

Alresford Articles No.1

The New Beginning for 'Alresford Displayed'



Alresford Historical and Literary Society



Produced 2012 by
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www.alresfordhistandlit.co.uk
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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 3rd 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 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

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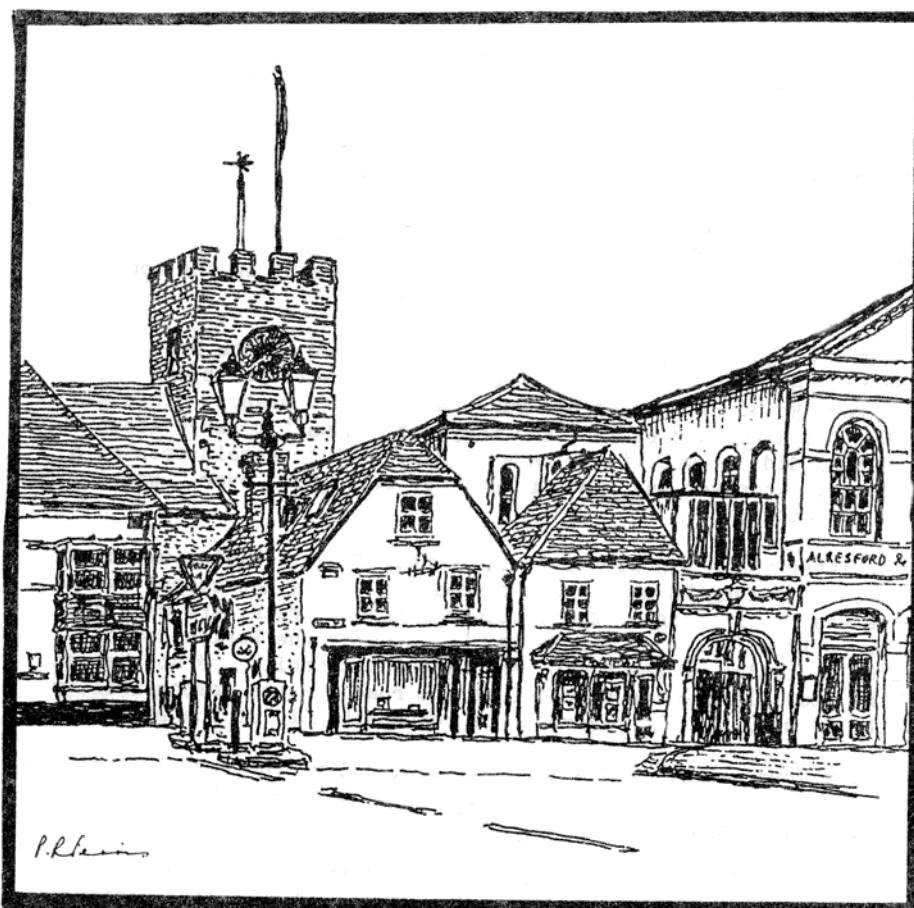
Front cover colour photo © Glenn Gilbertson

Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of 'Alresford Articles', the successor to the 'Alresford Displayed' series 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. We have chosen the new title instead of the alternative suggestion of 'Alresford Displayed No. 23 – A New Beginning'.

All 22 editions of 'Alresford Displayed' are available from Alresford Library, and the articles are now available online at www.alresford.org and www.alresfordhistandlit.co.uk. Our thanks are due to Roy Gentry for the early scanning work.

Alas, all of the old editorial team have passed on, but they have left a great body of work behind them, including Philip Ferris's drawing (reproduced by the kind permission of Trish Ferris) that graced the front cover of the last three editions:



Our thanks are especially due to local historian and author Arthur Stowell, who left the funding to start this publication.

We hope that you enjoy this first edition – please give us your feedback, and we welcome contributions or suggestions for topics to be covered in the future. We have prepared an advice document on how to style any contribution to make life easier for authors.

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Brian Rothwell

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TWO DIAMOND JUBILEES

By

Glenn Gilbertson



(Official Diamond Jubilee Portraits)

1897

Queen Victoria was 78 when she celebrated her Diamond Jubilee, and although elderly in appearance with limited mobility, she attended and presided over large and varied national events.

A selection of names was suggested for the commemoration of Queen Victoria's 60 year reign. However, it was decided that a combination of 'Jubilee' and 'Diamond' from the 60th wedding anniversary commemoration would be a suitable title.

Her Majesty's Royal Guests (not Crowned Heads of State) arrived for the Diamond Jubilee celebrations on 19th June and took their leave on 28th June 1897.

Saturday 19th June

A Grand Diamond Jubilee Festival was held at The Royal Albert Hall; there were 5000 admissions at one shilling.

Sunday 20th June

On the morning of the anniversary of her Accession to the Throne, Queen Victoria marked her Diamond Jubilee by attending a Thanksgiving service with her family at St George's Chapel, Windsor.

Thanksgiving services were held in almost every Church and Place of Worship of every denomination in the United Kingdom. The hymn, "O King of Kings" was written by the Bishop of Wakefield for the Diamond Jubilee and set to music by Arthur Sullivan. It was used by all Churches and Chapels in England and Wales on that Sunday as was a form of prayer with thanksgiving to Almighty God.

Queen Victoria spent the rest of her Accession Day “driving out” with members of her family, meeting “Officers of the Cavalry Guard of Honour” and “witnessed a Military Tattoo in the Quadrangle of Windsor Castle”. The Poet Laureate, Mr. Alfred Austin, there presented Queen Victoria with an especially composed poem “Victoria”.

Monday 21st June

Queen Victoria left Windsor Castle and travelled to London by train, arriving at Paddington Station. In the evening the Queen hosted a State Banquet in the State Supper Room, where the Band of the Royal Engineers played a selection of music. After the dinner a reception was held in the Ballroom for invitees of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. That night, Queen Victoria wrote in her diary: “The streets were beautifully decorated, also the balconies of the houses, with flowers, flags and draperies of every hue.”

Tuesday, 22nd June

A public holiday for the Diamond Jubilee was declared. It was also a holiday in India and “at all Foreign Places where British subjects were resident”.

Representatives of all the Empire nations were involved in the main Jubilee procession, as well as in many of the parades and receptions organised in honour of the Jubilee.

Queen Victoria left Buckingham Palace at 11.15am on the morning to proceed through London, “for the purpose of seeing Her People and of Receiving their Congratulations on having attained the Sixtieth Anniversary of Her Majesty’s Reign”. Seventeen carriages carried guests in Queen Victoria’s procession to St. Paul’s Cathedral. Occupants included Queen Victoria’s family, Royal families from around the world, Military, Naval and Marine Aides-de-Camp to the Queen, and envoys and ambassadors. The Queen was in a carriage pulled by eight cream horses; and Helena, Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein (third daughter of Queen Victoria) and The Princess of Wales (later Queen Alexandra) accompanied her. As the Queen walked with difficulty and was unable to climb the steps to the Cathedral, it was decided to hold the service outside with Queen Victoria remaining in her carriage. A “Te Deum” (a hymn of praise) was sung on the steps of the Cathedral.

After the short service, Queen Victoria stopped at Mansion House to be welcomed in to the City of London by the Lord Mayor. She then toured London in her carriage so that as many people as possible could see her. The route back to Buckingham Palace included crossing London Bridge and over Westminster Bridge, before travelling back to the Palace along the Mall.

Boeuf braise was served at the Royal Luncheon, attended by the guests who had travelled in the carriage procession to St. Paul’s Cathedral.

Later the streets of London were illuminated and bonfires were lit simultaneously on hills all over the country.

That night, Queen Victoria wrote in her diary: “A never to be forgotten day. No one ever, I believe, has met with such an ovation as was given to me, passing

through those 6 miles of streets, including Constitution Hill. The crowds were quite indescribable and their enthusiasm truly marvellous and deeply touching. The cheering was quite deafening and every face seemed to be filled with joy.”

Wednesday 23 June

Queen Victoria was greeted by 10,000 school children on Constitution Hill on her way to Paddington station. Later that day Humble Addresses by both Houses of Parliament were presented to Queen Victoria in the Ballroom at Buckingham Palace. 200 Peers and 500 Members of Parliament attended each Address, and according to the Court Circular for that day “Her Majesty returned a most gracious answer” on both occasions.

Queen Victoria held a reception at Buckingham Palace for Chairmen and Conveners of County Councils, Mayors, Lord Provosts and Provosts of the United Kingdom were presented to the Queen. Refreshments were served in the garden of the Palace. Gold, diamond-shaped medals were given to the Lord Mayors and Lord Provosts and Silver medals of the same shape to Mayors and Provosts.

After the celebrations in London, Queen Victoria returned to Windsor Castle, travelling by train to Slough. She was greeted by dignitaries from the “county of Buckingham” and Slough. Three pupils from the British Orphan School gave the Queen, their patron, a bouquet.

Queen Victoria drove through Windsor one evening during her Diamond Jubilee celebrations and assembled crowds pelted her with confetti. She playfully swung her parasol from one side to the other to counter the confetti shower.

Friday 25th June

Queen Victoria drove to Home Park and saw 5000 school children from Windsor and the neighbourhood, and to inspect a parade of firemen from across England. Afterwards, she drove between the lines of steam and manual fire engines.

In the evening, a torchlight procession of boys from Eton School, sang for Queen Victoria in the Quadrangle of Windsor Castle and the boys created formations on the ground including the cipher ‘V.R’. They were accompanied by the band and drums of the Coldstream Guards, performing a number of songs including ‘Auld Lang Syne’ and “God Save The Queen”. Afterwards the boys gave Queen Victoria three cheers.

Saturday 26th June

A Royal Review of Her Majesty’s Fleet at Spithead took place. Her Majesty was not present but represented by The Prince of Wales. The Fleet consisted of 21 battleships and 53 cruisers, in addition to numerous smaller craft, and the Prince of Wales inspected the ships from the Royal Yacht ‘Victoria and Albert’.

Later in the year Queen Victoria carried out various reviews, hosted and met hundreds of dignitaries, politicians, members of the armed forces from the UK and

across the world. She received addresses by Deputations from other denominations: Presbyterians, Independents and Baptists, and 1,310 telegrams of congratulations from all around the world.

On 16th July, Queen Victoria wrote a letter of thanks expressing her gratitude to her people for “the spontaneous and universal outburst of loyal attachment and real affection” which she had experienced during her Diamond Jubilee, and sent a telegram to the Empire: “From my heart I thank my beloved people. May God bless them.”

Nottingham, Bradford and Kingston-upon-Hull were raised from boroughs to cities on the occasion of Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee.

The ‘Longest Reign’ waltz by Ezra Read was published in 1897 in commemoration of Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee.

Garden parties were held by Queen Victoria to mark her Diamond Jubilee. One was held at Buckingham Palace on 18 June and another at Windsor for MPs on 3rd July. Garden Parties were introduced by Queen Victoria and continue to be regular summer events in the Royal calendar. ¹

The *Hampshire Chronicle* of 26 June 1897 gives a report on Alresford’s celebrations of Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee:

“LOCAL JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

ALRESFORD – As we mentioned a few weeks ago, the Jubilee Memorial takes the form of a re-hanging of the church bells. This we understand is in the hands of the committee, and steps are being taken to carrying out the scheme. Unfortunately the time which has elapsed between the bringing forward of the proposal and the 22 June was insufficient to meet its completion and, therefore, the ringing of the bells was not one of the day’s rejoicings. A sum of £140, which includes £19 17s of deferred donations, has been given for the re-hanging of the bells and £37 10s was collected for the festivities on the day. There is no doubt that Tuesday last had been indelibly fixed in the memories of all of the inhabitants of our loyal little town as one of the most enjoyable days experienced, as well as being the commemoration of the first Diamond Jubilee of the reign of an English sovereign. The *feu de joie* by the volunteers on the tower of the church and the firing of salvos at five o’clock in the morning roused all but the most drowsy to the fact that the day of days had arrived.

The town during the night and early morning had been transformed; almost every house bore external signs of the loyalty and jubilation of its inmates, and flags and banners were evident on every hand. The organised festivities of the day were in the hands of two committees viz:- Sports committee, Messrs J. Ridley Shield, J. Hall, W. Pickman (judges), A. Picken (referee), W. Peploe (starter), H. Lasted, E. Wright, C. Mountford-Gardener, H. Hall, C.E. Hunt, J. Shepherd, H.C. Baker, F. Hall, H. Stubbs and A. Munford. Tea committee, Reverend A.A. Headley, Messrs J.F. Chapman, W.W. Hore, J.G. Gladstones, F.E. Abbott, J. Sait and W.F. Barnes. The Reverend A.A. Headley and J. Ridley Shield Esq. were ex-officio members of both

committees. Hon Secretary Mr E.B. Moody. The Fair Field was requisitioned for the sports and at ten o'clock a cricket match (twelve aside) was between Mr A. Picken's team and Mr James Hall's team. The result was as follows: Mr A. Pickens team 62; Mr James Hall's team 56. About noon Mr Chalkley's band arrived and was in attendance for the remainder of the day. Luncheon was served in a barn on the field at two o'clock, when between 70 and 80 people sat down to an excellent repast provided by Mr A. Munford of the Sun Inn. After luncheon the Rev. A.A. Headley, who occupied the chair, in a few appropriate remarks called for the toast to her Majesty Queen Victoria, which was most heartily responded to, and all joined in the singing of the National Anthem. A toast to the chairman proposed by Mr A. Ford and seconded by Mr J. Shepherd also met with a cordial response. At three o'clock sports commenced and a good number of people assembled to witness the events, which resulted as follows:-

Hurdle race, - 1st heat, 1. Millard, 2. Kent, 2nd heat, 1. Wright, 2. Collins,

3rd heat, 1. White, 2. Kent, final heat, 1. Millard, 2. White, 3. Wright.

Quarter mile race, boys - 1. Bennett, 2. Allen, 3. Cross.

Quarter mile race, men - 1. Mansbridge, 2. Ford, 3. Millard.

Bicycle race, one mile handicap – 1. T. Dorey, 2. Vickarn.

Sack race – 1. Kemp, 2. T.A. Newell, 3. F. Wigmore.

Steeple chase – 1. and 2. Forder and Millard (dead heat) 3. Kemp.

Treacle buns – 1. Raymond, 2. Kember, 3. Newell.

Slow bicycle race – 1. Lusted, 2. Dorey, 3. Webb.

Bicycle costume race – 1. Forder, 2. Dorey.

Half mile flat race – 1. Spencer, 2. Ford, 3. Newell.

Wheelbarrow race – 1. Wigmore, 2. Kemp, 3. Raymond.

Greasy pole (leg of mutton) – Winner, J. Brown.

In the afternoon a free tea was given to the school children and people over 60 years of age in The Avenue, Pound Hill, and in the instances where infirmity or illness prevented the recipients attending the district, visitors took to them at their homes a Jubilee cake in lieu of their tea. Mrs Pocock, of the Swan Hotel, kindly placed a brake at the disposal of the committee for the purposes of conveying the inmates of the union, and also others who were infirm, to the tea. A charge of sixpence was made to others for the tea and altogether 81 persons partook of the social cup. Mr J. Shepherd, of The Horse and Groom, provided the tea and the following ladies and gentlemen provided valuable assistance at the tables: - Mrs James Hall, Mrs Richardson, Mrs Hern, Mrs J. Brown, Mrs Abbott, Mrs Richards, Mrs Gates, Mrs Millett, Misses Tucker, Cheston, N. Royle, Taylor, Freeman, Stubbs (2), Henning, Hunt, Dancaster, Colebrook, Ritchie and Connerton, and Messrs L. Burden, Cox and Millett.'



The 1897 Jubilee tea party in The Avenue

'The children, after partaking of tea, went to the field and indulged in sports and games. Messrs Collis and Potter, Hurst and Co, J. Ford and G. Eddolls were kind enough to lend ropes for the swings &c. In the evening a very interesting event was the distribution of the prizes by Mrs Ridley Shield, assisted by J. Ridley Shield Esq. and the Reverend A.A. Headley, after which a large fire balloon, the gift of Mr H. Spats, was successfully sent up by Messrs W. Pickman and Peplow. The air was perfectly calm and the balloon gently ascended to a great height, floating away till out of sight in the direction of Winchester. Dancing was kept up until half past nine and at ten o'clock, in unison with all the other places of the country, a large bonfire was lit and rockets sent up in Mr Hasted's meadow (kindly lent just for the occasion). In the town the shops and houses were beautifully and effectively illustrated in various designs presenting a most unique and charming effect. The butchers' and bakers' activity on Tuesday commenced with a cricket match between representatives of these trades which took place in Mr Merryfield's meadow, resulting in a victory for the bakers to the extent of an innings and 40 runs. Various sports and games followed and at 6.30 a dinner was served by Mr Merryfield, of which between forty and fifty persons partook. Mr D. Allen of the Grange occupied the chair and the loyal and social toasts were given. The arrangements for the day were in the hands of a committee, consisting of Messrs Jose, H. Haken, W. Mansbridge, T. Parham, W. Ransom, W. Kent and A.C. Barge (hon. sec.) A very enjoyable time was spent by all.'

The 1897 celebrations, then, both nationally and locally, were shorter than those of 2012. Queen Victoria was seventy eight, but obviously not fit enough to take on our eighty-six year old present monarch's programme, and indeed Victoria died in 1901 aged eighty one. Both the 1887 and 1897 celebrations saw a resurgence of popularity of the monarchy after a period of increased republican sentiment. After Prince Albert's death in 1860 Queen Victoria seemed to have entered a prolonged depression, withdrawing from public life to the extent that many subjects questioned the relevance of the 'Widow of Windsor'.

2012

The royal schedule for the 2012 Jubilee looked daunting even for a young person. Our Queen must have been grateful for the support of her family as she read the programme:

'The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh will be travelling as widely as possible across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland during 2012. Other members of the Royal Family will be undertaking overseas tours of Commonwealth countries on behalf of Her Majesty.

UK visits by The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh

The following list is a breakdown, by city and town (or London borough), of The Queen's United Kingdom Diamond Jubilee Tour.

These visits will give Her Majesty the opportunity to express her thanks to people throughout the country for their continued support and loyalty.

8 March - Leicester

23 March - Manchester and Salford

29 March: North London - Redbridge, Walthamstow, Harrow

26 - 27 April: Wales - Cardiff, Margam, Merthyr Tydfil, Aberfan, Ebbw Vale, Glanusk Park

1 - 2 May: South West England - Sherborne, Salisbury, Crewkerne, Yeovil, Exeter

15th May: South London - Bromley, Merton, Richmond

16 - 17 May: North West England - Burnley, Accrington, Warrington, Chester, Liverpool

2 - 5 June: Central Weekend

13 - 14 June: East Midlands - Nottingham, Burghley, Corby, Stevenage, Hatfield

25 June: South East England - Henley-on-Thames

26 - 27 June: Northern Ireland - Enniskillen, Belfast

2 - 6 July: Scotland (Holyrood Week) - Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dunbartonshire, Renfrewshire, Perth

11 - 12 July: West Midlands - Hereford, Worcester, Birmingham, Shropshire

18 - 19 July: North East England - Sunderland, South Tyneside, North Tyneside, Gateshead, Durham City, Stockton-on-Tees, Leeds

25 July - South East England - Cowes, Isle of Wight, New Forest, Hampshire

The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh will make use of car, the Royal Train, aircraft and the ship Leander as they tour the United Kingdom.

Overseas visits by members of the Royal Family

Members of the Royal Family will travel overseas representing The Queen throughout the Diamond Jubilee year, visiting every Realm as well as undertaking visits to Commonwealth countries, Crown Dependencies and British Overseas Territories.² (A programme of twenty nine visits by eleven members of the Royal Family).

Even the Central Weekend was challenging, and as we remember the 90 year old Duke of Edinburgh was hospitalised after the River Pageant.

‘Saturday 2 June, 2012

The Queen attended the Epsom Derby.

Sunday 3 June, 2012

The Big Jubilee Lunch: Building on the already popular Big Lunch initiative, people were encouraged to share lunch with neighbours and friends as part of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

The Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant: This event took place on the Thames and consisted of up to 1,000 boats assembled from across the UK, the Commonwealth and around the world. The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh travelled in the Royal Barge which formed the centrepiece of the flotilla.

Monday 4 June, 2012

BBC Concert at Buckingham Palace: A host of famous faces came together to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee against the backdrop of Buckingham Palace.

The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Beacons: A network of 2,012 Beacons will be [sic] lit by communities and individuals throughout the United Kingdom, as well as the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and the Commonwealth. As in 2002, The Queen will light [sic] the National Beacon.

Tuesday 5 June, 2012

On Tuesday 5 June, the Diamond Jubilee weekend culminated with a day of celebrations in central London, including a service at St Paul’s Cathedral followed by two receptions, a lunch at Westminster Hall, a Carriage Procession to Buckingham Palace and finally a Balcony appearance, Flypast, and Feu de Joie.³

On 5th June 2012 the Queen broadcast a Jubilee Message:

‘The events that I have attended to mark my Diamond Jubilee have been a humbling experience. It has touched me deeply to see so many thousands of families, neighbours and friends celebrating together in such a happy atmosphere.

But Prince Philip and I want to take this opportunity to offer our special thanks and appreciation to all those who have had a hand in organising these Jubilee celebrations. It has been a massive challenge, and I am sure that everyone who has enjoyed these festive occasions realises how much work has been involved.

I hope that memories of all this year’s happy events will brighten our lives for many years to come. I will continue to treasure and draw inspiration from the countless kindnesses shown to me in this country and throughout the Commonwealth. Thank you all.’⁴

As nationally, Alresford had a series of events to mark the Jubilee. In May Alresford Rotary Club planted trees and hedges to improve the Stratton Bates recreation ground. As in 1897, the bells of St John’s needed re-hanging, and after great efforts the necessary funds (interestingly, when corrected for inflation about the

same amount as in 1897) were raised. Unlike 1897 the work was finished in time to ring in the Jubilee on June 1st., and a series of events was announced for the first week in June:

‘Diamond Jubilee celebration events in Alresford

1 June, Jubilee Time Capsule

‘What would people in 60 years’ time like to see in a time capsule? Organised by Sun Hill Schools.

1 June, Bells of St. John’s. Bell ringing to celebrate the newly hung bells in St. John’s Church in the centre of Alresford to mark the start of the Jubilee week events.

2 June, Jubilee Ball. Held at Perins School Hall, live band The Ambassadors, fine food from Hampshire Fare, great entertainment, a night not to be missed.

3 June, Pimms on the lawn & Jazz event at The Globe on the lake. A superb classic summer’s afternoon on the lawn at The Globe on the Lake

3 June, Church service & Big Lunch at Stratton Bates Park.. Churches Together with help of Alresford Pigs and Alresford Scout and Girl Guide units, are hosting the "Big Lunch" preceded by a service.

4 June, The lighting of Old Alresford beacon. As part of the national event, the beacon will be lit at St Mary’s church in Old Alresford preceded by a picnic. The London Jubilee concert will also be broadcast on a screen.

5 June, Talk & Walk - ‘River Walk & Wild Food’ Organised by the Alresford Society, this is part of a series of walks around Alresford.

6 June, Talk & Walk –‘Alresford Pond then and now’

7 June, Talk & Walk – Mary Sumner, founder of Mothers’ Union .Organised by the Alresford Society in conjunction with the Historical & Literary society

7 June, Goldilocks and the Three Bears performed by ACTS and the Sunshine Singers

8 June, Goldilocks and the Three Bears performed by ACTS and the Sunshine Singers

8 June, Talk & Walk – ‘History you can see’

9 June, Goldilocks and the Three Bears performed by ACTS and the Sunshine Singers

9 June, Alresford Music Festival. The Alresford Music Festival is timed this year to round off the Jubilee celebrations in the town.’

There is also a photographic competition for people to submit their pictures of the events .⁵

The Alresford Pigs Association Ball was a great success, even if the London-based band seemed surprised that country folk in evening dress knew how to dance and enjoy themselves.

Wet weather marred most of the week. After heavy rain was forecast, an announcement was made that the ‘Big Lunch’ on Sunday June 3rd would be in the John Pearson Hall. Although the service was well attended, few stayed for a meal. Perhaps it was more attractive to watch the Thames Pageant on television while keeping warm and dry.

Rather than tea in the Avenue, many street parties and other gatherings took place on Monday 4th. The beacon was lit in Old Alresford (even if the Union Flag was upside down) and the televised Jubilee Concert was a hit.

The series of two hour local strolls were so popular that it is planned to make them a regular summer event.

Finally, the Alresford Music Festival brought the celebrations to an end. This was another successful event, and many happy, tired party-goers wended their way home late at night.

Was a 'very enjoyable time spent by all' as in 1897? It certainly seemed so, and some pictures of the week are printed on the back page in the hope that they may trigger happy memories. There were certainly plenty of chances to participate on offer, reflecting the greater opportunities of the 21st Century compared with the 19th. If the Queen lives as long as her mother, we may even have another grand celebration in 2022 and, conceivably, 2027; who knows what ways of celebrating might be on offer by then?

1. <http://www.thediamondjubilee.org/queen-victorias-diamond-jubilee>
2. <http://www.thediamondjubilee.org/uk-and-overseas-visits-jubilee-year>
3. <http://www.thediamondjubilee.org/central-weekend>
4. <http://www.thediamondjubilee.org/queen-s-diamond-jubilee-message-5-june-2012>
5. <http://alresfordjubilee.com/events.asp>

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SHOCK RESULT AT FIRST PARISH COUNCIL ELECTION

by

Brian Rothwell

The first ever parish council election in New Alresford took place on 15th December 1894 and produced a shock result. All four of the surviving former governing burgesses of the town were amongst the twenty candidates competing for the eleven available councillor positions - but three of those men were rejected by the electorate who were voting for the first time.

Alresford in the 1890s was more a big village than a small town. The parish, then as now, covered barely more than a square mile. The 'T' of Broad Street and East and West Streets comprised the town centre. Buildings straggled down The Dean towards the river and up Pound Hill but there was little development south of the railway line. This was a compact, closely integrated and mainly self-sufficient community where most people lived, worked, made their friendships and undertook their leisure activities within walking distance of their homes.ⁱ

Society back then was a class structured hierarchy of social ranks and deference to those in authority was commonplace.ⁱⁱ Although this was their first experience of local democracy, the former town burgesses must have been confident that they would be elected. They were pillars of the local establishment who were used to being invited to serve on community committees from the local Golf Club, through to the town Fire Brigade and its Flower Gardening Society.

They were successful members of the professional class, one was a leading solicitor, the second a respected doctor and the third the town's only architect. Their rejection at the ballot box would have been a galling experience for these individuals who had been used to holding powerful positions in the town. All of them had been burgesses for at least fifteen years before the election.

This article analyses how this unexpected result came about and discusses its ramifications that still exist today.

Alresford had been a borough since 1295 when the sheriff of Hampshire invited the town to send two burgesses to the King Edward I's new Model Parliament. Parliamentary borough status was, however, short lived. In 1348 a decline in town prosperity, caused by the Black Death, led the borough members to ask, 'to be released from the *burthen* of sending representatives to the common council of the realm'.ⁱⁱⁱ The town's borough status was reconfirmed by charter in 1572 when Robert Horne, then Bishop of Winchester, in return for a fixed annual rent of £16 14s 6d, granted the borough to a governing body that he decreed was to consist of a town bailiff and eight burgesses.^{iv}

The town was dominated by agriculture well into the twentieth century and more or less escaped the industrial revolution. In the 1600s the burgesses were exclusively representatives of the landowning class. Their influence had declined during the agricultural depressions of the nineteenth century and, in the absence of industrialists, the landowners had been replaced by professional men. In 1882 the burgesses comprised seven professionals and two landowners as shown below:

	Name	Occupation	Appointed
1.	John F. Adams	Solicitor	1860
2.	William Benson	Gentleman	1865
3.	William H. Hunt	Architect	1865
4.	John C. Moberly	Solicitor	1869
5.	Charles E. Hunt	Brewer	1873
6.	Edward Blackmore	Solicitor	1873
7.	Dr Charles E. Covey	MD	1874
8.	John Ridley Shield	Solicitor	1879
9.	Capt. George F. Marx	Gentleman	1879

Figure 1. The last members of the ancient Corporation of the Bailiff and Burgesses of New Alresford.

This corporation had always been a self-electing body. It was an exclusive club of nine where the same family surnames could, and did, appear on the membership roll for three generations or more.^v Sons followed in their fathers' footsteps; nephews replaced their uncles and professional men nominated their business partners to serve with them. Adams and Moberly were solicitors from the same firm.^{vi} The partners in another legal practice, Blackmore & Shield, similarly filled two of the other positions.^{vii} The two Hunts, architect and brewer respectively, were brothers and the sons of one former long-serving burgess and the grandsons of another.^{viii} Dr Charles Covey had 'inherited' his place on the death of his uncle, also a medical doctor.^{ix} William Benson owned the Langton Estate in 1882 and George Marx the Arlebury Park Estate, two of the largest enclosed acreages within the parish boundary.^x

Once appointed, a burgess stayed in post until he died or until a debilitating illness prevented him attending meetings. One burgess held the internally elected position of town bailiff for a twelve-month term starting and finishing on Michaelmas Day. The corporation paid for the church bell ringers to 'ring in' their new leader on the Sunday following his election. The bailiff's symbol of office, for use on formal occasions, was a wooden baton emblazoned with the town's coat of arms. This can be viewed today; it is on display behind glass in Alresford Public Library.

This unelected corporation was abolished by an Act of Parliament^{xi} in 1886 and the rights and assets of the old institution were transferred to New Alresford Town Trust in 1890 under a scheme of arrangement ratified by the Charity Commission. These assets included, inter alia, the ownership of The Avenue, the Broad Street sidings and The Fire Engine House, plus the right to charge tolls at all of the town's sheep fairs and markets. Also contained in the

constitution of the trust, was a pledge to provide the town with a reliable emergency water supply. Of the nine members of the ancient corporation in 1882, five had died by 1890 but all four of the surviving burgesses became town trustees serving on the board of this charity, with one of them, John Ridley Shield, acting as its chairman. It was what they did, or omitted to do, as town trustees in the period 1890-94 that influenced the result of the first parish council election.

The third Reform Act of 1884 increased the parliamentary electorate to five and a half million. All men over twenty-one, who lived in accommodation on which rates were paid, were given the vote; they represented 43 per cent of the male population.^{xii} As had happened after the 1832 Reform Act, and again after that of 1867, this extension of the franchise quickened the demand for more elective local authorities. The 1888 Local Government Act, that created sixty-two new county councils, only partly quietened this clamour.^{xiii}

In the geographically large counties such as Hampshire, with much travel necessary in order to win votes, poor men could seldom afford to stand, let alone sit, as a councillor. Consequently, those elected tended to come from the landed and professional classes. As a result there arose a cry for elective parish councils. To Liberals and non-conformists this particularly appealed because the conservative Church of England had cornered most of the administrative functions associated with the parish through their churchwardens and vestries.^{xiv}

When Henry Fowler, the Liberal minister with responsibility for local government, introduced his initiative to the House of Commons in 1893, it was immediately dubbed the 'parish councils bill'. Fowler assiduously proposed many changes, being prepared to lose some if he could get the rest passed. In 1882 single qualifying women had been enfranchised in town council elections. Fowler built on this by including the enfranchisement of both single and married women at parish level and he removed the ban on females standing for election. He took away all secular responsibilities from the Church of England by transferring them to parish councils and also straightened out the myriad of local government boards and improvement commissions by putting them into a system of urban and rural district councils.

Unsurprisingly, these radical proposals encountered considerable opposition. The Commons spent thirty-eight days debating the bill; 619 amendments were moved and Fowler spoke over 800 times. There then followed a wrangle with the House of Lords, with the bill going backwards and forwards three times before the 1894 Local Government Act was passed on 1st March. Every village of more than 300 residents gained the right to elect its own parish council. 6,880 of them were set up in the immediate aftermath.^{xv}

Guidelines and orders for the first parish council election in Alresford were first issued to the public in November 1894. This announcement resulted in twenty nominations, all of them male, for the eleven available councillor positions. Henry Fowler had stipulated that parish elections had to be held on premises that were owned for and on behalf of the people and

there was only one building big enough in the town centre that met that criterion. The event was to take place at The Board School on The Dean, opposite the gas works. In order to minimise the disruption to the education of children, the election was scheduled for a Saturday, on 4th December.^{xvi}



Figure 2. Local historian Isabel Sanderson's artistic impression of The Board School on The Dean. Constructed following the 1870 Education Act, this building was demolished in 1973. It used to be on the site of what is now Mallard Close.

The coming event was like no succeeding parish council election. There was great excitement in the town. A spoof election poster was widely circulated describing well-known local characters, who were obviously not candidates, in humorous verse. The opening stanza reflects many elements of the real election:

War is declared, the fight has begun,
The School Board election promises fun,
Of candidates there will be eight,
Some are precocious, some are sedate,
Looking at them, they are a mixed lot,
Some of 'em good enough just to be shot,
Parsons and lawyers fight hard to win,
Chemists and drapers hope to get in.^{xvii}

The date of the mock election was given on the poster as 3rd November (as opposed to 4th December) – it is not known if it took place. By the time of the real election, the town was abuzz and had been for weeks. Those who lived in town worked there; no-one would have been away on business. It was the first time that ordinary people had the chance to vote for their local leaders, and the candidates were people whose faces and personalities they knew. Both single and married women had the opportunity to vote, a novelty in itself. In the pre-mass media days of 1894, the first parish council election would have been a lot of fun and a vibrant occasion.

The population of Alresford at the 1891 census was 1,464. There were 284 households with an average of 5.2 persons per dwelling.^{xviii} Given larger families than today and live-in domestic servants, a reasonable deduction is that approximately 60 per cent of the inhabitants were either under the age of

twenty-one or did not qualify for other reasons. It is, therefore, estimated that between 500 and 600 men and women were entitled to vote.^{xxix} Each of them had one vote for each of any number of candidates not exceeding the number to be elected - a maximum of eleven votes to be spread amongst the twenty candidates.^{xxx}

It cannot be said that the arrangements for the election on 4th December were perfect; they most definitely were not. At first, the Reverend Alexander Headley took charge of the meeting but then it was realised that he was ineligible because he was one of the candidates. Headley stood down, to be replaced as the returning officer by Henry Baker, a local farmer.^{xxxi} The first minutes of the parish council record, 'after an inspection of the nomination papers a show of hands was taken but a poll was demanded within the time allowed'.^{xxxii} All returning officers had been issued the instruction to leave ten minutes after the candidates' names had been proposed and seconded during which anyone present could call for a poll.

It is not difficult to understand why someone present considered that a show of hands, with several hundred voters packed into a school hall, would not have been fair to all candidates. With each voter entitled to eleven votes, the returning officer would have found it very difficult to verify the number of votes made by each individual. Henry Baker postponed the election and it eventually took place, using printed ballot papers, two weeks later at the same venue.^{xxxiii}

In total 1,375 votes were cast on 15th December 1894 and the following list was published in the *Hampshire Chronicle*:

Successful				Unsuccessful			
Name	Title	Votes	Name	Title	Votes		
1	Batchelor, F.C	Mr	120	12	<i>Shield, J.R.</i>	<i>Mr</i>	69
2	Headley, A.A.	Rev	105	13	<i>Hunt, W.H</i>	<i>Mr</i>	67
3	Cooper, H.	Rev	99	14	<i>Covey, C.E.</i>	<i>Dr</i>	54
4	Shepherd, J.	Mr	95	15	Wheeler, E.	Mr	43
5	Richardson, J.H.	Mr	92	16	Gladstones, J.G.	Mr	40
6	Walford, H.H.	Mr	87	17	Purvis, J.	Mr	40
7	Willis, W.	Mr	87	18	Fry, F.W.	Mr	29
8	Merryfield, A.	Mr	81	19	Spencer, T.	Mr	27
9	Hemming, H.W.	Mr	77	20	Crook, R.	Mr	16
10	Hall, J.	Mr	74				
11	<i>Hunt, C.E.</i>	<i>Mr</i>	73				

Figure 3. The 1894 New Alresford Parish Council election result. The names of the town's former burgesses are shown in italics.^{xxxiv}

The first eleven elected parish councillors, who took office on 1st April 1895, included three of the town's publicans, two of its pharmacists, two rectors, a bottle manufacturer, a brewer, one retired gentleman who had been a draper and the owner of the Arlebury Park Estate, Herbert Walford, who became the first chairman.^{xxxv} As can be seen above, of the former burgesses only Charles Hunt, the town's brewer and major employer, was elected and

even he was in an ignominious eleventh place. John Ridley Shield, (solicitor) William Hunt, (architect) and Dr Charles Covey were all in the unsuccessful group. How had they managed to sow the seeds of their own electoral downfall?

In the period 1890-95 New Alresford Town Trust was the most important governance body in the town. There was a local sanitary board and a highways board but neither was based in Alresford. The churchwardens were responsible for street lighting, fire prevention, graveyards and allotments^{xxvi} but in terms of town governance the inheritors of the rights and assets of the old corporation were in charge. However, the first town trustees did not make good initial impressions, conducting two poor public relations exercises during their first five years in office.

In the 1890s the town had no mains water supply. Every major house had its own well at the rear and one of the daily tasks was to draw sufficient buckets for washing and cooking. The former burgesses were not, however, motivated to provide every home with running water. Their minutes of June 1888 refer to the necessity, 'of having a sufficient water supply to guard against fire'.^{xxvii} The town had a long history of disastrous fires. The archives are full of the need for water, buckets, pumps, hoses and calls for volunteer fire crews.^{xxviii} The motivation behind the burgesses including an emergency town water supply in the trust's schedule of responsibilities in 1890 was entirely laudable and historically understandable but financially misguided.

The project involved marine engineering of major proportions for a trust of limited financial means. It required damming the local river, raising a huge quantity of water by ram, laying pipes for a mile or more across land they did not own and then installing a pumping station to drive water uphill into a big over ground storage tank. The cheapest quotation they received was for more than £700 – more than twice the value of the total assets of the trust and more than eight times its annual income.^{xxix} This quantum did not include the price of purchasing the land needed to site any of the engineering hardware.

The trustees attempted to raise the necessary funds by public subscription. Lists inviting promises of specified donations to the project were posted up in the town's banks and shops in 1891. Nine months later they issued a public letter, 'unless more people subscribe, the water scheme is unlikely to go ahead'.^{xxx} Unfortunately, sufficient promises of money were not forthcoming. The project had to be shelved in 1892 and was never resuscitated by the trustees. The public climb-down, which involved the return of cheques and cash they had received, would have been a humiliating experience for the trustees, who all lived and worked in the town.

The second poor public relations episode concerned the Broad Street sidings. As its name implies, this roadway is wide. It was designed for market days by a twelfth-century bishop.^{xxxi} Stallholders pitched their wares on the two strips of land, known as the sidings, between the footpaths and the roadway. On non-market days, however, the sidings lay bare and empty. In 1877 the burgesses decided to improve their appearance. They sought and accepted a quotation for the planting of mature lime trees. Horses and carts

caused occasional damage, so the burgesses also invested in iron tree guards. A photograph is shown below:



Figure 4. Broad Street sidings, trees and guards in 1900 (looking south with St John's Church clock tower in the centre background and New Alresford Town Hall to its left).

Nineteenth-century roads and footpaths were merely compacted dirt. On such ground a combination of tree roots and frost caused cracks and in Alresford chalk has never been far from the surface. The chalk absorbed water and when that was refrozen the fissures widened and worsened the problem. In 1890 the sidings were in a state of disrepair and causing concern amongst the residents. The obvious solution was to gravel the sidings with stone chippings but this was costly.

None of this would have caused a problem if the burgesses had not claimed ownership of the sidings in the legal document that gave birth to the town trust in 1890. On 16th June that year John Richardson, a pharmacist and one of the non-burgess town trustees, requested that his colleagues agree to pay to put right the damage caused by several harsh winters. He received the reply that this was not the trust's responsibility and the clerk was instructed write to the highways board requesting that repairs be undertaken. A reply from the board stated that, as the trustees had claimed ownership, they were liable.^{xxxii} On 27th October 1891, the persistent Richardson formally proposed that the trustees honour their obligations to undertake repairs. The former burgesses responded by calling attention to their 1877 minutes that referred to the permission of the highways board that had been sought before the trees were planted. The chairman, John Ridley Shield, declined to put Richardson's proposal to a vote.^{xxxiii}

It was not until 1893 that the culprit behind this rumbling saga emerged. The trust minutes of 28th March contain the words, 'any representation of the strips of land being the property of the old corporation must have been made in error'. This would have been an embarrassing admission for Shield. He was a solicitor, supposedly experienced in checking land titles, without which no mortgage, lease or property sale could proceed. He had allowed a legal document (the scheme of arrangement that had founded the trust under the

auspices of the Charity Commissioners) to be sealed without checking the title to a land ownership.

A proposal to amend the schedule of assets in the trust's constitution was only agreed on 15th December 1893 when Shield used his casting vote. A consequent application was made to the Charity Commissioners who were far from pleased. They did, however, eventually agree and a new scheme of arrangement was sealed on 25th September 1894. This deleted the ownership of the sidings clause and substituted, 'the maintenance of trees and their guards on Broad Street'.^{xxxiv}

However, the problem did not go away; the sidings still needed repairing and the residents were demanding action. The trust, as the town's principal governance body, was still involved in the minds of the inhabitants. To silence the grumblings, the trustees issued a public letter which they paid to have printed and then circulated. It was not worded particularly tactfully in making the case why the trustees were refusing to undertake the repairs:

- The former Burgesses had never paid for repairs to the land and the books of the old corporation were available for scrutiny to that effect.
- They had applied to, and been given permission by, the Highway Authority to plant their trees in 1877 and they had evidence that could prove it.
- The right to levy market tolls did not imply that the Bishop of Winchester had granted them any freehold in 1572.
- They were entitled to levy market tolls not only on Broad Street but also on East and West Streets and no-one was requiring them to repair these roads.
- All of these facts had been placed before the Charity Commissioners who had issued an amended scheme of arrangement excluding their responsibility for any repairs.^{xxxv}

'So there! We're just not going to do it,' was the tone of the public letter. The situation ended up in a public enquiry in 1895. Shield was ignominiously called to appear to account for his error and his subsequent actions. The chairman of the enquiry committee eventually ruled that Alresford Rural District Council, only constituted on 1st April that year, would be responsible for both the current and future repairs. The sidings were later gravelled with stone chippings and remained so, with frosts continuing to throw up chalk, until they were eventually tar sealed after the Second World War.^{xxxvi}

The public climb-down over the emergency water supply and the five-year running sore of the Broad Street sidings had produced an adverse electoral effect for the former burgesses of the town. John Ridley Shield never again stood for election to the parish council. One humiliation at the ballot box was evidently enough for him, as it was for his colleague, Dr Charles Covey. Former burgess, William Hunt, however, was made of sterner stuff. At the first available opportunity, in 1896, he put himself up again as an election candidate and became a parish councillor. He served the town with distinction until his death in 1914.^{xxxvii}

The assets and rights of New Alresford Town Trust, all held for and on behalf of the inhabitants of the town, were not rolled into those of the new parish council in 1895, even though the legislation pertaining then would have

permitted this to happen. The man responsible for this was John Ridley Shield. Having been rejected by the electorate, he clung on tightly to the one public sector position that was already in his possession.

Shield was eighty-six in 1939 when he died in post as the chairman of the trust that he had helped create in 1890. Six times his eight-year term as a co-opted town trustee had ended and he had always put himself forward for re-appointment. No one ever objected and no individual ever stood against him. His fellow trustees re-elected him forty-nine times as their chairman.^{xxxviii} Throughout this time his solicitors' office on East Street served as the correspondence address for the town trustees and the venue for their meetings; his strong room as a repository for the records of the old burgess' corporation and he provided the services of his chief legal clerk to deal with all trust secretarial work.

New Alresford Town Trust exists today in 2012. It continues to own assets and rights that normally come under the jurisdiction of an elected local authority. This charity, run by its unelected trustees, still owns the public assets of The Avenue and The Old Fire Station, it remains responsible for maintaining the trees and their guards on Broad Street and it continues to levy tolls at all of the markets and fairs that take place in the town centre. This trust is not unique; thirty-one other towns have similar bodies that date from late-Victorian times, but it is an anomaly, very different from the standard or the norm. It is also an anachronism, a surviving institution from the age of town governance when democracy at parish level did not exist.

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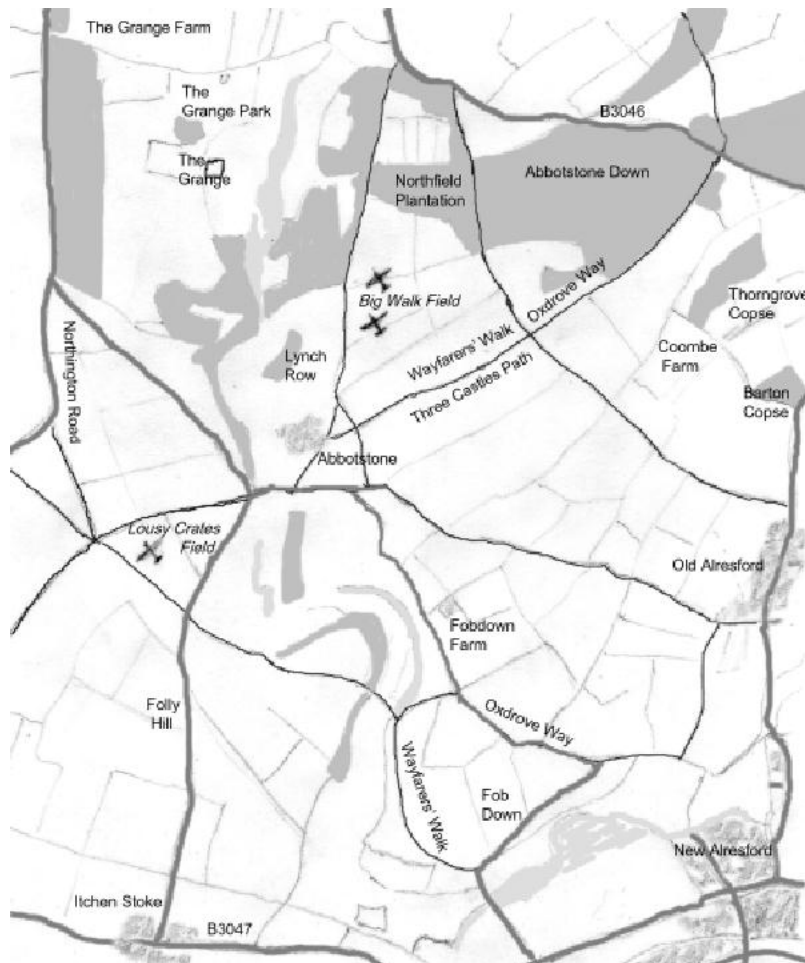
A Bad Day in Abbotstone

By

Glenn Gilbertson

On 22nd July 1944 British newspaper headlines were revealing that the bomb plot of two days before had failed to kill Hitler. In Normandy, Montgomery's "Operation Goodwood", an attempt to break out from the Caen area, petered out with heavy losses.

Stan Upton, now living in retirement in Alresford, recalls that in Abbotstone that day, he was a fourteen year old farm boy helping men to 'hurdle sow' mangels. Overhead they heard the sound of Rolls Royce Merlin engines, and looking up the men saw pairs of Spitfires manoeuvring hard, their black and white D-Day recognition stripes bright against the sky. Suddenly the sound changed - a sickening "crump" as three aircraft collided was followed by the scream of two Spitfires plunging into Big Walk Field while the third, port wing torn off, spun like a sycamore seed into Lousy Crates Field. All three pilots, F/Lt H.W. Adams, F/Sgt J.G.L.Hughes and F/Lt B. Lees were killed.





Looking towards Big Walk Field



Lousy Crates

The pilots were from 26 Squadron, RAF, which was not an interceptor unit but serving in the army co-operation role within 34 Reconnaissance Wing, 2nd Tactical Air Force, based at Lee-on-Solent. From May 1944, two RAF, four Fleet Air Arm and one US Navy squadron shared a pool of Seafire L.III (navalised Spitfire) and Spitfire L.F.Vb aircraft, spotting for the naval guns during the early stages of the Normandy invasion.

The Spitfires were a relatively old model at this stage of the war, frequently referred to in the RAF as “clipped, cropped and clapped”; the beautiful ellipse of the Spitfire wing clipped by having the wingtips shortened to give higher speed and a faster rate of roll, the impellers cropped to optimise the engine for low level performance, and the airframes having seen hard use. That said, under about 12,000 feet the L.F.Vb was still capable against most of the opposition, which was why the US Navy had put their slow spotter floatplanes (usually catapulted from battleships and cruisers) ashore, formed their pilots into Squadron VCS-7 and given them a quick conversion course to handle aircraft with about three times the power and twice the speed of their previous mounts.¹

By mid-July the Americans had returned to their ships but 26 Squadron was involved in army support, anti-midget submarine and anti-E-boat patrols in the Bay of the Seine.²

On July 22nd six of their pilots were tasked with an exercise to practise pair formation flying and deflection sighting.³ F/Lts Adams and Lees formed one pair, F/Sgt Hughes and F/Lt Hartley another. The RAF aircraft accident cards for July 22nd are available,⁴ and record the findings of the enquiry (giving the location as “Old Alresford”). It was found that Adams and Lees had “carried out an unauthorized attack” on Hughes and Hartley, followed by the collision. Hughes was exonerated, but senior officers questioned the standard of flying discipline in the squadron. Of course, fighter pilots need to have aggression and be willing to take risks, but, sadly, sometimes in training mistakes will be made. Let us then remember with honour:

ADAMS, Harold William, F/Lt 118559 RAFVR, age 23. Buried in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, Grave 23.D.9.

HUGHES, John George Lawrence, F/Sgt 948182 RAFVR, age 22. Buried in Blackwood (Our Lady & St John) Roman Catholic Churchard, Lancashire.

LEES, Bernard, F/Lt 125534 RAFVR, age 26. Buried in Eaton (St Andrew) New Churchyard, Norfolk, Grave 109. Bernard Lees, the son of Clifton and May Lees, was the husband of Bertha Lees, of Clapton, London, and had been awarded the George Medal, the highest civilian decoration for bravery.⁵ The Metropolitan Police web-site records a George Medal awarded to a Police Constable Bernard Lees in 1940, but gives no further details.⁶



Spitfire L.F.Vb, W3314 in which F/Lt Adams was killed was a “presentation” aircraft – a product of a Government scheme for any group which could raise £5,000 to “buy” a fighter and give it a name. W3314 was donated by Leicester hosiery trade in 1941 and when new it carried the title 'HOSIERY FLIGHT LEICESTER' on the nose.³

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Alresford Rugby Football Club

This year Alresford RFC celebrated its 21st birthday. A ball was held at Old Alresford Place and a pamphlet produced to mark the occasion. The latter, with material contributions from Brian Cutler, Mike Garton and the late Bryan Lacey, was written by John Weston, a vice-president of the club and former Chairman and 1st XV captain.

What follows is an edited and updated version of his article.

Hugh Ogus August 2012

In the Beginning

Little did they know it in early 1991, but when the “magnificent seven” of Jeff Rees, Brian Cutler, Ian Beecham, Robin Howard, Bryan Lacey, Steve Carter and Sean Ellis began to discuss starting a rugby club in Alresford as they sipped pints in the Horse and Groom, they would be reopening a tradition of rugby playing in the town that began over a century earlier. The present team (ARFC) was established formally a few days later, over a few glasses of Chablis at Gareth Thomas’s house.

The earliest reference to the club was unearthed by Brian Cutler, a former President and Honorary Life Member of the club. The following report appeared in the Hampshire Chronicle on 1st January 1881. “Alresford v Farnham – a football match, under Rugby Union Rules – was played between these clubs at the latter place on Monday last when the visitors (Alresford) carried off the laurels”. The report continues in a curiously pleasing and anachronistic tone. “Although the losing side played up very pluckily and tried hard to retrieve the fortunes of the day during the last half, at the call of time the scores stood as follows – two goals and three tries to nil”. So a first win to Alresford in 1880.

A few other reports of games played by the original team have been traced: - versus Trojans (a loss) in 1881, versus Whitewood Park (another loss) and versus Southampton Rovers (a win) in 1882. It is in the latter two games that the name of C S Wooldridge is first encountered. He was an Alresford player who became an Oxford Blue in 1883, the same year in which he proposed the formation of the Hampshire County Union Football Club and was subsequently elected to both chair the meeting and become the first Hampshire County Captain.

Returning to the “Chablis” evening in 1991, the reborn Alresford RFC formed its first committee, made application to join the Hampshire RFU and agreed a strip of black, green and gold hoops, modelled on Northampton Saints. The inaugural committee comprised Gareth Thomas (Chairman), Steve Carter (Secretary), Bryan Lacey (Treasurer) and Nigel Clarke (Social Secretary). Mike Gander volunteered to be the first coach. These were the days of non-league rugby for Alresford but in that first season 20 out of 28 games were won, scoring 616 points against 228. At the end of the season Nigel Clarke received the Chairman’s award; player of the year went to Chris Holmes, Most Man of the Match to Jon Scott, and both Player’s Player and Most Improved Player to Raef Gregory. It should be noted that the first Alresford side was led from the front by Richard Gander, Mike’s son, occasionally accompanied in the team by younger brothers Ed and Will, beginning a line of brothers, fathers and sons coaching and/or playing for the club. Added to this tradition of a family atmosphere are those of camaraderie and identity with the local town and surrounding villages. Mike Gander’s original encouraging coaching mantra of “believe in yourselves” has become the attitude of all those who are welcomed into the organisation.

The Early Years 1992-1999

During the 90s, ARFC, having been accepted into the Hampshire RFU, started a 2nd XV, known subsequently as the Vagrants. They also had an early attempt at mini-rugby and began the end-of season tours. Hatches, matches and the occasional sad dispatch were celebrated enthusiastically by the club, especially the first of these events, where in Robin Howard’s day at the Horse and Groom, much vintage port was consumed in “wetting the baby’s head”. Indeed the pub at the top end of Broad Street was for a number of years used as our clubhouse where we fed and entertained visiting teams and ourselves after matches. These may have seemed like “any excuse” situations but they proved to be vital in building the club’s identity within Alresford community.

The first ARFC tour was to Topsham RFC just outside Exeter, this venue being John Weston’s former club. The second, to Bredbury Hall near Manchester was organised by Chris Day who was well aware of its then infamous reputation. Suffice to say, a good time was had by all, for, as we all know, “what happens on tour, stays on tour”! Other places visited over the years have included Dublin, Edinburgh, Tallin, Newquay and Gloucester. In this 21st year, the team were back in Topsham.

However, back to rugby, we were experiencing frequent difficulty in finding and maintaining training locations and had to battle on using places such as the grassy area adjacent to Perins’ bus bay, Southdown Children’s Home and Grange Road Rec., where training lights were run from Mark Elliot’s house.

Up until 1993 we had used Perins School rugby pitch for Saturday afternoon matches but due to it being re-laid, had to look for an alternative. Simon McCowan kindly offered the use of the cricket ground in Bighton. In spite of recurrent appeals to the New Alresford Town Council to find us somewhere within the town, the club has had to play there ever since; *but more about this later*. It is easy now to forget our humble origins, but some of the players will well remember marking out the pitch over the old cricket square at Bighton and erecting the goalposts borrowed from Perins.

In 1994, the Daily Telegraph rugby correspondent Rupert Bates, who was to become our President for a year, wrote a splendid article about Alresford RFC in *Rugby World*. He commented that in 1993-94, our first season in the Hampshire League we had only missed promotion to Division 1 on points difference.

Other notable events now included an annual fixture against Fleet (now Fleet & Aldershot RFC) for the Bryan Lacey Rose Bowl. Our two clubs were formed in the same season and both played in the same Hampshire division. For much of that time, while Fleet were in the division above us, we kept a "friendly" fixture going, but we are now back together at the same level and compete for the bowl twice a year at our league fixture. Until they were disbanded, Alresford RFC played annual rugby and cricket fixtures against Barrie Walshe's Vagabonds cricket team. At first these fixtures were a lot of fun but when Alresford committed the cardinal sin one year of beating the Vags at both games, the rugby became more serious to the point where we had to suspend these "friendlies" due to the mounting injury list! In more recent years we have played an annual genteel T20 game against Tichbourne Cricket Club.

While the Rugby Football Union has, as described by Will Carling, its 54 Old Farts, Alresford RFC has its Old Fossils; although these venerable gentlemen, I hope, occupy a somewhat more affectionate place in our rugby hearts than do the Twickenham variety. The fossils include those early worthies Jeff Rees, Brian Cutler, Mike Garton and of course, the biggest reprobate of them all, the late Bryan Lacey. The Fossils are an exclusive club, which is by invitation only, and although great age is no prerequisite, forthright and pedantic views on everything from politics and sport to vintage port and claret, certainly are!

The Annual Summer Barbeque tradition started on Abbotstone Down in the early 1990s where the kids (club members are very prolific) could run wild, climb trees, fall and occasionally break the odd limb. Nowadays we only have to worry about getting dive bombed in Hugh & Maggie Ogus's pool (by yet more children). The club is most grateful for our president and his wife for their annual hosting of this event.

Most of the social events, from these early years onwards have to a large part been organised by yet another club stalwart, Ady Cobb. He has also been a vital link between the 1st and 2nd Xvs having switched back and forth several times, captained both sides and currently playing some of his best rugby in, dare we say, his twilight years. Mention must also be made of Gavin Janisch who has done stirring work over the last five years or so in the difficult task of keeping the 2nd XV alive and well.

Alresford RFC for 10 years or more have stewarded the car parking at the Alresford Show. Apart from this being a great public relations exercise, it aids player recruitment (we now have a regular stand at the show) and raises much needed club funds. Other annual opportunities for raising our profile in the same way are the Watercress and Music Festivals. Indeed, one of our players is the Holder of the Guinness World Record for Watercress Consumption, ARFC's gentle giant Sam Batho.

Minis to Colts 2000 –

On 26th November 2000, the former president of ARFC, Rupert Bates, wrote in the *Daily Telegraph* an article concerning the England Rugby team's strike. He noted "Members of the Alresford Rugby Club in Hampshire League II were hoping that the strike might permeate through enough levels of the game to allow them to win England caps". Thanks Rupert, always good to get a plug! Apart from such occasional articles and mentions in the Hampshire Chronicle and other local papers, in order to further raise our profile, in October 2002 an ARFC website was established. We are indebted to Brent Davies for setting up and maintaining this facility for much of the last decade.

During this period of the club's consolidation, Sue Bell, who has just retired after 6 years as club secretary, and Mike and Liz Garton have all received awards as "Unsung Heroes" by the Hampshire RFU. This was in formal recognition for their unstinting work in the background activities of the club and in 2003, Chairman Bryan Lacey was awarded the title of 'Administrator of the Year'.

However, perhaps the most significant achievement, as reported



in the Hampshire Chronicle headline of 27th February 2004, "Historic day as Alresford earn place at the top table", was ARFC's win over Fordingbridge to gain promotion to the 1st Division for the first time in its history. Over this period the talented 1st XV was coached masterfully by Carl Bevan and led with distinction by captain Paul Rees; however, the club needs to be aware that without a thriving 2nd XV

none of this would have been possible.

This triumph was followed on August 10th 2004 however by tragedy, with the death of ARFC's chairman and stalwart Bryan Lacey. His funeral service at St John's was completely packed and extremely moving. Following his wishes, Bryan's ashes were later interred on the centre spot at the Bighton pitch and all those present will remember the full moon rising between the uprights as a lonely owl circled the pitch, a spooky reminder that Bryan will forever be with Alresford RFC in spirit.

Unfortunately, as so often transpires in sport, a relatively meteoric rise is followed by a swallow-diving fall and ARFC, the following season, slipped back to Division II. Needless to say, this did not prevent us from enjoying our first Summer Ball at the Guildhall in 2005 and despite coaching difficulties the club soldiered on with various degrees of success, playing and training at Bighton with changing, showering and clubhouse facilities at the Alresford Recreation Centre in Arlebury Park.

Several events in the following years have made impressions on the club. Perins School has been established as a Sports Academy specialising in rugby, and thus increasing the flow of young, much needed blood into the club. Perins can boast a fantastic record in coaching both male and female rugby players for representation at the highest levels. But, then another tragedy; Christian Barnard, one of ARFC's most enthusiastic sponsors and supporters passed away. Christian's motto "One life, live it" was his way and timely reminder to all of us that living for the moment is something we should all strive for.

In 2009, by coincidence, ARFC launched its Veterans team with a game against Portsmouth Vets and ARFC Minis were re-launched with, this time, great success. Vets fixtures will continue on an *ad hoc* basis whereas Minis rugby appears to be going from strength to strength and the club appreciates the work of Tim Blanchard and his Sunday morning team of enthusiastic parents and senior players in getting our youngsters involved in our great sport.

Another recent innovation has been John Weston's "Tweed Walk". He felt that perhaps social standards in the club required attention and in establishing this annual or biannual event with strict adherence to sartorial rules and old school values, manners and decorum should improve! This remains to be seen but it is fair to say that the most enthusiastic "Tweeder" was Alex Whatley. The recent tragic death of our 1st XV outside half at such a young age was a shock to us all. The deep impression Alex made on all who knew him was emphasised as we celebrated his life and said goodbye at St John's with a rendition of "Swing Low Sweet Chariot".

Key to the Door

Alresford RFC, under the enthusiastic chairmanship of Chris Day, now firmly believes that they are about to enter a new era in our development. The principal restriction on progress over the past 21 years has been the lack of a ground within the town with their own pitches on which to train and play. This has hampered real growth even though the club has an increasing identity within the town and much closer ties with Perins School. New Alresford Town Council, after protracted and difficult negotiations have just purchased several acres of land immediately adjacent to Arlebury Park with the sole intention of providing two rugby pitches close to the centre of Alresford and just by the Recreation Centre and across the road from Perins. Even after this very long wait we are appreciative of what the Town Council has done and especially the work put in by Roy Gentry, but the task is still far from complete.

At the time of writing, several of us are toiling hard to raise the necessary finance from loans and grants etc., to level the ground that slopes severely away to the north, and to prepare the pitches with appropriate drainage and turf. Although we feel that this is a huge project for such a small organisation as Alresford RFC, we are convinced that it will be the *key to the door* for the next 21 years. No longer will we need to travel by car to Bighton and it will be much easier for our younger members to attend evening training sessions. We can also say goodbye to both our and our opponent's car seats being wet and muddy following games at Bighton. We should attract more new members who, in the past have been tempted to join other clubs from surrounding towns. Perins School is chronically short of pitches for its rugby teams, but will be able to share the new pitches which, when complete, will also enable Alresford RFC to run a youth team and, dare we even think it, a ladies' team.

© Hugh Ogus 2012

Stop press:



On Saturday 11th August 2012 the first turf for the new pitch was cut by (l to r) Winchester Mayor Cllr. Frank Pearson, with Cllr. John Cattle and Club President Hugh Ogus.

Photo © Roy Gentry

ALRESFORD'S NAME – WHAT DOES IT MEAN? HISTORICAL AND LITERARY IDEAS

By
Peter Abraham



Alresford – an odd name which strangers sometimes find difficult to pronounce, and occasionally spell wrongly. What does it mean?

Spellings

An early, probably AD 455, document ¹ referring to Aylesford in Kent, uses the spelling *Aegelesford*, which was understood at the time to mean a body of (normally shallow) water belonging to a man named *Aegel*. A similar spelling *Aelesford* was used in an AD 995 document ² referring to a place in Essex which is now called *Alresford*. In both cases the spellings varied over the years: for example in the Domesday Book (1086) ³ *Aegelesford* (Aylesford) was written *Ailesford* and *Aelesford* (Alresford, Essex) became *Eilesford*. In the case of our Hampshire Alresford however the spelling has remained consistently *Alresford* (*Alresforde* in the Domesday Book) since the earliest (AD 701) document. ⁴

Literary Argument

So what does Alresford mean? Ekwall ⁵ gives the meaning of the Hampshire Alresford as '*Alder ford*'. If we accept '*Alder ford*', the question arises as to what the meaning of '*Alder*' is. The shorter Oxford English Dictionary ⁶ gives two meanings. The first is a tree found in wet places, derived from Old English *alor* or *aler*. The second is 'chief' or 'prince' from Old English *aldor* or *ealdor*. [From the latter we also derive the present day 'alderman']. Which of the two possible meanings giving rise to the name Alresford is the right one ?

In order to decide between them we need to be aware that in ancient times the Saxons changed words very slightly to indicate different meanings. So when speaking of an angel they would say *engel*, when referring to the wing of an angel *engles* or of several angels' wings *engla*. The last two are described by grammarian scholars as examples of the 'Genitive Case, Singular and Plural'. Now according to Bosworth and Toller's massive *Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon* ⁷ the 'Genitive Singular Case' of both *alor* and *ealdor* are remarkably similar, both ending in *-res*. But the first would mean 'belonging to or derived from a single alder tree' while the second would mean 'belonging to or derived from a single chief or prince'. Which makes better sense?

Historical Argument

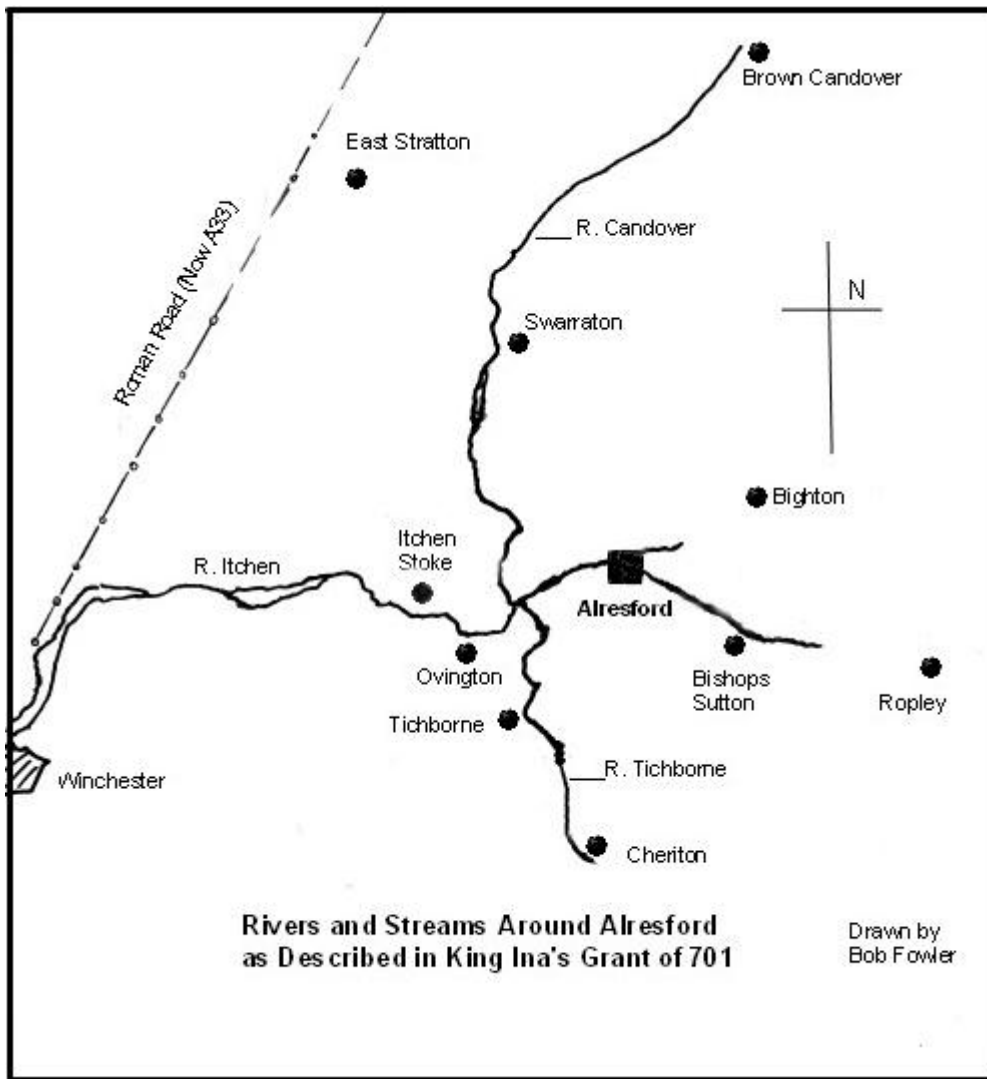
In addition to the preceding literary argument there is the historical one. First of all we must remember that an *ealdor* was not a member of a council, great or small. He was a ruler, commonly translated as prince. Secondly Alresford is and always has been a prime chunk of territory.

Now when Cynewalh succeeded his father Cynegils as king of Wessex in the early part of the seventh century, according to The Venerable Bede ⁸ he refused to accept the Faith as his father had done and he put away his wife and married another. This upset the King of Mercia, who happened to be the first wife's brother, and who promptly drove Cynewalh into exile in Kent, where Cynewalh remained for three years, was baptised and returned to his kingdom and reigned for a number of years, occasionally losing parts of his kingdom to his enemies. When Cynewalh died in 677, according to Bede, "*his ealdors undertook the government of the realm, dividing it between them and ruling for ten years*". Bede goes on:

Then "*Cadwalla deposed and removed these ealdors and assumed control himself*", but after two years resigned and went to Rome, and was succeeded by his son Ina who gave Alresford back to the Church. ⁴ Apparently Cynewalh had done so previously. When Cynewalh died in 677 and was followed by the Ealdors [see the previous paragraph] presumably one of them acquired Alresford. Ina's Grant in AD 701 spells out that the grant was to be renewed permanently '*Sicut predecessor meus Cynewalh..... jamdudum concessit.....libens perpetualiter concedo*'

Interestingly, this same AD 701 Grant from Ina (mostly written in Latin) demonstrates that the so-called River Arle or Alre shown in the Ordnance Survey (compiled in the 19th century) is in fact the River Itchen, which runs past the Watercress Beds and Bishop's Sutton to the junction of the (now) B3047 and A31. The Grant helps to make this clear while describing, in the Anglo-Saxon language of the time, the encircling boundary of the territory of Alresford, starting with the head of the Candover river. It ends with a description of the western part, (here in present day English): ".....along the wasteland; onto the *Tichborne*; along the *Tichborne*; onto the ***Itchen***; along the ***Itchen*** there *Candover* and ***Itchen*** come together; along the *Candover* where it is uncultivated." Therefore the *Tichborne* runs into the *Itchen* and no other river. So as Ekwall suggests ⁵ the river-name *Alre* is a [much later] back-formation.

The river running through Alresford was first recorded as *Alre/Arle* by William Camden in 1695.⁹ The author at that time presumably interpreted the meaning of Alresford as 'the town where the river [*Alre*] was forded', thereby presuming the existence of a previously unrecorded river. However this is inconsistent with either of the interpretations of the '*Alres*'- element quoted at the start of the first page, neither of which have anything to do with a river, forded or not.



In other words the river on which Alresford lies is the Itchen not the Arle which only appears in documents many centuries later and is occasionally used to describe the Itchen as far as Winchester!

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to John Hardacre, Curator at the Cathedral at Winchester, for the printed text of King Ina's Grant and to Donald Ashdown of Ropley for drawing my attention to relevant passages of Bede's *History of the English Church and People*.

Reference Notes:

- 1 Document AD 445 *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*
- 2 Document AD 995 *Cartularium Saxonicum* Ed. Birch
- 3 Domesday Book AD 1086
- 4 King Ina's Grant, Document AD 701 *Cartularium Saxonicum* Ed. Birch
- 5 Ekwall, Eilert *Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names* (Fourth Edition): Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1960
- 6 *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, Revised 1973: Oxford, Clarendon Press
- 7 Bosworth, Joseph & Toller, T. Northcote, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*: Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1898
- 8 Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum (History of the English Church and People)*, AD 731. Quotations based on the translation by Leo Shirley-Price, Penguin Edition 1955
- 9 www.alresford.org/history.php

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Alresford Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations 2012



Party Cake



Street Party



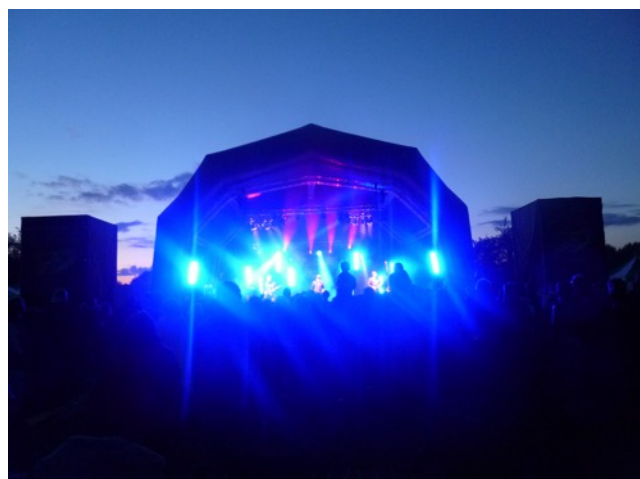
Hurrah!



Whoops!



Inflatable instruments - what do you mean, eccentric?



Alresford Music Festival