the company.' Clearly, Carlyle indulged Harriet. Others found him a formidable conversational opponent who was more than a match for men of the stature of the Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, nicknamed 'Soapy', a frequent Grange visitor. Carlyle was prepared to play along with the banter but he preferred serious conversation on serious subjects. The scientist Professor John Tyndall, recorded that his dinner conversation with Carlyle ranged over homeopathy, the Crimean war and the poetry of Goethe. Sometimes egos clashed. Several guests remembered the occasion when Alfred Tennyson, the greatest of all the Victorian poets, came to the Grange in January 1856 having recently published his long poem *Maud* (the source of the famous song 'Come into the garden, Maud'). He was pleased with himself. Jane describes him 'going about asking everybody if they like his *Maud* — and reading *Maud* aloud — and talking of *Maud*, *Maud*, *Maud*' (CL 10.1.56). A reading was arranged, chairs were set out and everyone was ready for Tennyson to start, but it was suddenly realised that Carlyle was having none of it. It was time for his afternoon walk and he didn't intend to go alone — and, anyway, he didn't like Tennyson's poem. An incident was narrowly averted when the historian Goldwin Smith stepped forward to accompany Carlyle and the reading went ahead. It is not recorded whether Tennyson noticed the slight.

⁷ Goldwin Smith, *Reminiscences* (New York, 1911) p.141.

⁸ Charles and Frances Brookfield, *Mrs Brookfield and her Circle* (London 1906), II, 437.

Like many other Victorian men Carlyle was an inveterate pipe-smoker. In country houses at this period there was an understanding that guests should not smoke indoors. At the Grange it was not until 1868 that a designated 'Smoking Room' came into being.⁹ In Carlyle's time smokers would shelter in a portico or resort to the Conservatory. Carlyle would not listen to Tennyson reading *Maud* but he found him 'good company to smoke with in the Conservatory ... tho' he often loses his pipe'. However, Tennyson told his wife he preferred his own 'little fumitory at Farringford'. 'Here they smoke among the oranges and lemons and camellias. That sounds pleasant but isn't.'¹⁰ There are also mysterious references to an alternative smokers' retreat in a rustic construction called a 'moss-house' nick-named by its habitués 'Notre Dame de Tabac'. In 1853 Carlyle told Harriet that he was looking forward to smoking 'a silent pipe' there (CL 3.12.53).

Visits to Alresford

There was much to interest Carlyle beyond the house. He enjoyed wandering alone with his thoughts amidst the beauty of the 700 acre estate and over the years got to know the surrounding area, including Alresford, very well. His first excursions beyond the estate were on walks with the 'old' Lord Ashburton 'to see his new churches, his labourers' cottages, his old cedar and yew trees', including a site visit to a church under construction (probably at Brown Candover) (CL 12.9.44). There were also organised outings for guests to see Winchester Cathedral, St Cross Hospital and Winchester College. On one occasion Carlyle accompanied HM Inspector of Schools, Rev. William Brookfield, another Grange regular, on a visit to Andover school. The second Lord Ashburton took him to the Petty Sessions (probably at Alresford where the magistrates met at the Swan on alternate Thursdays) and Carlyle was interested to witness the Hampshire Yeomanry, in which Ashburton served as an officer, exercising with small arms and horses in the grounds of the Grange, after which they dined 'sumptuously' in Ashburton's quarters.

Carlyle's personal excursions on foot or on horseback often took him in the direction of Alresford and beyond. He visited the site of the Battle of Cheriton and, became acquainted with the history of Alresford, noting that 'the big pond, with Swans, and the bit of Roman Road 'to Alton' (properly from Winchester to London) are all still there' but that the two famous fires which devastated the town have 'vanished from all memories that I consult' and Alresford remains 'a clean merry-looking market town as if no fire or disaster had ever been' (CL 27.10.52). In September 1848 he describes to his mother a walk 'partly under an umbrella' to Alresford and

⁹ See the plan on p.139 *The Grange*.

¹⁰ *The Letters of Alfred Lord Tennyson* (Oxford 1987) ed. C Y Lang and E E Shannon, II, 140.

comments knowledgeably on the condition of agriculture and the well-being of the local inhabitants, comparing Hampshire with his own native Scotland. He found the fields 'weedy' and 'sluttishly tilled', the labourers' cottages 'much trimmer than ours usually are' and was surprised that there were 'almost as many Churches as farms'. In a later letter he notes 'thistles abounding; turnips sown broadcast (and a very bad crop this year); bad fences, mostly *temporary*, made of hazle [sic] wattles, abundance of waste ground (patches of bad wood and bushes)'. What surprises him in particular is the number of 'roads and foot and bridle paths', how much land is taken up by them and the freedom of access permitted: 'it seems virtually the rule ... that you can ride in any direction whatsoever, at your own pleasure; for whatever field you enter, there is almost sure to be a gap or a gate with a latch at the other side, and nobody dreams of finding fault with you.' (CL 29.9.48)

As for Alresford itself, it is: 'a fine clean village, with wide streets and good red brick houses, — about the size of Lockerby, but much preferable in appearance; various gentry and even nobility living in or close round it. — the people here seem to me much less hard-worked than in the North; they are very ill off, I believe, if their Landlords did not help them; — but seem to require much more to make them *well* off than Scotch people do. Their cottages are mostly very clean with trees about them, flower-bushes into the very windows, and a trim road paved with bricks leading out from them to the public way. The ploughmen (or farm servants generally ...) go all about girt in *buckskin leggings* from toe to mid-thigh; ... rags are seen nowhere; nor, I suppose, does *want* anywhere do other than 'come upon the parish,' and have itself supplied. The gentry, I imagine, take a great deal more of pains with their dependents than ours do.'

It was a Christmas tradition at the Grange for guests to join in toy-making in readiness for the presentation of gifts to the villagers. Carlyle evokes the occasion with another reminder of the link between Alresford and the Grange:

Last night there had secretly come a 'brass band', really of rather excel[en]t quality, from the neighbouring Town or Village of Alresford (4 miles off too): they had stationed themselves, in the dark, under a huge greek portico there is here; and suddenly the black night burst into *Auld Lang Syne* and other soft-breathing articulate, melody which lasted for an hour, and was really touching to the feelings here and there. The night before, immensities of little gifts had been delivered, round a Xmas tree, to all the Labourers' children &c; ending with due tea, due cake and bun. (CL 26.12.51).

It was a great shock to Carlyle when after a period of illness Lady Ashburton died in Paris on 4th May 1857, 'a great and irreparable' sorrow comparable in magnitude to his mother's death. (CL 11.5.57) He returned to the Grange for the funeral. According to Jane, who always resented Harriet's queenly airs, the ceremony 'was conducted with a sort of royal state, and all the men, who used to compose a sort of *Court* for her, were there; *in tears!*' (CL 18.5.57) Reflecting on his loss Carlyle told his brother, 'I have indeed lost such a friend as I never had, nor am again in the least likelihood to have, in this *stranger* world: a magnanimous and beautiful soul, wh[ich] had furnished the English Earth and made it homelike to me in many ways.' (CL 22.5.57)

Carlyle and Lord Ashburton had over the years become almost like brothers, even to the extent of Ashburton prankishly stealing Carlyle's razors to force him to continue growing the beard he retained for the rest of his life.(CL 13.10.54) In January 1858 Carlyle returned to the Grange to spend time with him. Ashburton was almost crippled with gout and the house devoid of guests. Carlyle described it as 'silent as Elysium, and today almost as beautiful' but a place 'full of mournful thoughts.'(CL 17.1.58) Then to his friends' surprise Lord Ashburton announced that he was to marry again. His new wife, Leonora, made a special effort to get to know the Carlyles and soon overcame their misgivings. Jane became passionately fond of her and to Jane's delight Leonora gave birth to a daughter. She proved to be an excellent friend, hostess and innovator who acquired works of art and resumed house parties at the Grange.¹¹ Jane, who was increasingly frail, particularly enjoyed the newly installed central heating in January 1860 though she deplored the carnage of the large-scale pheasant shoot she had witnessed. For Carlyle himself it remained a place of sad memories, 'The Hall of the Past' as he put it, and Northington church, where Harriet was buried, a place of pilgrimage. But Leonora's reign as mistress of the Grange did not last long. By the rules of primogeniture on the death of Lord Ashburton in 1864 the Grange passed into other hands and the Carlyles' visits finally came to an end.

Illustrations:

The Grange:
Winchester Museum Collection WINCM:PWCM 4373

The portraits:
Thomas Carlyle from *Illustrated Memorial Volume of Carlyle's House* (n.d., c. 1896)
Jane Welsh Carlyle and Lord Ashburton from Charles and Frances Brookfield, *Mrs Brookfield and her Circle* (1906)
Harriet, Lady Ashburton from Lord Houghton, *Monographs Personal and Social* (1873)

¹¹ See Virginia Surtees, *The Ludovisi Goddess: the Life of Louisa, Lady Ashburton*, (Salisbury 1984) pp.54 ff.

6. The Date of The Broad Street Fair

by

Brian Rothwell

A one-night only street fair takes place in Broad Street in the centre of New Alresford every year. The fair is always held on a very particular date. It happens on 11 October if that date falls on a Thursday and if it does not, it takes place on the Thursday following. Several bits of history lie behind the scheduling of this event.



Illustration 1: The Broad Street Fair in about 1912. The steam driven roundabout, known as ‘Bartlett’s Whirligig’ was the crown of this particular fair. It stands in front of the Horse and Groom Inn.¹

In 1302, King Edward I, the founder of the Model Parliament, made a grant of ‘pavage’ – the right to collect tolls from passing traffic – to the burgesses of his parliamentary boroughs who were prepared to fund the paving of the streets in their home towns. Over tens of years this right was extended to the collection of tolls from the traders who wished to stand on these paved areas to peddle their wares.

The Bishop of Winchester owned these rights in the town until Robert Horne transferred them to the Borough Corporation of the Bailiff and Burgesses of New Alresford in 1572.² Henceforward, as the town’s economy in those days was based on wool, the bailiff collected these ‘pavage’ tolls from the dealers at the sheep fairs that were held in the centre of town in the centuries that followed.

¹ Edward Roberts, *In and Around Alresford in Old Photographs*, Volume 2, (New Alresford, 1992), plate 37.

² Hampshire Record Office (HRO), 7M50/A4, New Alresford Borough: English translation of charter dated 10 December 1572, 7M50/A4.

The sheep fairs always took place on market days and ever since New Alresford was founded as a market town by a twelfth-century bishop these weekly events have occurred on a Thursday. The two biggest sheep fairs were scheduled for the summer after lambing and in the autumn when the ewes were purchased for breeding the following spring.³

The Feast of St Michael and All Angels, or Michaelmas, has always occurred on 29 September. In previous times, as well as being a date of religious celebration, it was also a quarter day. Quarter days were important because land and property rents were paid in four quarterly instalments. Michaelmas Day, therefore, marked the end of the second quarter of the year, signalled the onset of autumn and was the date that the rent had to be paid.

It became a longstanding tradition over the centuries in New Alresford for the autumn sheep fair to be labelled 'The Michaelmas Fair'. It took place on Michaelmas Day, if 29 September fell on a Thursday and if it didn't, on the immediate Thursday afterwards.

In 1751, Parliament took the decision to replace the Julian calendar with the more astronomically precise Gregorian calendar. Their first step was to officially move New Year's Day from Lady Day on 25 March to 1 January, thus making 1751 a year of three quarters rather than four. Their second was to shorten the length of the year by eleven days and they chose the ninth month of 1752 to make this change. The day after 2 September became not the third but the fourteenth of that month.

Literally nothing happened between the third and the thirteenth days of September in 1752 because those eleven days did not officially exist. It was just bad luck if your birthday or wedding anniversary fell on these dates, it simply did not happen. Many of the illiterate and superstitious believed that their lives would be shortened as a result and there were mass protests in towns and cities that the missing days should be returned to the calendar. The switch to the Gregorian calendar also created economic problems with many individuals objecting to paying a full quarterly rent to their landlords when the period included the eleven missing days.

The calendar change must have also played havoc with fixed annual events such as the 'The Michaelmas Fair'. With animals being driven slowly on foot towards New Alresford by illiterate shepherds across the whole of the county, the loss of eleven days before the big occasion had the potential of being disruptive if not disastrous. In 1752, the town's autumn sheep fair was moved from the twenty-ninth of September to the eleventh of October, a date referred to as 'Old Michaelmas Day'.⁴

The town's annual funfair in Broad Street continues this 1752 tradition and is scheduled for 'Old Michaelmas Day' if it falls on a Thursday, as it did in 2012, and if it does not on the Thursday following 11 October. In 2013 the fair will take place on the seventeenth of that month.

³ HRO, 7M50/A1, New Alresford Borough: Court Book of the Bailiff & Burgesses of the Borough of New Alresford, 1615-1890.

⁴ HRO, 7M50/A1, New Alresford Borough: Court Book of the Bailiff & Burgesses of the Borough of New Alresford 1615-1890.

7. The Bells of St John's Church, Alresford

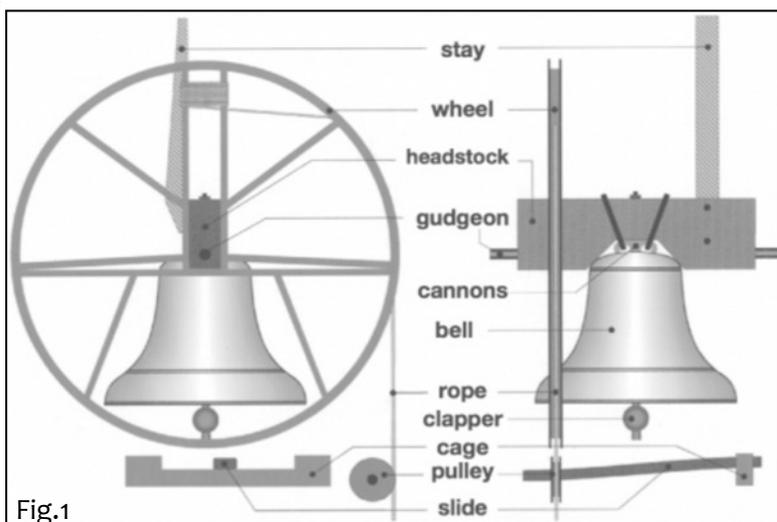
by

Nicholas Denbow with Elizabeth Johnson

Early in 2011 it was discovered in a routine inspection that the frame and fittings for the eight bells in the tower of St John's Church in New Alresford needed structural repairs. Constant ringing for over 75 years had caused wear and tear to the gudgeons and bearings on which the bells swing. The estimated cost was £12000, a significant amount, but because these bells are one of the best sounding rings of eight in Hampshire, an appeal was launched to coincide with the 200th anniversary of these bells being rung for the first time, in 1811. As a result of the successful local appeal and various fund-raising events – most significantly a major concert in the Church - the money required was raised, and the work was commenced.

At the end of January 2012 the major part of the renovation work started, to make the bells safe. Whites of Appleton, a firm of Church bell hangers, arrived on 30th January to dismantle bells 1,3,4 and 5 from the frame.

These bells had gudgeons in their headstocks that needed replacing. The bells were rested on timbers in the tower bell chamber. Then the four very heavy headstocks were taken away to their workshops in Oxfordshire, where two new steel gudgeon pins for each headstock were machined and hot riveted in place. Gudgeons, or gudgeon pins are the shafts on which the bells swing, in bearings within the frame. ¹



Returning to Alresford, the headstocks with the bells were re-installed, and the ball-race bearings (supplied in 1936, but still all in good condition) of all the bells were cleaned, re-packed with grease and fitted with new seals. The bolts securing the bells were replaced with new galvanised bolts, but the bells were not turned: this had been done in 1896. Local bell-ringers assisted the Whites staff in this work, saving further cost.

This vital repair work was only made possible by the fantastic fundraising of so many people, and by generous donations from individuals and from various organisations in the town. Major donations were made by Barclays Bank, Alresford Pigs Association, Alresford Rotary Club and Alresford Town Council.

¹ Fig.1 Diagram courtesy www.bellringing.org/bells

Fund-raising concert

In addition, a sell-out concert held in the Church on 10th December 2011, hosted by TV presenter Debbie Thrower, raised over £8000: guest performances were by classical pianist Di Xiao, and West End musical star Gina Beck, with the Hampshire Youth Choir led by their director of music, Keith Clark. Thanks are due to all the audience, who paid to attend, and to all the sponsors: the meticulous musical organization by Keith Clark meant that all enjoyed a truly special musical feast. Concert organiser Graham Smith persuaded many of the local businesses to sponsor the costs of staging the event. He commented: "I'm delighted that Alresford was able to host such a high-quality concert, featuring some of music's finest talent. I'd really like to thank the hard work and support of the fantastic performers and the local community for really getting behind the concert to raise essential funds to ensure the town's historic bells can be restored, so that they can continue to ring in all their glory, some 200 years after they were first rung."

Bells ring out again

Elizabeth Johnson, the Tower Secretary at St John's, commented on the completion of the work: "The whole installation was thoroughly checked over, and now is in tip-top condition. The bells can now ring out safely for many years to come." Maybe to another Jubilee, in 2111 or later.

Prior to the repair work on the bells, local firms had carried out associated work. Steve Ogden cleaned and repainted the whole bell frame and supporting girders. Butler and King renewed the electrical wiring and installed emergency safety lighting in the tower. Alterations and improvements were made in the tower to make access to the bells and roof safer.

Eight new bell ropes, which were paid for separately as a result of a generous donation from a parishioner, and by the St John's bell ringers, were also purchased. The bells, silent for a few days, were brought back into operation for services on 12th February 2012, and were able to ring out for Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee celebrations later in the year. It is planned that a plaque will shortly be placed on the tower to commemorate the fund raising by the community and the work done to restore the bells for this Jubilee, allowing them to do their real job - calling people to worship at St John's.

History of St John's

When Godfrey de Lucy built the Great Weir in 1289, he re-planned New Alresford village, with some 120 families and dwellings to the north of St John's, which he probably modernised/rebuilt. It would have had a timber roof covered with local reed thatching, and also had a tower.

Many serious fires occurred in the 17th Century: the worst was in May 1689, when fire started in the Soke and was fanned by a northeast wind. It destroyed the whole village, and the Church. This was rebuilt in the basic plan that we see today, with a western bell tower, walls and galleries. In 1895, the Church was in need of a further rebuild, and this took place under the direction of Sir Arthur Blomfield, the Diocesan architect to Winchester Cathedral.

The Church Bells

The western tower and main entrance to the Church has probably housed bells since at least the 1689 rebuild. The history of the bells of St John's before 1811 is unclear. We do know from Churchwarden's accounts that in 1803, the bells were rung the whole day, to celebrate that King George III passed through the town - and also earlier, in 1789, to celebrate his happy recovery from an illness! It is often quoted that in 1811 the six existing bells were recast and augmented to eight. More likely the eight bells supplied by the Whitechapel Foundry in 1811 were new: nothing in the records suggests that these were recast from old material. Since 1811 the tower has housed a ring of eight bells, hung for full circle ringing and tuned to the key of E.

In the Robert Boyes' Survey of Tithes and Properties of 1574-1730¹, fields called East Bell Found Field and West Bell Found Field are shown to the south of the Avenue, and east of New Farm Road, in Alresford. Churchwarden's accounts for the Church of St John's in Winchester show that bell casting work was done for them by John Cole of Alresford². Rev Colchester of New Alresford, 1922-25, suggests that the letters A cast into the crown of the treble in St John's Winchester, dated 1574, means that the bell was originally cast in Alresford³. This bell still hangs, cracked, in St John's, with four others. Also, in 1761, the Upham church accounts record that Thos Swain, of Alresford, cast bells for their church⁴. So probably Alresford had locally cast bells until 1811, and possibly those bells, when discarded in 1811, were actually passed to, or recast for others, via a local foundry.

The current bells

In 1811, T Mears of Whitechapel Foundry was paid £255 for the eight new bells, and a Mr Dyer £61 for hanging them. While this was to have come from public subscription, a debt of £150 plus five years interest was still outstanding in 1820: this was resolved by repaying £50 per annum, out of the rates levied on the parishioners. At that time, the bells were hung in a wooden frame. The *Hampshire Chronicle* reported that the new bells were first rung on 25 March 1811. The clock on St John's tower was paid for by the Bailiff and Burgesses of New Alresford in 1811, and the clock face has this date inscribed.

When St John's Church was rebuilt by Sir Arthur Blomfield in 1895, the tower remained untouched: but the bells were rehung with new fittings, the frame strengthened, and the bells quarter turned. The cost was £142.10s, raised by public subscription, and the work carried out by Whitechapel Foundry. The opening peal, a Kent Treble Bob Major, was on 22 December 1897, rung in the tower, but with no Church attached: it had been demolished to walls just six feet high! The work on the bells is commemorated by a brass plaque in the Church porch, as a celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria.



Photo, dated 1895, by courtesy of www.alresfordheritage.co.uk

In 1936 the treble was found to have a crack, and it was recast by Taylors of Loughborough. At the same time the rest of the bells were 'retuned' and rehung in a new iron frame, also made by Taylors. A plaque in the Church porch commemorates this as a Silver Jubilee celebration for King George V.

¹ HRO 45 M83/PZI Survey and Account of Titles in New Alresford.

² Bell Founding in Alresford, Elizabeth Johnson, Alresford Displayed 21, 1996, Paper 98.

³ Hampshire Church Bells, Their Founders and Inscriptions, W E Colchester 1920

⁴ HRO 74 M78/PZI Transcript of Upham Parish Registers

Inscriptions on the bells

Most of the current bells have an inscription and the makers name on them: the latter is "T Mears of London Fecit 1811". The inscriptions perhaps reflect the public mood at the time, fairly patriotic, after Trafalgar and preparing for Waterloo. These are shown below, with the weight of each bell - bell ringers prefer to have the weights quoted in hundredweights, quarters and pounds, i.e. the English way:

Treble – weight: 6cwt 18lbs (313kg)

In sweetest sound let each its note reveal,
Mine shall be the first to lead the dulcet
peal.

J Taylor of Loughborough Recast 1936

2nd – weight: 5cwt 3qtr 20lbs (301kg)

The public raised us with a liberal hand, We
come with harmony to cheer the land.

3rd – weight: 6cwt 1qtr 19lbs (326kg)

When female virtue weds with manly worth,
We catch the rapture and we spread it forth.

4th – weight: 7cwt 4lbs (357kg)

Does battle rage, do sanguine foes contend.
We hail the victor if he's Britain's friend.

5th – weight: 7cwt 3qtr 23lbs (404kg)

May he who England's matchless sceptre
sways

Her sacred honour guard, her glory raise.

6th – weight: 8cwt 3qtr 23lbs (450kg)

May Britons still their ancient freedom
boast,

And glittering commerce bless their happy
coast.

7th – weight: 10cwt 1qtr 21lbs (530kg)

Tenor – weight: 15cwt 3qtr 18lbs (808kg)

May all who I shall summon to the grave
The blessing of a well spent life receive.

Wm Keene, James Redman, Church
Wardens.

The bells are rung for approximately 45 minutes before the main morning and evening Sunday services, for other special occasions, and for weddings and funerals by request. Each Friday evening there is a practice session. The bells are rung by a band of ringers drawn from Alresford and the surrounding area. All are members of the Winchester and Portsmouth Diocesan Guild of Ringers ¹, a society that promotes the education of ringers and cooperation between ringers to maintain and ring the bells of the Diocese.



Photos, dated 1936, by courtesy of www.alresfordheritage.co.uk

¹(1) <http://www.wp-ringers.org.uk/winchester/index.htm>

8. 1953 Coronation Celebrations in Alresford

By

Glenn Gilbertson



1953 did not start well for the UK. Rationing of sausages, eggs and sugar was still in force, and in February storms and floods killed over three hundred people. Over the spring rationing was removed, and the country was in the mood for a brighter future. There was much talk of a New Elizabethan Age, so the Coronation of our young Queen was something to celebrate, and Alresford and the surrounding villages were not to be left out.

A committee led by Mr. Geoffrey Craddock arranged events spread over a whole week, and the Hampshire Chronicle reported all as being well-attended and successful. The local Chamber of Trade offered a prize for the best decorated premises, and this was won by Messrs. Tickners, ironmongers.

On Sunday 31st May 1953 there were good congregations at their places of worship and in the evening a united service was held in Broad Street, organised by the Anglican, Methodist and Congregational Churches; music was provided by the British Rail Eastleigh Military Band. At the close a concert was held on the lawns of "The Lindens".

On Monday 1st June a sacred concert, with Isobel Baillie as soloist, was given in St John's, and the church remained open all night for a Coronation Vigil.

On Coronation Day, 2nd June, the proceedings opened before a good crowd in the Dean with the firing of anvils in a Royal Salute by blacksmith Mr. T. Baker. Shortly afterwards the bells of St John's rang out a special peal. During the morning there was a television broadcast of the Coronation at the Town Hall by Messrs. Jackman; this was well attended and reception was very good. In the afternoon there was a carnival procession to Arlebury Park. Miss Rita Blundell of Ropley was crowned Carnival Queen. Schoolgirls demonstrated country dancing, and boys of the Secondary School gave an athletic display. A tug-o'-war was won by a team from Tichborne Down House and there was a comic football match. The Fire Brigade gave both serious and amusing displays. In the evening a carnival dance was held in Broad Street, music being supplied by the BR Eastleigh Military Band, and later by the D'Altons Dance Band, but owing to the chilly wind it was found necessary to go to the Town Hall, after an hour's dancing in the street. Boy Scouts were responsible, after taking part in the afternoon festivities, for the erection and lighting of bonfires at Pinglestone and Sun Hill.



Wednesday 3rd June was children's day, when a programme of sports arranged by the teaching staff of the Secondary and Primary Schools was carried out in the Playing Field of the Secondary School. After a short loyal address by Lt. Colonel Palmer a generous tea was served. Each child received a Coronation mug as a souvenir, together with a bag of sweets. In the evening a bowling match was played on the Sun Green against Five Ash, play taking place on three rinks. The game resulted in a win for Alresford by 79 points to 51.

On Thursday 4th June an evening table tennis tournament was held at the Town Hall and exhibition matches were given by the Winchester League champions. Also that evening, the children of the new housing estate of Jesty Read, Mitford Road, Nicholson Place and Ashburton Place, numbering about 200, had a most enjoyable tea at the British Legion Hall.

On Friday 5th June, a football match between the Youth and Veterans of Alresford took place at Alresford Park, and in the evening a Coronation party for the 65s and over was held at the Town Hall, when they were entertained to tea and by a conjurer.

A Grand Finale Dance and Cabaret Show on Saturday 6th June closed a memorable week. Local villages had also had a series of services, fetes and parties. We had learned of the conquest of Everest, many of us had seen television for the first time (even if it was on a 9-inch screen with a magnifying glass), we had a young, new Queen – it was a great time to be British. We even ignored the weather.

Reference

Hampshire Chronicle 6th June 1953

All pictures courtesy Alresford Museum Trust - see www.alresford.org/museum

9. Poetry Corner

Chidioc Tichborne (c.1563 – 20 September 1586)

Chidioc was born in Southampton sometime after 24 August 1562¹ to Roman Catholic parents, Peter Tichborne and his wife Elizabeth (née Middleton).² In June 1586, Tichborne agreed to take part in the Babington Plot to murder Queen Elizabeth and replace her with the Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots, who was next in line to the throne. Though most of the conspirators fled, Tichborne had an injured leg and was forced to remain in London. On 14 August he was arrested and he was later tried and sentenced to death in Westminster Hall.

While in custody in the Tower of London on 19 September (the eve of his execution), Tichborne wrote to his wife Agnes. The letter contained three stanzas of poetry that is his best known piece of work, *Tichborne's Elegy*, also known by its first line *My Prime of Youth is but a Frost of Cares*. The poem is a dark look at a life cut short and is a favourite of many scholars to this day.

On 20 September 1586, Tichborne was executed with Anthony Babington, John Ballard, and four other conspirators. They were eviscerated, hanged, drawn and quartered, the mandatory punishment for treason, in St Giles Field. However, when Elizabeth was informed that these gruesome executions were arousing sympathy for the condemned, she ordered that the remaining seven conspirators were to be hanged until 'quite dead' before being eviscerated.

Tichborne's Elegy

*My prime of youth is but a frost of cares,
My feast of joy is but a dish of pain,
My crop of corn is but a field of tares,
And all my good is but vain hope of gain;
The day is past, and yet I saw no sun,
And now I live, and now my life is done.*

*My tale was heard and yet it was not told,
My fruit is fallen, and yet my leaves are green,
My youth is spent and yet I am not old,
I saw the world and yet I was not seen;
My thread is cut and yet it is not spun,
And now I live, and now my life is done.*

*I sought my death and found it in my womb,
I looked for life and saw it was a shade,
I trod the earth and knew it was my tomb, And now
I die, and now I was but made;
My glass is full, and now my glass is run,
And now I live, and now my life is done.*

¹Phillimore, Hampshire Parish Records, Vol VI, page 78, marriage of Peter Tychborne, gent to Elizabeth Midleton, 24 Aug 1562

²Penry Williams, 'Babington, Anthony (1561–1586)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004

This is the first printed version from *Verses of Prayse and Joye* (1586). The original text differs slightly: along with other minor differences, the first line of the second verse reads "The spring is past, and yet it hath not sprung," and the third line reads "My youth is gone, and yet I am but young."

Twenty eight different manuscript versions of the Elegy (or Lament) are known and there are many variations of the text.

Tichborne's authorship of the Elegy has been disputed, with attributions to others including Sir Walter Raleigh. However it was printed soon after the Babington plot in a volume called *Verses of Praise and Joy* in 1586, published by John Wolfe of London to celebrate the Queen's survival and to attack the plotters.

Another poem in the volume is an answer to Chidiocck verses, most likely by the poet and dramatist Thomas Kyd, author of *The Spanish Tragedy*:

Hendecasyllabon T. K. (Thomas Kyd 1558-1595) in *Cygneam Cantionem Chideochi Tychborne*

*Thy prime of youth is frozen with thy faults,
Thy feast of joy is finisht with thy fall;
Thy crop of corn is tares availing naughts,
Thy good God knows thy hope, thy hap and all.
Short were thy days, and shadowed was thy sun,
T'obscure thy light unluckily begun.*

*Time trieth truth, and truth hath treason tripped;
Thy faith bare fruit as thou hadst faithless been:
Thy ill spent youth thine after years hath nipt;
And God that saw thee hath preserved our Queen.
Her thread still holds, thine perished though unspun,
And she shall live when traitors lives are done.*

*Thou soughtst thy death, and found it in desert,
Thou look'dst for life, yet lewdly forc'd it fade:
Thou trodst the earth, and now on earth thou art,
As men may wish thou never hadst been made.
Thy glory, and thy glass are timeless run;
And this, O Tychborne, hath thy treason done.*

Reference

Article adapted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chidiocck_Tychborne

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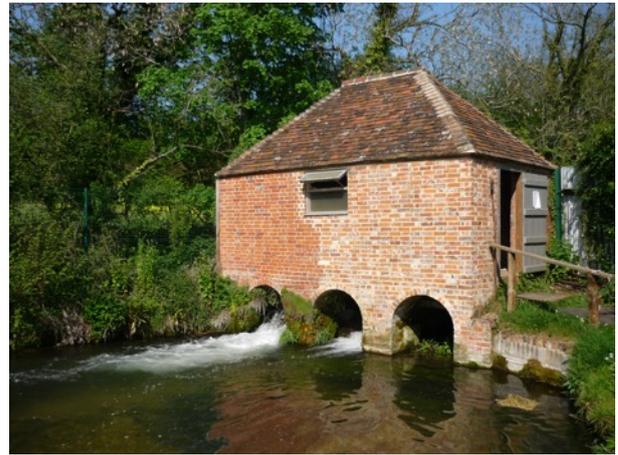
The Grange © Brian Tippett



Old Pinglestone Road (Item 1)



Honeysuckle Cottage (Item 2)



The Eel House (Item 3)



The Grange, Northington (Item 5)



St John's Bells (Item 7)



Broad Street Fair (Item 6)