



## Alresford Historical & Literary Society

### NEWSLETTER - 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024

**Next meeting, 7:30pm Wed 20<sup>th</sup> March in the Methodist Church**  
***The Porthole Murder* a talk by Paul Stickler**

On 18 October 1947, 21-year-old Gay Gibson disappeared from the Durban Castle as it sailed home from Cape Town.

When the police boarded the vessel upon its arrival in Southampton, they started an investigation. Slowly, a picture emerged that a first-class deck steward, James Camb, had been seen inside her cabin immediately before she went missing. For the week that Gibson had been on board, Camb claimed that he had become friendly with the missing woman. When asked by the captain whether he had any knowledge of Gibson's disappearance he said had not, but when confronted with what had been found in the missing woman's cabin, he now told a completely different story involving being invited to Gibson's cabin and engaging in a sexual liaison. Was she killed and by whom? Was her body pushed through the porthole? Imagination boggles! Our speaker Paul will tell us more!

Paul Stickler is a former UK police officer with a background in murder investigations. During his service he was seconded to the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia where he graduated in International Law Enforcement and now spends his time researching British historical murders and lecturing to a wide range of audiences. His debut book, *The Murder that Defeated Whitechapel's Sherlock Holmes: At Mrs Ridgley's Corner* was published in April 2018 by Pen and Sword Books. His second book, *The Long Silence*, is due to be published in August 2021 by The History Press.



### **Some comments on our last talk by Alys Blakeway on Charlotte M Yonge**

Alys Blakeway gave a well-researched chronological account of the life of her heroine, Charlette Mary Younge (CMY), who had dedicated herself to helping girls from better-off families and working girls of "unblemished character" to improve their education. It was an intriguing time-warp into a very different period when women (sorry "ladies") really "knew their place". CMY was a successful Victorian writer whose high-church religious convictions were central to her life and work. She had a dedicated following. Connections with Winchester, Old Alresford (The Mothers Union) and St Swithun's School confirms that CMY qualifies to be added to our list of Alresford's local literary notables. [MD]

### **2024 Outings**

You will see on our programme card that all-day outings have been arranged for **Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April to Stratfield Saye** and **Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> August to Strawberry Hill**. Coach transport will be provided and lunch will be available for purchase at these venues. Details, including how to sign up, will be sent out shortly.

Best wishes from

Mike Dickens, Hon Secretary [secretary@alresfordhistandlit.co.uk](mailto:secretary@alresfordhistandlit.co.uk)