



ISSUE NO. 11

# GOSPORT RECORDS



"FAITH AND SERVICE"

(See page 7)

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Chairman : The Reverend John R. Capper, Holy Trinity Vicarage. Tel: 80173  
Hon. Sec. : Councillor Mrs. L. A. Burton, 106 Jellicoe Avenue. Tel: 83916  
Hon. Treas. : Councillor Dr. H. J. Taylor, 16 Broderick Avenue. Tel: 80976

Councillor Mrs. L. A. Burton.  
(Editor)

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## Foreword

Now that ten issues of Gosport Records have been produced and indexed, it is time to consider what the voluntary efforts of their editors, contributors and other helpers are achieving.

The Records seek to interest readers, to inform them of the historic background of their physical and social environment, and to stimulate general interest in local history. The figures of sales suggest that they are meeting with some success.

The Records are an important feature of the life of the Gosport Historic Records & Museum Society. Even if their quality has been somewhat variable, taking them as a whole members may well be proud of what their Society has produced.

They encourage research; most contributors would probably have agreed that they had done research for their articles which they would not have done if they had not intended to publish the results. Three of the contributors, Commander Benson, Alderman Rogers and Dr. L. F. W. White, have died; the Records have ensured that at any rate some of their specialised knowledge of Gosport's history did not die with them.

The Records are gradually building up a body of material which, while it will never amount to a comprehensive history, is already an obvious source for historians to draw upon, for teachers to use or for new arrivals to read when learning about their town. For example: D. W. Lloyd's Buildings of Portsmouth and its Environs, 1974, on page 158 lists 13 articles from the Records as being "specially relevant to the architecture and topography of the town" of Gosport; and the Records were much quoted at the recent W.E.A. classes on Gosport and its People.

Copies are sent to a number of national, local, university and specialist libraries. This enhances Gosport's cultural reputation. But more important, such dispersion is the best way of preserving knowledge; if, in a hundred years' time, no copies of the Records can be found in Gosport, it will still be possible to use for research those held somewhere else.

Lastly, the Records have been a starting point for other activities of the Society. An exhibition in the Library in early 1974 was built up around them. The Society's two books, on the Earlier Fortifications and on the Railway Era, obviously owe much in their layout to experience gained with the Records.

Almost every issue has had at least one article by a new contributor; this issue has two. The format has now been improved; one effect of this is that about the same amount of material as was contained in recent issues now occupies fewer pages. It is hoped that readers will consider that No. 11 maintains or surpasses the standards set by Nos. 1 - 10.

G. H. Williams



# Goody and the Clever Devil

by

Lesley Burton

## A BAY HOUSE INTERLUDE

In 1838, the financier Alexander Baring, Lord Ashburton, had built for himself an imposing seaside residence just outside Alverstoke village. For nearly two decades thereafter, Bay House was the scene of many brilliant gatherings where the leading politicians, writers, artists and philosophers of the day assembled. Among the visitors were a distinguished literary couple, Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle, who in 1839 made the first of many visits to stay with their friends the Hon. William Bingham Baring, son of Lord Ashburton, and his wife Lady Harriet Baring.

It was to be the beginning of a tense, emotional relationship lasting nearly fifteen years. The key element in this gifted quartet was the rivalry between Mrs. Carlyle and Lady Baring, both of them women of great ability, charm and wit.

Thomas Carlyle was an acknowledged genius in his own life-time. Born in 1795 at Ecclefechan, Dumfriesshire, the eldest of seven children of a stone mason, he showed brilliant intellectual promise from his earliest years, and studied arts and law at Edinburgh University. His historical biographies, political pamphlets and moral and philosophical works determined the nature of the man — ascetic, dour, unfrivolous.

In 1825, Carlyle had met and married Jane Baillie Welsh, a vivacious Scots girl of wit and intelligence. She was known to her family as the Flower of Haddington (her birthplace) and to her husband as 'Goody'. Jane's portraits show her to be an attractive woman, although not conventionally beautiful. Certainly, her letters reveal her forceful personality, and there is evidence that she had personal magnetism. "Her features were not regular", wrote the historian James Froude, "but I thought I had never seen a more interesting-looking woman. Her hair was raven-black, her eyes dark, soft, sad with dangerous light in them. Carlyle's talk was rich, full and scornful, hers delicately mocking."

The Barings were likewise a brilliant couple, endowed with all the gifts necessary to qualify them as leaders of society. The Hon. William, four years Carlyle's junior, was a cheerful, handsome man of quiet and graceful demeanor, but possessed of a depth of knowledge and an appreciative understanding of the arts and sciences. In the House of Commons he was a Whig and held various Government posts before succeeding to the title of Lord Ashburton in 1848.

Daughter of the sixth Earl of Sandwich, Lady Harriet Baring was in every way an outstanding personality, one of the great hostesses of her time. Jane Carlyle, writing to a friend, said of her, "There is one new female in whom he takes a vast amount of pleasure, Lady Harriet Baring. I have always omitted to tell you how marvellously that liaison has gone on — for my part I am singularly inaccessible to jealousy, and am rather pleased that he has found an agreeable house to which he likes to go and go regularly." Writing to Carlyle of Jane, Lady Harriet commented, "I meditate paying my respects to Mrs. C. so soon as I am making visits — she is a reality whom you have hitherto suppressed."

The Barings were a wealthy couple and had homes in various parts of the country. Carlyle, with or without Jane, was a regular visitor on the country house circuit, where he met many of Lady Harriet's proteges. At the social functions over which she presided so regally, he was able to observe her in action. Her fascination for him deepened. In a letter to a friend, Carlyle wrote: "She is one of the cleverest creatures I have met with, full of spirit, not very beautiful to look upon, a clever devil, belle laide, full of wit and the most like a dame of quality of all that I have yet seen."

Perhaps Carlyle, under her spell as he was, just failed to notice that she was also despotic, even occasionally insolent in manner. Bores were despatched with ruthless efficiency. "I don't mind being knocked down, but I can't stand being danced upon", wrote a victim of her repartee.

Jane Carlyle's powers of observation were also at work. "She is immensely large, might even have been one of the ugliest women living, but is almost beautiful, simply through the intelligence and cordiality of her expression. She is unquestionably clever, just the wittiest woman I have seen, but with many prejudices which I wonder Carlyle should have got over so completely as he seems to have done."





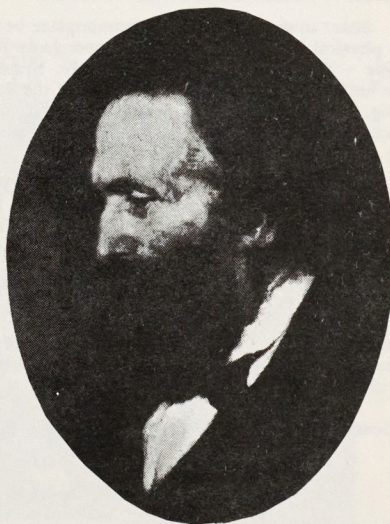
JANE WELSH CARLYLE  
*from a photograph by Tait, July 1st, 1856.*



THOMAS CARLYLE  
*from a photograph by Tait, July 28, 1854*



LADY HARRIET BARING  
*from an engraving by Francis Hall*



LORD ASHBURTON  
*from a painting by Landseer, 1861*



Nevertheless, Jane Carlyle and Lady Harriet Baring became firm friends. They had many tastes and interests in common, shared a love of German which they read together, and were equally matched in their wit and intellect. Carlyle was overjoyed at this happy arrangement. Numerous visits were made to Bay House during the ensuing years, the Carlyles travelling to Gosport by train from Nine Elms Station, London, and being met by their host at Gosport Railway Station. By 1843, a besotted Carlyle was describing Lady Harriet as "the beautifullest creature in all this world, divided from me by great gulfs for ever more." She was simply his "Queen".

Jane Carlyle has left a graphic description of the kind of hospitality offered to visitors to Bay House in the Baring's day. "It is a large, fantastical-looking new building on the shore of the sea" wherein could be enjoyed "sea air and good food — not so much dressing as in London, and no strain on the wits, for Lady Harriet does all the wit herself."

But before long the sheer frivolity and emptiness of the goings-on at Bay House was beginning to pall, coincidental with Jane's growing awareness of Carlyle's involvement with Lady Baring. In a letter to a friend, Mrs. Russell, Jane admitted to being "worn out with the strenuous idleness, six weeks of doing nothing but playing battledore and shuttlecock, chess, talking nonsense. Nothing could exceed the sumptuousity and elegance of the whole thing, nor its uselessness!"

Jane was a migraine sufferer, and both she and her husband took laudanum, a common enough antidote in pre-barbiturate times. The letters during this period show increasing tension and greater consumption of laudanum as Thomas Carlyle's infatuation for Lady Harriet became an established and noticeable fact. Moreover, her Ladyship began to subject Jane to Spartan measures for the relief of migraine symptoms. Fires were refused her, windows thrown open and worst of all, Jane's adored pet dog, Nero, was shown to be an unwelcome guest at Bay House. To cap it all, the south westerly gales and winter bleakness of Stokes Bay got on her nerves.

For a sensitive woman such as Jane, the sight of her normally dour husband as a fawning courtier was detestable. It was completely out of character. To her cousin and close friend, Jeanne Welsh, she confided: "Her (Lady Harriet's) fascination of Carlyle proves her to be the most masterly Coquette of modern times." William Baring, however, appears to have accepted his wife's sway over Carlyle and to have pursued a separate existence of politics and patronage of the arts.

Bitter rows soon became commonplace between Jane and Thomas and some evidence exists to suggest that physical blows were exchanged over Lady Baring. At about this time, Jane appears to have attempted suicide — the laudanum was always handy. Her state of mind cannot have been helped by a letter she received from her husband in 1846: "Took leave of the Barings last night, all is handsome and clear there, and nothing wrong, except you and my ill genius force it to be so — my relation to her is by a very small element of her position, but by a just and laudable one and I wish to retain that if I can, and give it up if I cannot. O Goody! be wise and all is well."

By 1855, Lady Baring's health was begining to fail and some of her exuberant vitality had dimmed. During this period, the Carlyles were travelling abroad, but Jane still carried with her the bitter memories of her husband's emotional attachment to his larger-than-life hostess. Two years later Lady Harriet was dead. Afterwards, Jane confided to a friend: "Oh, good gracious, how far was I from dreaming that through years and years I should carry every stones' weight of it on my heart."

And so ended a small chapter of Bay House history. For Thomas Carlyle, the period was a productive one. During his long association with Lady Harriet Baring, he was writing his definitive work, *The Life of Frederick the Great*. Undoubtedly, the seaside remoteness of Bay House offered him the seclusion and quiet necessary for creative writing. But for Jane the Bay House period turned sour and brought her disillusionment and ultimate unhappiness.

- Sources
- (i) *Necessary Evil*, by Laurence and Elizabeth Hansom, published by Constable 1952.
  - (ii) *The Carlyles at Home*, by Thea Holme, published by Oxford University Press, 1965.
  - (iii) *Thomas Carlyle — Letters to his Wife*, edited by Trudy Bliss, published by Victor Gollancz, 1965.
  - (iv) *The Carlyles*, by John Stewart Collis, published by Sidgwick and Jackson, 1971.
  - (v) *Everyman's Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Edited by D. C. Browning, M. A., B. Litt.
  - (vi) *Burke's Peerage*.



## Faith & Service

### The St. John Ambulance in Gosport

by

G. L. Squire

75th Birthday celebrations will be in order this year for the Alverstoke Ambulance/Nursing Division of the St. John Ambulance, which has been in continuous active existence since 1901. Although the Brigade is a familiar sight at public events of both local and national significance, it is perhaps interesting to examine the earliest unfamiliar origins of the Order, Association and Brigade.

Its name derives from the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem. The Order was originated in A.D. 1100 as a reward for the devoted services of certain merchants from Amalfi in Italy, who founded a hospital at Jerusalem for the care of the sick and wounded pilgrims to the Holy City. When Jerusalem was recaptured by Saladin, the Headquarters of the Order were removed first to Acre, then Cyprus, Rhodes and finally Malta. At about the same period, A.D.1140, the English Order was established at Clerkenwell in the Priory of St. John of Jerusalem, founded by Jordan Briset. Years later when Malta was recaptured from Napoleon in 1800, the Headquarters were again dispersed and the work of the Order became disseminated throughout several European countries. From these earliest beginnings, the St. John Ambulance Association for the training of first aid was founded in England in 1877 and has since become an essential part of the national fabric.

Subsequent to 1877, many units or centres of the Association were formed. The Alverstoke Ambulance Division of the St. John Ambulance Brigade was founded in 1901, having previously been attached to Portsmouth. Superintendent C. R. Edwards was responsible for the formation of this Division, whose all-male membership was constituted from the classes held by the Gosport, Alverstoke and Fareham Centre, itself in existence since 1882. Their first President was Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught, who became an active patron.



Members of the Alverstoke Division, 1901.  
Supt. Edwards, the founder, is seated on the far right of the middle row.



Initially, the Divisional Headquarters were situated in the old wooden library immediately behind the original Thorngate Hall (the then Town Hall). By the standards of the time, these were spacious quarters but the floors were so rough and dusty that leather knee-pads were provided for drill practice. In 1923, the Headquarters were removed to 'Rostellan' in Spring Garden Lane, and in 1939 to Forton Road.

During training sessions men and women did not mix, so all Divisions at this time were either Men (Ambulance) or Women (Nursing). The Alverstoke Division's first Hon. Surgeon was Dr. E. Hunter, later succeeded by Dr. Wharram Lamplough. Mr. W. M. Clay became the Division's Treasurer and Storekeeper, a post he held for many years. His home, Anglesey Lodge, with its beautiful wooded garden, was for many years used by the Association for Field Day demonstrations and fetes. Under the supervision of the Hon. Surgeon a programme of classes was drawn up in First Aid, Home Nursing, Home Hygiene and Sanitation. Examinations were held regularly and the result was to build up the active strength of the Association and make the Brigade a much-respected and indeed essential feature of Gosport life.

Several events highlighted the years leading up to the 1914-18 war. In 1905, a spectacular display was mounted at Cams Hall, Fareham. Demonstrations were given by local Association members and the Alverstoke Division provided the stretcher bearers for the Sham Fight – an almost obligatory feature of open-air pageants of the time. The brochures state that "all casualties were plainly marked and labelled". The following year, Mr. Lee, M.P., (later Lord Lee of Fareham) loaned his home, Rookesbury Park, for the Association's Annual Field Day. On this occasion, the demonstration as well as the Sham Fight, contained Mock Pit, Ice and General Accidents, enabling members to put into practice the knowledge and skills gained in class.

In 1907, in celebration of the 25th anniversary of the first classes to be held in Alverstoke, Gosport was honoured with a visit from Princess Henry of Battenburg. The Thorngate Hall was the venue for the ceremonial presentation of certificates and badges gained by the Gosport and Alverstoke members. The streets surrounding the Hall were gaily decorated and big crowds watched Her Royal Highness arrive from Royal Clarence Yard attended by a travelling escort of the Hants. Carabineers. Later the ceremonial party moved over to the Connaught Drill Hall, which had been dressed with flowers by Mr. Legg, florist, and bunting by courtesy of the signal men of H.M.S. Dreadnought and local Association officers. Princess Henry was regaled, amongst other things, with "a very realistic Demonstration of Ice Accidents and Resuscitation from Drowning."



Princess Henry of Battenburg arriving at the Thorngate Hall, August, 1907.



Then as now, the financing of the Association and Brigade work was a constant headache, and the report of the 1907 Annual Meeting earnestly hoped that the strong interest shown by Her Royal Highness "will stimulate all to even greater exertions to increase the usefulness of our Ambulance Organisation, inducing more to subscribe and become Associates, especially employers of labour." Apart from the surpluses from receipts over expenditure from some of the classes, very heavy reliance was placed on donations to cover the working expenses of the Brigade. Again, then as now, members, Officers and medical advisors performed on a voluntary basis.

The early uniform of the Brigade was somewhat different to to-day's version. All male members wore hats of pill-box shape with small, shiny peaks. The Brigade badge in front – with its eight-pointed Cross – was worked in cloth. There was no white band on the men's hats for this was the distinguishing mark of the officers. Officers also wore a white-enamelled leather bandolier over the left shoulder, by which a small leather pouch was slung in the middle of the back. The men wore belts and pouches of brown leather with haversack and water bottle. The haversack was carried over the right shoulder so that the white diagonal band went in the opposite direction to the officers' white leather bandolier.



An early demonstration by the Alverstoke Division.

In the early years of the twentieth century, the two most important pieces of equipment owned by the Association were the Horse Ambulance Carriage and a two-wheeled iron litter, designed to carry a Furley stretcher. When not in use, the litter was stored in a small room adjoining the police station in South Street. Here it came in very handy for dealing with supine drunks from the many pubs in the vicinity, and also for the occasional corpse. As late as 1950, this legendary iron litter was still in use.

The Horse Ambulance was kept in a hut close to the old library, which had also housed the Fire Brigade's escape ladder. It was the practice in times of emergency to borrow one of the Fire Brigade's horses from the now demolished Fire Station in Clarence Road. These horses were sometimes taken off the street for they, like the part-time firemen, had to earn their corn between fires. However, for the straightforward removal cases, a horse was obtained from the military Mews in Forton Barracks. Invariably, the horse would be grazing in a nearby field, so the prescription for removal of a patient necessarily began: First, catch your horse! At one period, the horse was kept in Treacher's Field (Lees Lane Level Crossing) so that once caught, the animal had to be led a mile or so along Forton Road to the waiting ambulance, there to be harnessed before eventually proceeding with job of removal of patient to hospital. Before the building of Gosport's War Memorial Hospital in 1921, all cases requiring hospitalization had to be conveyed to the Royal Portsmouth Hospital in litter or Horse Ambulance via the Floating Bridge. Only seriously ill patients made the road journey to Portsmouth by Ambulance.





Official opening of the Forton H.Q., 1939.



One of the floats in the Walpole Park demonstration, 1939.



**REGULATIONS FOR THE USE OF THE HORSE AMBULANCE CARRIAGE  
BELONGING TO THE GOSPORT AND ALVERSTOKE DIVISIONS**

1. No disorderly or infectious case is to be carried.
2. In cases of accident or sudden emergency the call may be made by telegram, telephone or special messenger. The name of the person responsible must be given as well as the place where the carriage is required; the nature of the accident if possible and the number of attendants required.
3. **Fees** The ordinary Cab fare by day or night, by distance or time, as arranged; in addition, 3/6 an hour or part of an hour for the first hour, and 3/- for every hour or part of hour after; and 2/- for the first hour or part of hour, and 1/- for every hour or part of hour after for every attendant required, other than the driver. N.B. These charges may be modified by the Committee where there is real inability to pay the full or any fees.

In 1905, a Committee directed by Queen Alexandra had ordered the setting up of nursing detachments within the Association so that in times of national emergency plans for medical care could be put into swift operation. The result was the formation of the Alverstoke Branch of the Womens' County Voluntary Aid Detachment. In 1914, as war clouds gathered over Europe, the V.A.D. and the local Brigade went into action. Three centres were set up in Alverstoke to receive the war wounded. These were the National Children's Home, the Brodrick Hall and Brookfield House, loaned by Lt. Col. and Mrs. Sloane-Stanley. At the end of 1918, the following order from the War Office Council, marked 'very urgent' was received at Alverstoke: 'Steps are to be taken forthwith to prepare for a large number of casualties which are expected at an early date. Billeting to be arranged in cottages and buildings and canvas extensions and preparations to be made to receive cases direct from overseas.' During the war period, over 1,000 patients were admitted, many of them severe cases of gas poisoning, trench feet, malaria and chest infections. They comprised officers and men of the Belgian Army, Australians, Canadians, New Zealanders as well as members of 56 Infantry and 5 Cavalry regiments. Money was raised by the usual means of donations, subscriptions and loans, with a War Office subsidy in the form of a capitation grant of 2/- per diem each occupied bed. The Brigade had its own allotment which, together with the produce from Brookfield House garden, largely provided the fruit and vegetables for the sick and wounded.

In the years between the Wars, the Brigade continued to flourish and undertook the manning of both local and national occasions. One of their biggest challenges was the first Schneider Trophy race at Stokes Bay in 1929. This international sporting event attracted many hundreds of visitors to Gosport, all of them anxious to secure ring-side seats at Haslar Seawall and Stokes Bay. The Borough Council enlisted the aid of the local Division together with the police. In 1929, Jellicoe Avenue had not been built, so that the exit point to the Bay and the beach was Village Road Crossroads. Here, eager motorists and motor cyclists (the vogue of the Twenties) created a formidable traffic hold-up. St. John's members were kept busy attending to the dust-inflamed eyes of the motor cyclists, as well as to more serious injuries.

By 1934, the number of public duties undertaken by the Division topped the thousand mark. In the same year, members were on duty at the first Empire Air Day at Grange and the launching of 'Endeavour'. One diverting incident — though not for the victim! — occurred at a Sports Meeting at Gosport Park, where the over-enthusiastic starter inadvertently shot himself in the thigh, severing the femoral artery. Luckily, Brigade members were on hand to give him prompt attention and he recovered later in hospital.

In the late thirties, the Alverstoke Division joined with those of Lee-on-Solent, Fareham and Sarisbury to form the Gosport and District Corps. In August 1939, the newly-formed Corps gave a first-class display of Brigade and A.R.P. work at Walpole Park. An estimated crowd of 3,000 watched the comprehensive demonstration which was to be in effect a dress-rehearsal for their magnificent efforts in World War II.

**Note** The author would like to thank Councillor Mrs. L. A. Burton and members of the Society for assistance in the preparation of this article.

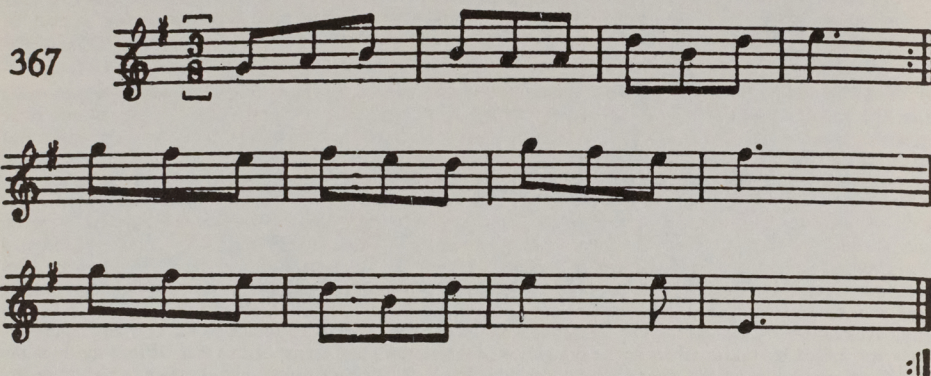
**Sources** Handbooks of the Brigade and Association, 1901-1951.  
The Penguin Dictionary of Modern History.



# The Gosport Tragedy

by

G. H. Williams



In Gosport of late there a damsel did dwell,  
For wit and for beauty did many excel;  
A young man did court her to be his dear,  
And he by his trade was a ship-carpenter.

Gosport Records No.10 reproduced an old broadsheet of a ballad headed "The Gosport Tragedy : Or, The Perjured Ship-Carpenter". In the British Museum catalogue this broadsheet is dated "1720?". The words of the first verse are repeated here with a slightly amended version of the 17th-century tune, "Peggy's gone over Sea", to which the ballad was set (1).

At the time when Gosport Records No.10 was published, Professor David C. Fowler, of the University of Washington, Seattle, was engaged on research in England on whether the ballad had any basis in fact, he has kindly made the results available. Readers will remember that a ship-carpenter, William, seduced, killed and buried a Gosport maiden, Molly, and then embarked on the Bedford "which lay at Portsmouth out bound for the sea". Molly's ghost appeared to him and to another member of the crew, Charles Stewart; William then confessed and died. Molly's body was found and "in Gosport church they bury'd her there".

William and Molly are extremely popular names in ballads, but Charles Stewart and the ship Bedford seem more likely to be genuine. Papers at the Public Record Office show that H.M.S. Bedford was in Portsmouth Harbour more or less continuously from October 1721 onwards (2). She went on a Baltic cruise from Spithead from 7 April to 4 November 1726, having among her crew a sailor variously called Charles Stewart and Charles Steward; he had been on her books since the previous 27 January. The most interesting point is that the Carpenter, John Bilson (a warrant officer), died at sea on 25 September 1726; he had been on the ship's books since 4 May 1723 (3).

At that time Holy Trinity Church was always known as Gosport Chapel; so far as is known there were no burials inside it, though there were in Alverstoke Church. A search of the Holy Trinity and Alverstoke burial registers has not revealed anything significant; but even if a murdered girl were buried, the register would probably not record that she had been murdered. The Holy Trinity and Alverstoke transcripts of tombstone inscriptions also reveal nothing significant.



Readers may judge for themselves whether John Bilson was guilty.

The ballad was popular for a very long time, in America as well as in England. Cambridge University Library (4) have over a dozen different broadsheets of it. The wording gradually changed; the late H. T. Rogers at page 6 of *Gosport Records No.10* quoted from an American edition of about 1835 (5), and readers can compare the wording. The plot and title also changed, and some versions were much shorter. One version was set in Worcester instead of Gosport; others nowhere in particular. Molly became Polly and she, or her ghost, got a violent revenge: "She stript him and tore him, she tore him in three.....". In another version she was Pretty Polly (6).

We reproduce here the title-page and words of a parody sung by the comedian Sam Cowell in about 1859 (7). Gosport has become Portsmouth, and Molly seems to have been robbed of her money rather than of her virtue. An original copy of the parody, with an elaborate musical score, is in Portsmouth District Library.

Whether or not the original ballad was founded on fact, it certainly gave rise to a great deal of singing.



#### Sources.

- (1) Claude M. Simpson, *The British Broadside Ballad and Its Music*, pp.572, 573; copyright 1966 by Rutgers, the State University, USA; reprinted by courtesy of the Rutgers University Press.
- (2) ADM. 180/1, f. 79.
- (3) ADM. 33/317, 321; ADM. 36/263, 264; ADM. 51/132 Part XII.
- (4) Madden Collection.
- (5) Brit. Mus. 11630 f 7(123).
- (6) J. W. Ebsworth, *The Roxburghe Ballads*, Vol. 8, 1895, pp. 143, 173; MacEdward Leach, *The Ballad Book*, New York, 1955, pp. 698-700; G. Malcolm Laws, *British Broadside Ballads Traditional in America*, Philadelphia, 1957, pp. 268, 269; Leslie Shepard, *The Broadside Ballad*, 1962, p. 149.
- (7) Reproduced by courtesy of the Portsmouth District Librarian; some additional punctuation has been inserted.



**MOLLY THE BETRAYED**  
 or the  
**FOG-BOUND VESSEL.**



SUNG BY  
**SAM COWELL**  
 Music and Words  
 COMPOSED BY  
**W H C W E S T**

*Printed by S. Hall*

*Price 6d*



1. In a Kitchen in Portsmouth a fair maid did dwell,  
For grammer and graces none could her excell,  
Young Villiam he courted her to be his dear,  
And he by his trade was a Ship's Carpentier.  
Singing Doddle, doddle, doddle, chip, chum, chow, choorallilay.
2. Now it chanc'd that von day ven her vages vas paid,  
Young Villiam valk'd vith her, and thus to her said —  
"More lovely are you than the ship's on the sea".  
Then she nudg'd him, and laugh'd, and said "Fiddle de dee!"  
Singing Doddle, doddle, &c.
3. Then he led her o'er hills, and down walleyes so deep,  
At length this fair damsel began for to weep;  
Saying, "I fancy, sweet Villiam, you've brought me this vay  
On porpos my hinnercent life to betray!"  
Singing Doddle, doddle, &c.
4. He said "that is true, and we've no time to stand",  
And immediately took a sharp knife in his hand,  
He pierc'd her best gown till the blood it did flow  
And into the grave her fair body did throw.  
Singing Doddle, doddle, &c.
5. That night as asleep in his hammock he lay,  
He fancied he heard some sperrit to say  
"Oh vake up young Villiam and listen to hear  
The woice of your Molly what lov'd you so dear.  
Your ship bound from Portsmouth it never shall go  
Till I am reweng'd for my sad overthrow.  
The Anchor is veigh'd the vind's fair and strong  
But all is in vain for your ship shan't go on".  
Then up com'd the Captain vith "unfurl ev'ry sail",  
He guv'd his command but all no avail,  
A mist on the hocean arose all around  
And no vay to move this fine ship could be found,  
And no vay to move this fine ship could be found.
6. Then he calls up his men, vith a shout and a whoop  
And he orders young Villiam to stand on the poop.  
"There's summat not right", says he, "'mongst this ere crew,  
And I'm blow'd if I don't think young Villiam it's you".  
Singing Doddle, doddle, doddle, chip, chum, chow, choorallilay.
7. Then Villiam turned red, and then vite, and then green,  
Vile Molly's pale ghost at his side it vos seen;  
Her Buzzom vos vite, the blood it vos red, —  
She spoke not but wanish'd, — and that's all she said!  
Singing Doddle, doddle, &c.

#### Moral

8. Now all servant gals who my story does hear,  
Just remember poor Molly, and her ship's Carpentier;  
If your sweethearts they axes you vith them to roam,  
Just be careful and leave all your vages at home.  
Singing Doddle, doddle, &c.



## Gosport's Finest Hour

by

The Reverend John R. Capper

Louis-Philippe in 1835  
*by Scheffer*



"What emotions must he feel. He is the first King of France who ever came to pay a visit to the Sovereign of this country." Queen Victoria wrote these words, referring to the visit of Louis Philippe in 1844. Between 10 am and 11 am on Tuesday 8th October Gosport witnessed the splendour of a pageantry never seen here before nor since, as Prince Albert escorted the king from his royal yacht through Clarence Yard to the Railway Station.

Louis Philippe was no stranger to England. As Duke of Orleans he spent the first fourteen years of the nineteenth century at Twickenham in exile. The July Revolution of 1830 put him on the throne of France which he was to occupy with stability and good humour until the 1848 Revolution forced him into exile again. Neither was he a stranger to Queen Victoria. In spite of the doubts of her ministers she was determined to visit France in 1843, making her first Channel crossing in her new yacht. She was entertained at the Chateau d'Eu in Normandy and the king took great trouble to please his guests by importing large quantities of English beer and cheese.

The return visit was almost abandoned. Suspicion between the two countries flared up in disputes over Tahiti and Morocco. The Duke of Wellington declared that "the disposition of the French was to insult us whenever and wherever they thought they could do so with impunity." Queen Victoria wrote: "The only thing almost to mar our happiness is the heavy and threatening cloud which hangs over our relations with France. The whole nation here are very angry. The French keep us constantly in hot water."

Fortunately Louis' chief minister Guizot was a man of optimism and hope. Negotiations for the king's visit to England were made with meticulous care. He was now 71 and his daughter Louise wrote to Queen Victoria: "What makes my mother uneasy is the fear that, being at liberty and without control, he will ride, go about, and do everything as if he was still twenty years old. If I must tell you all the truth, she is afraid also he will eat too much." It was even discussed whether he would require the horse-hair mattress and plank of wood under it which he always used in his own home.

Gosport was chosen as the landing point for the King of France since it had at that date a good railway connection. The Earl of Yarborough, attended by his aide-de-camp the Earl of Wilton, made the final preparations at the Clarence Yard victualling depot. Then on the evening of Monday 7th October he sailed out to the Nab Light to await the arrival of the French fleet. At daybreak the large steamer Gomer approached and it hoisted the French colours, and the small device in the centre of the French Standard, L.P1 surmounted by a crown in the flag at the main top-gallant masthead. Lord Yarborough's small squadron saluted with 21 guns each and then returned to Clarence Yard. The salute was taken up by the guns at Fort Cumberland, manned by a detachment of the Royal Marine Artillery.



Clarence Yard and the short road to the railway station were alive with activity. Fifteen hundred troops crossed from Portsmouth by means of the floating bridge. The guard of honour was positioned at the long pier known as Queen's Wharf. It was composed of the Grenadier companies of the 47th, 59th and 76th Regiments under the command of Major Hovenden. The senior officer of that rank in the district usually had this duty assigned to him but Major Gordon of the 59th Regiment having had the similar honour six months earlier on the visit of the King of Saxony here, the duty devolved on Major Hovenden. The 59th colours and band were placed at the end of the guard of honour. Over 500 men of the 47th lined the path to the gate and their regimental band was stationed at the flag staff. The 59th regiment continued the file to the railway station, where the 76th with another 300 men were marshalled, complete with yet another band and colours.

Originally it had been intended to allow the public into the Victualling Yard but Queen Victoria forbade this. There had to be a tight security since many attempts had been made to assassinate Louis Philippe in his own country. But the local people were not going to miss the spectacle. Having been awoken from their slumbers by the sound of cannon salutes soon after daybreak they occupied every inch of space on the wharfs, batteries and houses adjacent to the waterside. The first thing to be seen was the British men-of-war barges cross the harbour from King's Stairs to take up their moorings at Gosport. First was the barge of Admiral Sir Charles Rowley, the Commander-in-Chief. The officers were in full uniform with white trousers, and the crew looked remarkably fine and neat in black hats, white shirts and blue trousers. Then followed the barge of Rear Admiral Superintendent of the Dockyard, Sir Hyde Parker, and in order the barges of the Victoria and Albert, the Victory, the Firebrand, the Excellent and all the vessels in commission.

As soon as the Royal French Squadron anchored there was a further salvo of royal salutes and the concurrence of people afloat and on shore gave a loud unanimous cheer. The Lords of the Admiralty went on board to pay their respects to the French King who informed them that he had experienced no inconvenience on the voyage as his vessel produced little motion. His Majesty announced his intention of not coming on deck until the arrival of His Royal Highness Prince Albert.

Prince Albert was rather late, which gave a chance to the Mayor and corporation of Portsmouth, fully robed, to embark in three barges from the Victoria Pier with the intention of presenting an address to Louis Philippe. There must have been a shortage of barges since the third in the Portsmouth party which carried the Town Clerk belonged to Dr. Burney's Royal Naval Academy and was crewed by the young gentlemen of that establishment from Clarence Square, Gosport. One of the Portsmouth officials reported that the king graciously received them. He wore a dark blue uniform faced with gold, with a red riband, similar to that of the Bath, across his breast and several stars of other military decorations. "We had time to glance round the cabin, which was furnished in the most elegant and exquisite manner possible. The sides were hung with yellow damask of the richest pattern, and the chairs and couches were also covered with the same splendid material. The ceiling was ribbed, and painted of a light drab colour, and ornamental with paintings of flowers and fruits, in depicting which the artist had rivalled the variety and beauty of nature."

Prince Albert had been up since 6 am but it was after 10 am before he arrived at Gosport Station in the splendid new state carriage from Farnborough, accompanied by the Duke of Wellington. He was dressed in a new fashioned coat, of very neat cut and appearance, with mixed grey trousers. But he had not realised that the French King would arrive so early in the morning and showed much anxiety about keeping him waiting. He at once stepped into one of the royal carriages which took him to Clarence Yard, the National Anthem was played on his arrival and there was yet another series of royal salutes. The admiral's barge took him to the Gomer where Louis Philippe embraced him, kissing him on each cheek most cordially.

During the time Prince Albert was on board the French royal yacht the most animating scene was displayed in the harbour. The Hampshire Telegraph described it: "Peal after peal, flash after flash succeeded each other, from the guns of a score of ships and vessels, the smoke enveloping the masts and rigging, and as each volume of varied shades hung in festoons up the mast and on the yards of the numerous shipping, the splendid colours of the flags of all nations formed with the above a most magnificent kaleidoscope, which is rarely witnessed and effected only once an age. On coming to the gangway the Prince was about to give precedence to his Majesty, but the King, playfully pushed his Royal Highness before him and they thus descended the ladder amidst the heartiest expressions of enthusiasm from all the spectators."

Louis Philippe was visibly moved as cheer after cheer marked his progress by barge to the landing stage. The guards of honour presented arms, and the bands played as His Majesty, leaning on the arm of Prince Albert proceeded to the royal carriages. He acknowledged the respects paid to him by repeatedly bowing and showing the highest gratification and delight. Thousands of people lined the road between Clarence Yard gates and the





HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA

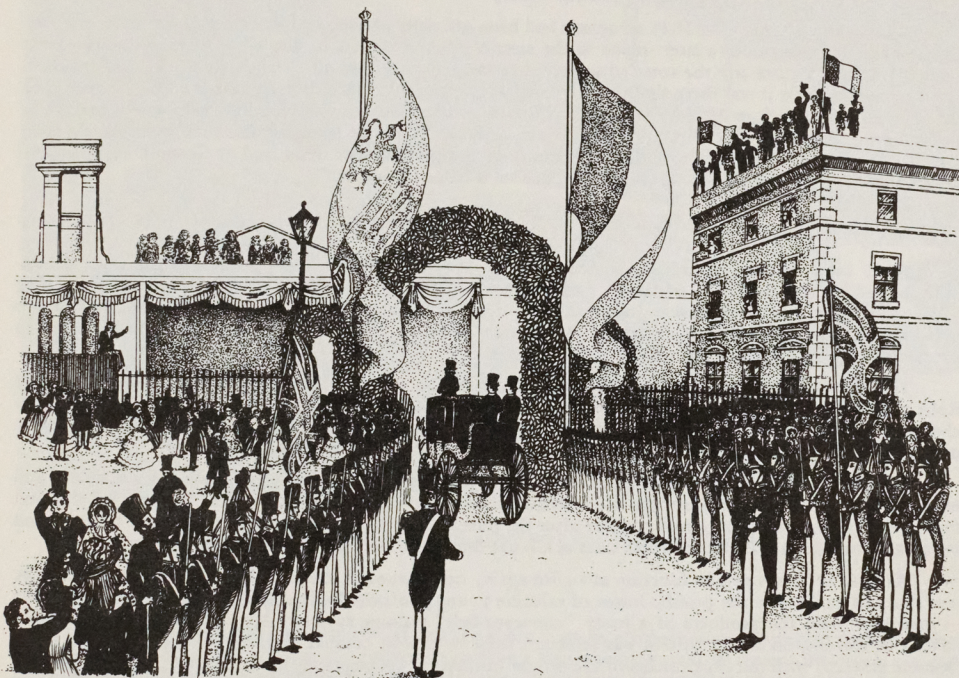


H. R. H. PRINCE ALBERT



railway station. The station buildings and approaches had been elaborately decorated with flags and bunting by Captain Burney and students from his Naval Academy. The Admiralty had lent the flags, and they were intertwined with flowers and evergreen festoons. The words 'Welcome to England Louis Philippe' were ingeniously wrought over the gate.

At the station there was a Royal Marine guard of honour and yet another band played the national anthem. The Chairman and directors of the railway company were presented to the King and the privileged few to whom the railway company had given tickets of admission showed their gratitude for this singular honour by shouting 'Vive le Roi'. His Majesty appeared highly pleased with his reception and acknowledged it with an affability that at once won the hearts of the bystanders. Several times he lowered the window of the railway carriage on each side to present himself and bow to the company, and to afford every one assembled an opportunity of distinctly seeing his person. Under the direction of Mr. Locke the engineer of the railway company the royal train left just before 11 am and reached Farnborough in an hour and a half. The party then went by road to meet Queen Victoria at Windsor.



Louis Philippe's arrival at Gosport Railway Station.

#### Sources:

Illustrated London News, and Hampshire Telegraph for 12 October 1844.

(Photostat copies kindly obtained by Godfrey Williams Esq.)

'Queen Victoria' C. Woodham-Smith 1972.

'The Life of Louis Philippe, Citizen-King' T.E.B. Howard 1961.

Louis Philippe's return to Gosport six days after his arrival here is described in Gosport Records No.4.(Spring Garden House) and in G. A. Allcock's 'Gosport Railway Era' (pp 16, 17)



# Grange - Fifty Years of Flying

by

Christopher D. Yandell

"That shows how important Gosport is in the history of Aviation!"

The speaker was Dr. A. P. Thurston, recalling in the nineteen fifties how he and Patrick Young Alexander, the son of the general manager of Cammell Lairds and Company of Sheffield and the energy behind the early years of the Portsmouth Aero Club, conducted experiments in a large Gosport field over four decades previously which not only radically advanced the technological progress of Aero dynamics, but also ensured the permanent recognition of this town in the annals of aviation history.

In the interim, the Avro 5041 aeroplane had been officially christened the Avro-Gosport as an acknowledgement of the contribution later made to the science of Aeronautics by the Air station at Grange. Both the names of the station and the town ultimately became household words throughout the Royal Air Force, whose personnel knew it was there that the standards of piloting that made British aviators the best in the world had been evolved. Back in 1918 when the Air Council was formed, one of its initial tasks was to reorganise the training systems of the Military and Naval air services after their amalgamation, and a comprehensive flying manual for instructors was published — based on the philosophies developed at Gosport. Today, the magazine of the Principal United Airfield Flying School is named "Gosport".

## SAD DIAMOND JUBILEE.

Now, only a golden spreadeagle beside the gates of H.M.S. Sultan in Military Road, and a few sporadically placed hangers remain as evidence of the former airfield, which in 1970 silently celebrated the passing of sixty years since the first powered aircraft took off from its grassy expanse. It was a Diamond Jubilee few could have looked forward to with elation. At the time of writing, twenty years have elapsed since the field's last connection with flying was severed.

The literal immortality of Grange can be directly attributed to a bearded First World War Pilot, Major Robert Smith-Barry, who knew how to engineer a subtle merger of the two ideals. He had the courage to challenge what he considered to be the outdated tradition of his superiors, and campaigned for the introduction of what was necessary to further the cause of British wartime safety and supremacy in the air.

His own 1914-18 career began very badly with a traumatic crash in which his Observer was killed, and he in turn sustained two broken legs and a smashed kneecap. Lying in France's San Quentin hospital and fearing the indignity of being taken prisoner after the retreat from Mons, he decided to discharge himself, and eventually managed to reach the British lines in a horse-drawn cab before escaping to this country.

As soon as he was able to function as a pilot again, he returned to the front line at the Somme, where he was shocked to observe the prolific losses of valuable young pilots the Royal Flying Corps was suffering there — men who were the products of a hasty "conveyor-belt" training system. After centuries of fighting her battles at sea and on land, Britain was reluctant fully to exploit combat techniques which had only really become practical with the experiments of the Wright brothers at the beginning of the Century. The war exposed alarming inadequacies in the pilot training system, with many of its students being good enough for what one observer described as "Fokker Fodder".

The methods used needed to be drastically altered, and only men like Smith-Barry, it seemed, knew how. In his own words — "The object of training is not to prevent flyers getting into difficulties, but to show them how to get out of them satisfactorily, and having done so, to make them go and repeat the process alone".

## AVIATION PIONEER.

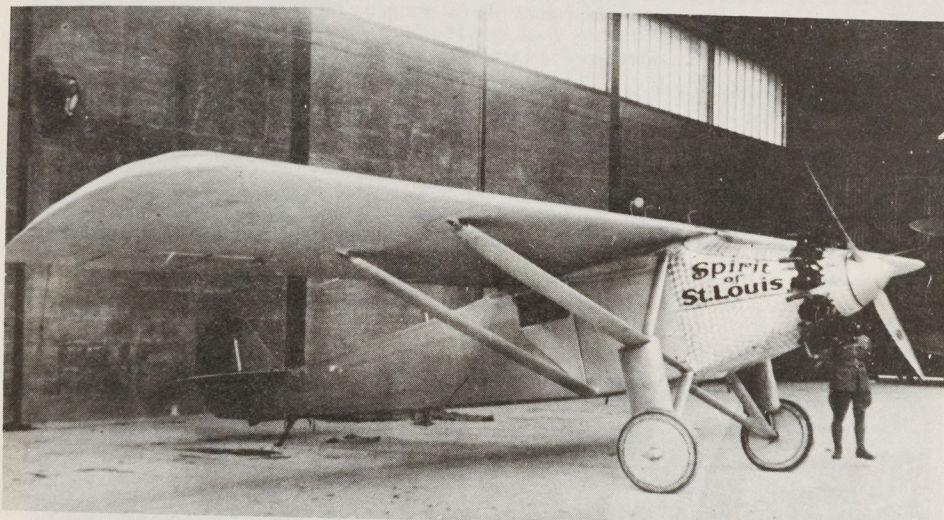
Unfortunately, his opinion was the exact opposite of those who dictated the pilot training policy of the day. Yet Smith-Barry was a pioneer. He refused to have his cause undermined, and Sir Hugh Trenchard finally surrendered, saying: "It's about time you went home to try out these methods you've been pestering me with. I've told the training people, so don't let me down."



Grange Airfield was a conveniently large area of land situated between Forts Brockhurst to the North and Rowner to the South. It was bordered on its eastern side by Military Road, which connected the two representatives of a series of forts known as "Palmerston's Follies" and was itself adjacent to the branch railway to Lee-on-the-Solent.

In 1912 the Royal Flying Corps chose it to be the home for one of the seven squadrons which were destined to make up its Military wing, and officially took over the site in January 1914, just seven months before the outbreak of the First World War. It was in the Autumn of 1916, though, that it first became instrumental to the cause of more efficient pilot instruction and greater aircraft safety.

Returning to his homeland, Smith-Barry took over No.1 Reserve Squadron, which was then based at Gosport, and selected his instructors. Thus using the famous Hamble-built Avro 504 biplanes, complete with dual control, Grange became the home of the Special School of Flying. It was to become known throughout the World, and specialized in cross wind landings and in the correction of mid-flight spinning.



Charles Lindbergh's Spirit of St. Louis on a stop at Grange Airfield.

#### FLAG WAVING INSTRUCTION CODE.

The principal difficulty of that period was the absence of an efficient Communication device between instructor and pilot, necessitating the former to employ a flag waving system to convey his orders — a code easily confused by the over enthusiastic learner. On arrival at Gosport, Smith-Barry altered this by demanding that his instructors stall the planes at intervals and make their point during the silence that resulted. The new method not only hastened training considerably, but also provided valuable information regarding the amount of nerve possessed by the pilot. The same man later introduced the "Gosport Tube", a speaking pipe which served the same purpose.

The flying maxims of Robert Smith-Barry were transformed into the standard basic flight training procedure for all newly emerging air forces around the globe, not least, of course, the Royal Air Force itself. After the War, he took a team of fellow instructors to the United States to demonstrate his methods there before emigrating to South Africa, where he died in 1949 after having given up his commission in 1921. Four years later a BEA Discovery Class Viscount was named after him — a fitting tribute emulating the words of a former instructor of the Special School of Flying: "By shedding a flood of light on the mysteries of aircraft control, he drove away fear — which was really the greatest danger which existed for a pupil."



#### PORTSMOUTH AERO CLUB.

What must be remembered though is that the history of Grange aircraft, whilst owing gratitude to the famous pilot instructor, did not and does not today revolve entirely around that one man. To discover the origin of flying there, we must rejoin Dr. Thurston and Patrick Young Alexander, the latter having been primarily responsible for the foundation of the Portsmouth Aero Club. The club was originally given the use of twelve acres of land at Fort Monckton, and initiated its activities on October 23rd 1909, though later gained the permission of the War Department to exploit the site at Grange.

Alexander was determined to prove the potential of heavier-than-air machines, and devoted the whole of his £60,000 inheritance to discover the true secret of flight. It was at Grange's opening meeting on April 9th 1910 that he first demonstrated his interpretation of the air's lifting power with a self-made glider, yet it was in partnership with the doctor that he was able to expose his considerable talents in the stimulation of Aircraft evolution.

The two early pioneers began by testing the stability of aircraft using a wind tunnel they had constructed at Fort Grange. From there the two men experimented to ascertain the centre of pressure of various aerofoils, and claimed at the time that their persistence resulted in the first stability curves of aircraft ever made in the world, thus prompting the remark that opened this article.

The Aero Club prospered, principally through its members' construction of three efficient gliders, which reached a height of between fifty and sixty feet and travelled for over three hundred yards.

Naval interest in Grange began with the early gliding experiments of two submarine officers who practised the art both from the airfield and a site near present-day Paulsgrove.

The Royal Flying Corps moved on to the Grange site at the beginning of 1914, as has already been explained. To avoid the necessity of building barracks, the authorities transferred the Royal Garrison Artillery Units from Fort Grange to Portsdown Hill, thus enabling the Royal Flying Corps to occupy the vacated premises.

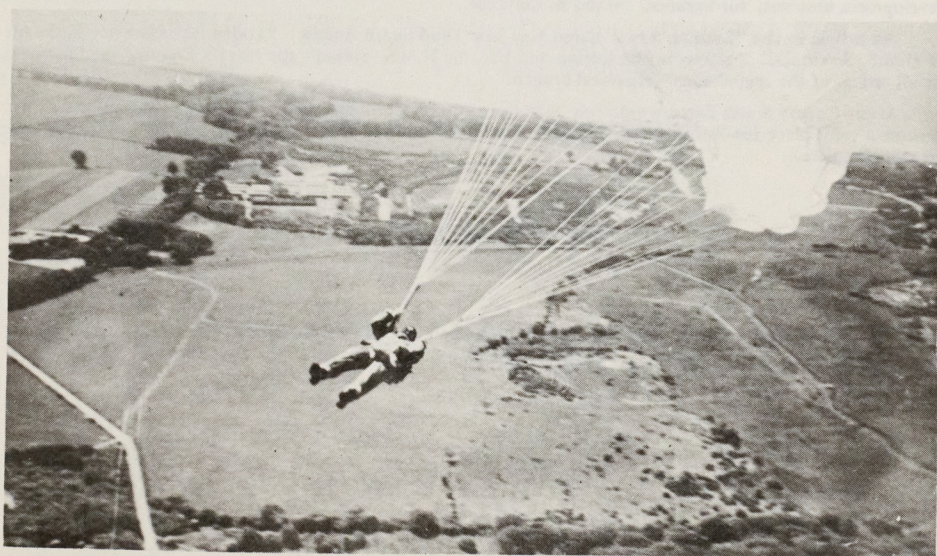


Grange Airfield 1933.





Parachuting over Rowner in the Thirties.





#### WAR INVOLVEMENT.

Seven months later, though, Britain's involvement in the first World War was announced, and the newly settled No.5 Squadron was mobilized and sent overseas to France. Grange stood empty until the end of September, when the Admiralty was granted temporary use of its facilities to train a Naval Reserve squadron. This squadron was placed in the Command of Lieutenant Arthur Longmore, who later became a distinguished Air Chief Marshal and is remembered today as having been the leader of the bombing raid on a large gathering of German "u" boats at Antwerp in 1915.

Grange had by that time assumed a more practical importance as an Air Training Centre. In August 1915 Fort Rowner was taken over to accommodate additional units of the Royal Flying Corps, thereby allowing full use to be made for Aerodrome Purposes of the land between the Fareham-Gosport Railway line and Fort Brockhurst, an area which had been used formerly as a racecourse and a military training ground.

Later that year, Smith-Barry returned from France.

After the fame the War years produced for Grange, the twenty years preceding its closure as an airfield were something of a marked anti-climax. Its degeneration was not immediate. New Barracks were provided on the opposite side of Military Road and personnel transferred from the Fort.

#### BATTLE OF BRITAIN SUCCESSES.

Throughout the Second World War both the Fleet Air Arm (which had parted company with the R.A.F in 1937) and the Royal Air Force used Gosport as a Staging post for Squadrons going overseas and as a base for the aerial protection of South Hampshire. Aircraft based there were responsible for a number of successes during the Battle of Britain.

In 1946 R.A.F. Gosport was handed over to the Navy, and approval given for the airfield to be renamed H.M.S. Siskin. In 1953 however, the Admiralty decided that Gosport's airfield should close, and during 1955/56 the activities of H.M.S. Siskin were transferred to other Naval air stations. The Aircraft Torpedo development unit was, for instance, moved to Culdrose.

An article in the "Evening News" dated May 31st 1956 began simply : "Today is the last day in the life of H.M.S. Siskin..... Tomorrow the station will become H.M.S. Sultan, the Navy's Training establishment for all ratings of the engineering Mechanical branch."

Major Robert Smith-Barry would not have been sorry. Through him, and through Grange, the air had become a safer place for British pilots during the two World Wars. He had done his job, and so had Grange. All was complete.



Note: The author wishes to acknowledge the help given him by Mrs. K. Callow, Curator, Gosport Museum.  
Source: Portsmouth Evening News, 1910 - 1956.