



Issue No. 2

GOSPORT RECORDS

Gosport
Historic
Records
and
Museum
Society



'MISS HIGGINS'
CIRCA 1890

COLONEL BOGEY'S BIRTHPLACE

R.W.P.

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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	Page 3
CROSSING THE HARBOUR IN ELIZABETHAN TIMES.	Page 5
HISTORIC HOMES No. 2 . LE BRETON FARM.	Page 10
COLONEL BOGEY'S BIRTHPLACE.	Page 13
H.M.S. HORNET.	Page 17
ALVERSTOKE BURIAL GROUNDS.	Page 22

Editorial

We must thank everybody who assisted so kindly in the distribution and sale of the first edition of the Gosport Records. The response was most encouraging and we had to print double the number we had estimated originally. A very limited number are still available at the Central Library and if the demand continues a further reprint may be necessary.

New readers who want a back copy will assist us by writing in to the Honorary Secretary so that we can judge whether a new printing is a practical proposition financially.

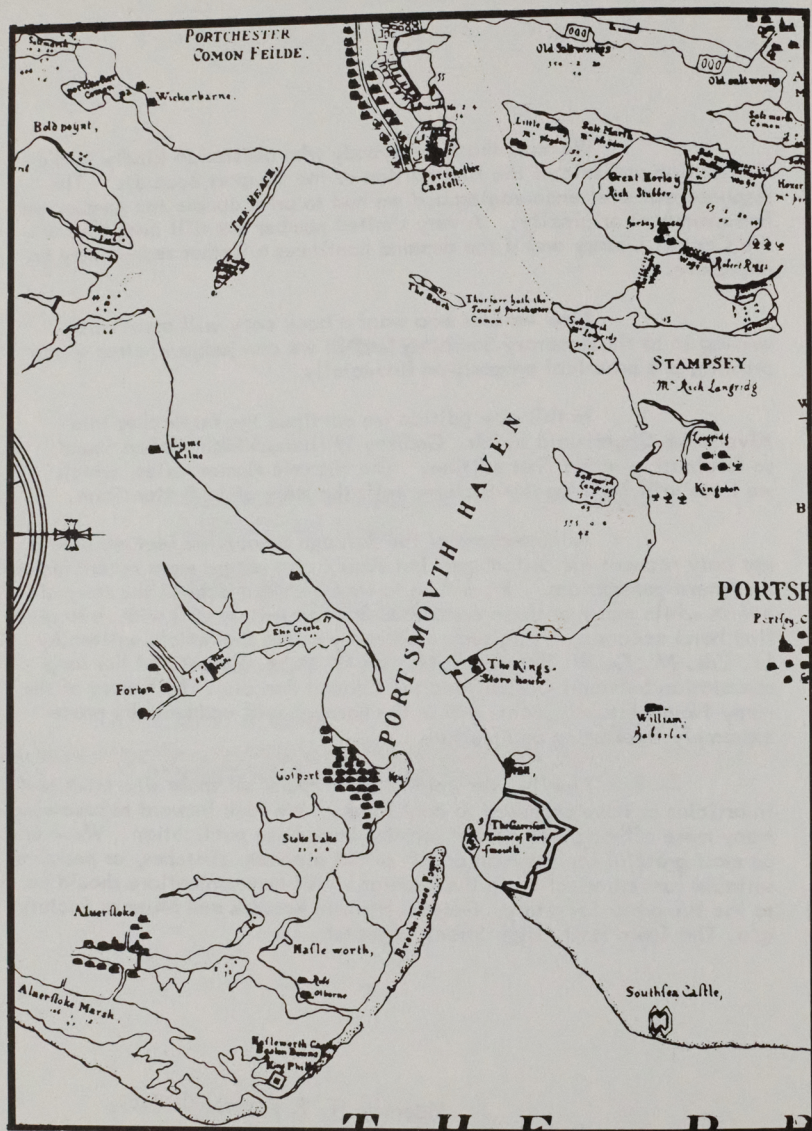
In this new edition we continue the researches into Alverstoke Churchyard by Mr. Godfrey Williams which readers found so fascinating in our first edition. The Historic Homes series, which we hope will be a regular feature, tells the story of Le Breton Farm.

As custodians of the Borough records we feel we should not only recount the distant past but should also record more recent history for future generations. From time to time we shall publish the story of events while many of those concerned are fortunately still with us to give first hand accounts. Into such a category comes the article written by Lt. Cdr. M. G. W. Benson, R.N., on H. M. S. Hornet and the long association between Gosport and the Coastal Forces. The history of the many Naval Establishments within the Borough will undoubtedly prove extremely interesting and fruitful.

Finally, we would like to thank all those who have sent in articles or have promised to contribute. We look forward to receiving many more although we cannot promise immediate publication. We would be most grateful for the loan or gift of old pictures, sketches, or postcards suitable for reproduction in the Records. All communications should be to the Honorary Secretary, Gosport Historic Records and Museum Society, c/o. The Town Hall, High Street, Gosport.

Alderman H. T. Rogers, O.B.E.,
Chairman

CHAIRMAN.



The Harbour circa 1600. Based on an old map by La Favelure and published by kind permission of Portsmouth Corporation.

Crossing the Harbour in Elizabethan Times

by L. F. W. White, M.B.E., Ph.D., B.Sc.(Econ), Barrister-at-Law

Crossing the harbour has always been a major problem for the citizens of Gosport. For hundreds of years the fishermen of Gosport plied their small craft to and from Portsmouth carrying men, horses and provisions, to avoid the long and dangerous land route through Fareham, Portchester and the open marsh lands into Portsmouth.

The issue came before the Courts first during the 44th year of the reign of Elizabeth I in 1603 (which was the last year of her reign) when the Court of the Exchequer at Southampton presided over by the Lord Treasurer of England Sir John Fortescue, had to determine the legal situation concerning the right to the ferry between Gosport and Portsmouth. The plaintiffs in the case were Roger Trymlett, John Chesle and Erasmus Burgess, inhabitants of Gosport, acting on behalf of all the other inhabitants and tenants within what was described as the borough or town of Gosport. The defendants were Stephen Riddleston and John Jeffreys.

The plaintiffs claimed that the ferry was an appurtenant and belonged to the several freelands or tenements in Gosport. The defendants claimed that they had acquired the title to the ferry by lease from Her Majesty in that they had agreed to pay an annual fee for the exclusive right to transport passengers across the harbour and that control of the ferry had been farmed out to them.

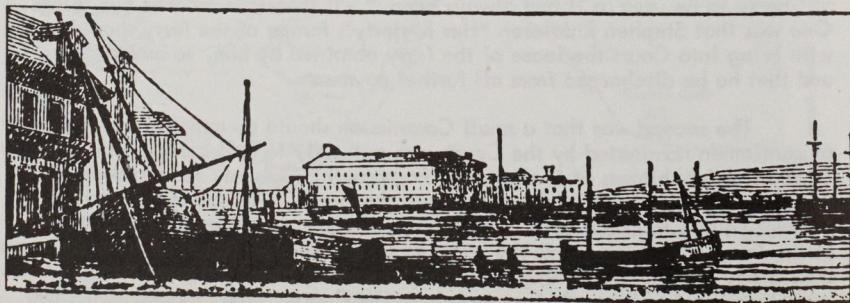
The Court had before it the depositions of a number of witnesses who proved that the plaintiffs and other tenants of Gosport had for divers years past used the ferry to carry and recarry both the inhabitants of Gosport and other passengers and provisions. The Court decided in principle "that it was not expedient for the Commonwealth nor for the safety of Portsmouth that the ferry should be under the rule and direction of any one man, but that it should be at liberty to be used as it had always been." It therefore ordered two things. One was that Stephen Riddleston "Her Majesty's farmer of the ferry should forthwith bring into Court the lease of the ferry obtained by him, to be cancelled and that he be discharged from all further payments."

The second was that a small Commission should be appointed consisting of gentlemen nominated by the Court with authority to call before them the most substantial inhabitants of the towns of Portsmouth, Gosport, Alverstoke and of the towns of the Isle of Wight which used the ferry. The Commissioners were to have powers to recommend what number of boats should continually attend at the ferry, by which towns the boats should be kept, what rate every passenger should pay and all other things necessary for the well ordering of the ferry. They were instructed to bring their proposals to the Court. The members appointed were Sir Hamden Paulett, Sir William Uredale, Francis Cotton and John White.

In due course the Commissioners reported back. They said "that they had called before them the most substantial inhabitants of the towns of Portsmouth and Gosport, Alverstoke and the Isle of Wight and found by their testimony and their conference with them, that time whereof the memory of man is not to the contrary, the said ferry or sea passage hath been maintained and kept by the inhabitants of the said Borough of Gosport only, and that they have usually taken of every footman, passing in their boats over into Portsmouth one halfpenny and so much for passing back again and that if any footman pass over alone, he paid one penny and that by the said use and continuance of the said ferry and sea passage at Gosport there hath been there from time to time and there was at the time of the making of this report, good store of sufficient seafaring men and mariners bred up and maintained there in marine affairs to the great furtherance of Her Majesty's service at the seas." The Commissioners reported that they "thought it meet that the inhabitants of the said Borough of Gosport should still continue the use of the ferry, taking for fare according to the usual rate aforesaid and no more."

The Commissioners further recommended that "to the end that the ferry may at all times be furnished with a convenient number of serviceable boats to serve for such ordinary travellers as shall daily pass there, to be in readiness for transporting aid of men and other necessities for the relief of the town of Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight upon every sudden attempt, there should be always maintained by the inhabitants the number of twenty good and serviceable boats as well for horses as men, and of them there should be daily attending for transporting ordinary travellers, five, whereof three to be such as should be meet for the passing of horsemen and that one of the five said boats should daily attend upon the shore on the Portsmouth side."

The Commissioners also made a final recommendation "For avoiding the many dangers that through negligence or disorder of the passenger-men might grow to the hazard and prejudice of the passengers there, the said Commissioners thought it meet that there should be a choice made of two of the substantialist inhabitants of the said Borough to be nominated once every year at their law day held there and that they together with the constable for the time being should take charge that all the said boats be kept in good strong and serviceable sort, well able to brook the seas, and that no passenger boats be suffered to pass over with any passenger without one skilful and able man at the least, to take charge thereof and that there be no disorder or exacting more of the passengers than ordinary prices."



Gosport Harbour.

HAVING RECEIVED THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS THE COURT OF EXCHEQUER MADE A SOLEMN ORDER AND DECREE, A COPY OF WHICH IS REPRODUCED HERE. THIS REGULATED TRANSPORT ACROSS THE HARBOUR FOR THE NEXT TWO CENTURIES.

It is therefore this Day Ordered and Decreed by the Court,
THAT the inhabitants of the said borough of Gosport, and their heirs, free tenants unto the said Bishop of Winchester and successors, as aforesaid, shall from henceforth still hold and continue the use of the said ferry or sea passage, as appurtenant and belonging unto their several freelands or tenements in Gosport aforesaid without the lett or disturbance of any person or persons whatsoever; and from time to time find, keep, and maintain twenty good, able, and serviceable boats, sufficiently and well furnished, to carry and re-carry all passengers, as well horsemen as footmen, and all other provisions passing between the said borough of Gosport and town of Portsmouth; and every of the same boats to have one skilful and able man, at the least, to take charge of every such boat for the more safe and surer transporting of every passenger or passengers, their horses, or other provisions; taking for every footman passing in their boats over unto Portsmouth one halfpenny, and for passing back again one halfpenny, and for every footman passing alone a penny, and no more or greater sum to be paid by any person or persons; AND to the end that boats for carrying of travellers, as well horsemen as footmen, and other provisions shall be in readiness, It is further ordered and decreed by the court, that there shall be always continually and from time to time attending five good and serviceable boats at the least of the said twenty boats well provided as aforesaid, whereof three of them shall be able and sufficient for the transporting of horsemen, and the other two able and sufficient for the transporting of footmen; and one of those five at the least shall be continually on that side the water or sea passage next unto the said town of Portsmouth, to the end that passengers shall not be delayed or hindered on their journey; AND for avoiding of many dangers that may grow by the negligence, disorder, and unskilfulness of the men that shall have the guiding, rule, and oversight of the said passenger-boats to such person and persons, their horses, and other carriages passing the said ferry or sea passage; It is thought fit and so ordered and decreed by the court, that the inhabitants of the said borough of Gosport for the time being shall from henceforth have power and authority, by virtue hereof, yearly at their law days holden for the said borough, to elect and chuse two honest substantial, and skilful men amongst themselves, who, together with the constables of the said borough for the time being, shall take upon them the care and charge, that the number of boats above-mentioned shall be always in readiness furnished as aforesaid, with able and sufficient persons for the well guiding of the same boats, and carrying and re-carrying of passengers, horses, and other provisions according to the true meaning of this decree; and shall likewise have power and authority, by virtue hereof, to punish according to their discretion all and every such person and persons as shall offend, either by disorderly behaviour of themselves towards the passengers or their carriages, or by taking of any greater rate or rates of the passengers than is above-mentioned.

Wm. Johnson, Printer, Gosport.

Disorderly behaviour and overcharging by the Watermen is referred to in the Court's decree. As the years went by traffic across the harbour and to the naval vessels at anchor increased enormously, while actual control of the crossing became vested in a few Gosport families. By 1809 conditions had deteriorated so much that an Act of Parliament was necessary "for the better government of the watermen working on the passage between Gosport, Portsmouth and Portsea" and for regulating the fares. The preamble of the Act refers to "watermen demanding exorbitant and unequal fares which has become a general grievance and a great inconvenience and detriment to the local inhabitants". A new Commission met in July 1809 at the India Arms Hotel. Unfortunately, it proved most ineffective..



This is one of the earliest photographs ever taken, probably about 1843. It shows some of the Gosport Watermen of the time. The young lad sitting in the front is Thomas Smith who was apprentice to his father, Samuel Smith, wearing a bowler hat in the back row.

SUCCESS TO THE WATERMEN Of Portsmouth, Portsea, and Gosport.

Come all you jolly Watermen
And listen to my song,
And if you will pay attention
I'll not detain you long.
A set of Pen-born tyrants
Have met, and they declare
That all our true-born Watermen
A slavish badge shall wear.

CHORUS.

Then a groan for our oppressors,
Who tyranny doth teach,
And a cheer for our jolly watermen
That ply on Gosport beach.

Both hand and heart united
We claim our ancient right,
With a full determination
We'll not conquered be by might,
We use our best endeavours
To gain the public approbation,
And with civility treat every fair
No matter what their station.

On the first infringement of our wrong
We made ourselves contented,
Tho to deprive us of our rights
They a floating bridge invented.
They badged their men to scream and
They wish we ne'er had met, [shout
But cheer up & sing the good old song
"We may be happy yet."

You all know a man—I speak no names,
Who at the present time supposes,
He can badge all our brave watermen
Because he's got three noses,
He pokes them where he has no right—
And as his nose so fast increases,
He'll run against a badge some night
And smash his nose to pieces.

Now its currently reported
That a very famous cadge,
Who sponges every waterman
Is voting for the badge.
To Southsea common he'll be sent,
So fast this cadging badger prated,
I'd give a crown with all my heart
To see this badger batted.

They find the watermen combined,
They've been so badly treated,
That they have quickly changed their
mind
And the Dutchman's been defeated.
The only badge that they will wear
Is Friendships badge, together
With a long pull and a strong pull
In calm or stormy weather.

When the Floating Bridge Company was formed a proposal was made that all Watermen be licensed and issued with a badge. Incensed at the prospect of losing their living the Watermen handed out the above pamphlet to passengers.

Historic Homes

No. II LE BRETON FARM

by H. T. Rogers, O.B.E.

In the year 1315, Gilbertus Le Bret La Bruton's "Great Manor by the Waters of Spithead" was in flames and was completely destroyed. It is doubtful if it was ever rebuilt and just where it was situated is unknown but tradition upholds its existence as near Rowner Church.

Walford in his Historic Sketches written in 1887 states that early last century some old cottages and ruins near the Church were probably the remains of the Manor House but gives no proof.

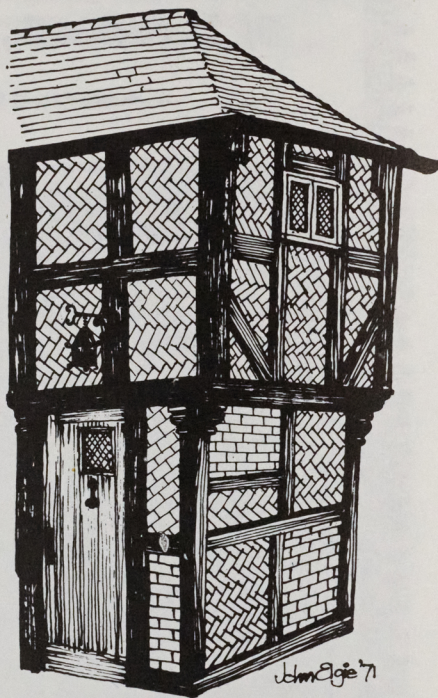
What is known is that Gilbertus who was under tenant of the Royal Manor had to find new quarters for himself and family and so "a small house was erected nearer to the sea" than before.

This small house is almost certainly Le Breton Farm, in Manor Way, Lee-on-the-Solent, occupied by Alderman & Mrs. R. A. Kirkin, the present Mayor and Mayoress of Gosport, who take a very justifiable pride in its renovation.

Ownership can be traced back over 600 years. Indeed, the house may well have been erected on an even earlier site as remains of flint axes and other domestic implements have been found quite recently in nearby Cheltenham Crescent.

There would have been no difficulty over building material. One of the ancestors of Gilbertus had given land to the Cistercia Monks of Quarr Abbey in the Isle of Wight with permission to land their ships free of toll.

Once again tradition has it that stone from the quarries near Binstead was landed at Monk's Hill, Hillhead, and was used in the building of Winchester Cathedral and Rowner Church. Similar stone can be seen at Le Breton Farm.



"CHARTER OF HAMO BRITO DE LEYA TO THE ABBEY OF
ST. MARY OF THE STONE QUARRIES :

Hamo Brito de Leya sends greetings. Know that I for the salvation of my soul and of Juliana my wife have given and in this my charter have confirmed to the Lord and Abbey of St. Mary of Quarr as a perpetual and pure alms, a certain part of my land of Cherc (Chark) And I have also granted that the Monks of Quarr have their ship free of toll and quietly along all that sea-board which belongs either to Cherc or to Leya.

After a gap in history of two hundred years the old house came into the possession of Sir Thomas Wriothesley who was created the First Earl of Southampton by Henry VIII. Wriothesley had come to power under Henry and had enriched himself acquiring numerous abbeys and manors in Hampshire including Quarr and Titchfield. He settled in great state at Titchfield Abbey now better known as Place House.

Although by this time Le Breton was probably little more than a tenant farm, nevertheless as befitted it's new owner, many additions and improvements were made. A typical Tudor Porch was added made from ship's timbers and brick set in "Herringbone" fashion, and a massive chimney constructed with an open fireplace and a bread oven.

It is interesting to note that the Second Earl of Southampton who succeeded to the title at five years of age, became in later years a staunch Catholic and there is in Le Breton Farm an authentic "Priest Hole" which can be reached by climbing up inside the chimney. The second Earl entertained Queen Elizabeth I at Place House, but was later lucky to get away with his life for plotting against the throne. He died in 1581 leaving an heir aged eight.

The Third Earl, as a young man became friend and patron to William Shakespeare, who when staying at Titchfield is traditionally credited with having based the plot of 'Romeo and Juliet' on two families who were engaged in a bitter feud. They were the Danvers and the Longs who lived in Wiltshire.

At a meeting in Corsham, Henry Long was stabbed to death by Charles and Henry Danvers, who immediately fled across country to Titchfield to seek the protection of their friend the Earl.

Southampton first hid them at Whitley Lodge near Odiham while he tried to arrange their passage from Bursledon to Calshot Castle and over to France. They were unable to sail owing to foul weather and adverse winds, and returned to Titchfield, where, for a few days they were hidden in a house close by, victuals and drink being sent over from Place House.

It is always tempting to let imagination run riot. Did they hide at Le Breton Farm?.

... So far as we know it was the only other house owned by the Wriothesleys in the locality and it would have been most convenient for Calshot when the weather cleared.

A few months later the Earl of Southampton came of age and entered into his full inheritance. One of his first acts was to give Le Breton Farm to Arthur Broomfield, gentleman. Why, or for what services rendered is not stated.

For several decades Le Breton, Lebriton, or Lee Britten, as it was variously known under different owners, was largely forgotten and sank into obscurity. In a Guide Book published last century, it was dismissed rather loosely and laconically as an "example of Jacobean architecture built of Isle of Wight stone."

Older residents in Lee-on-the-Solent can remember when it was a work-a-day farm, with outbuildings, stables and a duck pond abutting on to the road still known as Manor Way. Now after years of deterioration it has been intelligently and lovingly restored although motorists speed by on the main road without even knowing it is there.

There is no hurry. Those old walls which have stood for 600 years look good for several more centuries yet.



Le Breton to-day.

Col. Bogey's Birthplace

by

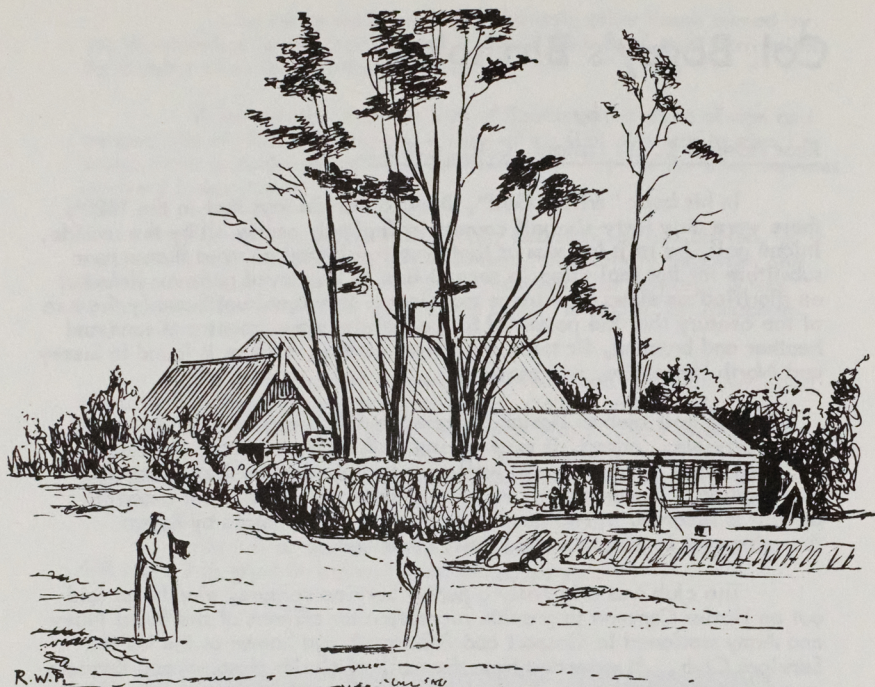
Rear Admiral R. W. Paffard, C.B., C.B.E.,

In his book "British Golf", Bernard Darwin says that in the 1880's there were only forty-six golf courses in England, nearly all by the seaside. Inland golf, he tells us, was at that time considered no more than a poor substitute for the real thing, a second-best to be played not over links but on glorified meadows of extreme muddiness; it was not until nearly the turn of the century that the potential for golf of the waste country of sand and heather and bracken, fir trees and silver birches, such as is found in Surrey and North Hampshire, was realised.

The golf club at Haslar, founded in 1885, must have been one of those forty-six; indeed, it must be one of the oldest clubs in the South of England, many years senior to well-known clubs such as Wentworth and Sunningdale. Records of its very early history are scant, but a certain amount is recorded in two handbooks of the club compiled by Robert Browning and Tom Scott some twenty years ago.

The club was originally a purely Service venture, nine holes laid out on Haslar Common to provide recreation for officers of the Royal Navy and Army stationed in Gosport and Portsmouth and known as the United Services Club. It extended from the walls of Haslar Hospital and Barracks round Fort Monckton to Fort Gilkicker, and the original clubhouse which forms the back part of the present one faced East towards Haslar looking out over a part of the course that later had to be given up.

In 1893 the ladies of Alverstoke caught the golf bug and started a nine-hole course of their own on forty acres of waste land, mostly shingle and gorse, to the West of the Long Warer. This must have been a very short course, for in the nineties it was not deemed proper for the ladies to drive the ball more than seventy or eighty yards. "Not because we doubt a lady's power to make a longer drive", wrote Lord Wellwood in 1890, "but because that cannot well be done without raising the club above the shoulder. Now, we do not presume to dictate, but we must observe that the posture and gestures required for a full swing are not particularly graceful when the player is clad in female dress". This dictum might well be thought a piece of male arrogance, but there was some justification for it as the "female dress" comprised a sailor hat, a high stiff collar, and a voluminous skirt and petticoats. Indeed, a lady golfer of those days has described the measures which ladies had to take to make it possible to hit the ball at all: "I can remember when sleeves were so voluminous that we always had to have an elastic strap round the left arm or we should never have been able even to see the ball, and 'Miss Higgins' was an indispensable aid. 'Miss Higgins' (named after a well-known American lady golfer) was an elastic band which was slipped round the knees when the player was addressing her ball to keep the skirt out of the way".



Despite the handicaps of fashion, the Ladies' Club evidently flourished and a ladies' clubhouse was established near what is now the old School of Electric Lighting. In 1905 the sensible step of combining the two courses was taken, the men and ladies pooling their resources to maintain an eighteen-hole course; but this was clearly only a marriage of convenience for the two clubs remained distinct, each with its own clubhouse, until 1924. In that year the marriage was at last consummated the ladies' small clubhouse being bodily transported (no doubt as a military exercise by the Sappers) from the extreme Western end of the course and joined on to the back of the men's clubhouse to make a new front facing Gilkicker and looking out over the first tee and eighteenth green.

The year 1924 saw another revolutionary change in the club's constitution. From its inception it had been a purely Service club, predominantly Army, for Gosport was then quite an important garrison town. A sprinkling of distinguished civilians had been admitted as honorary members, but their number was strictly limited and they had to stand for re-election every year. In 1924 civilians were for the first time admitted to full membership and the restriction on their numbers was lifted, but for another ten years the club continued to be known as the United Services Golf Club and it was not until the mid-thirties that the name was changed to its present one, the Gosport and Stokes Bay Golf Club.

The club's association with the Borough was marked two years later by a formal resolution to invite the Mayor of Gosport to be an honorary member, and was further strengthened in 1939 when a handsome silver cup was presented to the club in memory of Colonel Elles, for many years Captain and honorary secretary of the club and also a Justice of the Peace, to be played for annually in a match between the club and a team raised by the Mayor.

The Borough has one very good reason to take pride in its golf club, for the club has a unique claim to fame as the birthplace of that legendary figure Colonel Bogey. In the clubroom hangs a framed page from "Golf Illustrated" of the 17th November 1905, which tells the story. In 1890 the Coventry Golf Club, in order to provide a change from the customary match play, introduced a novel form of competition in which members played against what was called the 'ground score' - the number of strokes that a first-class golfer, playing steadily, would be expected to take at each hole. The idea was adopted by a few other clubs, and one in particular, Great Yarmouth, was enthusiastic about it. At that time the music-hall song "Hush, Hush, Here Comes the Bogey Man" was all the rage, and the 'ground score' came to be known as the Bogey Man at Yarmouth.

In the Spring of 1892, the Secretary of Great Yarmouth Golf Club, Dr. Thomas Browne, R.N., came to Alverstoke and played at the United Services Club. He introduced the Bogey Man to the honorary secretary, Captain Seely Vidal, R.E., and they worked out a ground score for the course and, together with Dr. Walter Reid, R.N., set out to play against the imaginary opponent.

Just as they were starting the match Captain Vidal said: "Stop! We must proceed in a proper Service way. Every member of this club has a Service rank. Our new invisible member, who never makes a mistake, must surely be a Commanding Officer. He must be a Colonel. 'Colonel Bogey,' " said he, saluting, "delighted to find you on the links Sir" - adding "I couldn't very well say see you on the links."

Captain Vidal was so attracted by the idea of having a ground score against which golfers could measure their prowess that he wrote to The Field and Golf magazines describing the system of playing against the mythical Colonel Bogey, and the idea of Bogey competitions caught on; within a few years every golf course had its official bogey score for each hole printed on the card. The Colonel was further immortalised in 1914 when the then Director of Music, Ricketts, at the Royal Marine Barracks wrote under the pseudonym of Kenneth Alford the still popular march tune 'Colonel Bogey.'

Nearly thirty years later Bernard Darwin played a round at Haslar and wrote a delightful article, full of praise for the charm of the course, in The Times of 2nd December 1933. In it he described how Coventry's idea of a 'ground score' was christened 'the Bogey Man' at Yarmouth and eventually given the rank of Colonel at Haslar and from there launched on the career that was to make him the best known and most feared golfer

of all time. Darwin expressed surprise that Bogey was no more than a Colonel; he felt that he should have been at least an Admiral or a General, even an Admiral of the Fleet or a Field-Marshal in recognition of his ability to do a steady score on such a challenging course on which water and gorse presented so many hazards.

Darwin's visit was historically significant in that he mentions that he was partnered in a four-ball match against an Admiral and a Captain by the first civilian ever to be elected Captain of the United Services Club. The records reveal that the Captain in 1933 was Dr. W. H. Lamplough, still well remembered in Alverstoke.

Gosport and Stokes Bay Golf Club, which started life as the United Services Club, is a robust and thriving octogenerian. The eighty-six years of its life have seen various developments in the game. With the aid of machinery and chemicals course maintenance has become very much more sophisticated, the modern ball travels further and the old hickory-shafted clubs have been superseded by the more powerful and precise steel-and-aluminium-shafted weapons of today. But by far the most noteworthy development is the rapidly growing popularity of the game; when the club was founded, golf in England was played only by the so-called leisured classes, elderly gentlemen and few exercise-mad eccentrics like officers of the Army and Navy; now it is enjoyed by young and old from all walks of life, and the pressing need for more and more golf courses is recognised. It would be a sad day for Gosport if "development" is allowed to encroach on this lovely open space which provides recreation for so many.



H.M.S. Hornet

by Lt. Cmdr. M. G. W. Benson, R.N.



Outside the gate of what is now the Hornet Naval Yacht Centre there stands on a cradle an odd-shaped grey craft, even to the uninitiated eye one obviously built for speed. This is "Coastal Motor Boat No. 103", a 55' boat built by Camper and Nicholson of Gosport in 1918, and although the plaque beneath it describes it as the sole survivor of the 1914 - 18 war it is in fact one of two remaining C.M.B's first produced in 1916 by the firm of John Thornycroft Ltd., (now Vosper-Thornycroft Ltd). The other, C.M.B 4, an earlier 40' design in which Lieutenant A. W. Agar, R.N., won the Victoria Cross in the Baltic in 1919, after many years at Thornycroft's Hampton Court Yard is now preserved at the Shipbuilding Industry's Training Centre at Woolston, Southampton.

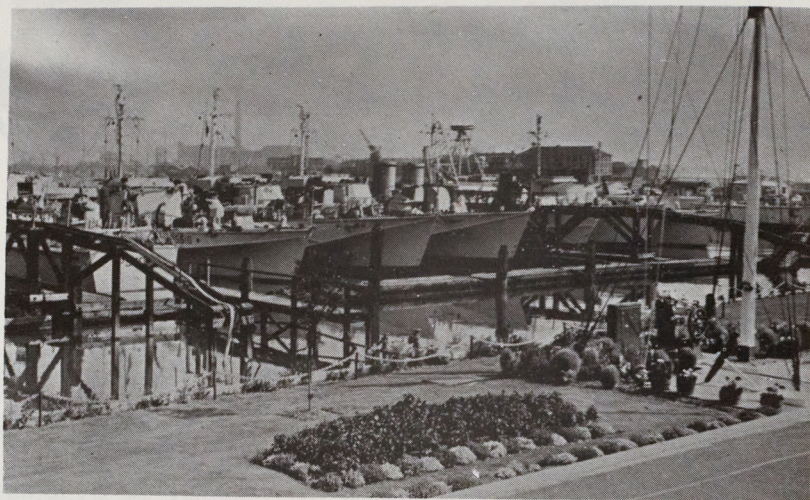
These two are the only remaining ancestors of what came to be known in the 1939 - 1945 war as Coastal Forces or, to the irreverent, "Costly Farces." Of the many bases from which they operated both in this country and abroad H.M.S. Hornet was the first and the last - and it may be said stands now very much as it ever did.

The first C.M.B's were originally based at Queenborough on the river Medway. Later they moved to Osea Island on the Blackwater, which became H.M.S. Osea, but in 1921 this was paid off and the craft and establishment transferred to Haslar. This year therefore, half a century ago, may be taken as the first in a long association between Gosport and Coastal Forces. The actual name "H.M.S. Hornet" did not come into being until four years later when, on 4th July 1925, C.M.B. 102 was so christened and became the name-ship of the base.

It is of interest that this craft was the eleventh of her name, the first "Hornet" having been a Sloop built at Chichester in 1745. It is also worth recording that the last C.M.B. was built as late as 1939, and that in fact several of these craft saw service in various capacities during the last war.

This particular base however did not last long; it was paid off in the following year, taken over for a short while by H.M.S. Dolphin, and was from 1927 - 38 used by the Royal Air Force as a base for marine craft.

Motor Torpedo Boats (M.T.B's), as they had now become, had however continued to develop in the meantime. The first M.T.B. Flotilla of six craft designed by the British Power Boat Company was formed in 1936, (to be followed by an order for twelve more) and was sent to Malta in the following year, but this was initially based at H.M.S. Vernon.



H. M. S. Hornet 1953



The Unveiling of the Memorial 1954

... The outbreak of war and in particular the threat from the extremely fast and powerful German E-Boats caused their recall in November 1939, as the Admiralty had already put in hand a building programme for small, fast craft and had begun to establish bases for them around the coast. Thus it was that the "'Appy 'Ornet" known to many inhabitants of Gosport today came into being again on 20th December 1939, and remained as an M.T.B. base until its closure in 1958.

While boats from "Hornet", due to its geographical position, did not see as much action during the war as those based on the East Coast (the notorious "E-Boat Alley"), a major concentration occurred at the time of the Normandy Invasion of 1944 when many were berthed at "Dolphin", temporarily bereft of submarines. The subsequent occasional coolness between the two Establishments (which after all had to share the same creek) perhaps dates from this period, as the story goes that the Coastal Force officers discovered "Dolphin's" store of vintage port but doubtless the tale is apocryphal.

When peace came in 1945 there were 1,383 craft belonging to Coastal Forces of Britain and the Commonwealth in commission at home and overseas, manned chiefly by the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. With the inevitable post-war contraction boats were paid off and sold and bases closed down, but "Hornet" remained, many hundreds of officers and men walking back into civilian life through its gates. All that was left were two Flotillas of "Long" boats, (one of the 115' Fairmile "D" class and one of the 117' class built by Camper and Nicholson Ltd.); and two of "Short" boats, (one of the 71' British Power Boat Company's design and one of the 73' design by Vosper Ltd., of Portchester), together with some miscellaneous craft.

Although these contracted even further in the years to come "Hornet" continued as the only remaining M.T.B. base. As time went by "Flotillas" were re-classified as "Squadrons", "M.T.B.'s" became "F.P.B.'s" (Fast Patrol Boats), and into its pens came boats of experimental hull design, boats with variable-pitch propellers, radio-controlled Target Boats, boats powered by diesel engines instead of the previous potentially lethal high octane petrol, and finally boats powered by gas turbines. With all these the Sea Trials and Development Section of "Hornet" was intimately involved, as were other Departments which experimented with new weapons, new radar and so new tactics, and many other fresh ideas.

In the post-war years the "Hornet" boats played many a small but important role. Because of their size they could "Show the Flag" in rivers and shallow waters where the White Ensign was seldom seen, and one penetrated as far as Shepperton-on-Thames. Paris saw them on several occasions at the "Salon Nautique." They acted as ferries for the installation of Channel Island Governors, escorts for Royalty and visiting Heads of State, paid visits abroad, and it was an F.P.B. (in fact the author's) which by virtue of her position was the first to cheer Her Majesty the Queen at the Coronation Review of 1953 - not quite, but almost, the smallest ship present.

Ceremonial duties aside, they carried out frequent exercises to test developing techniques, often in conjunction with Coastal Forces of the Netherlands, German, Danish and Norwegian Navies who often visited "Hornet" in return.

In 1954 a scheme long dormant came to fruition. Back in 1945, while waiting to be de-mobilized at "Hornet", a design for a War Memorial had been made by Lt. Cdr. C. J. Jerram, D.S.O., D.S.C., R.N.V.R., an architect in civilian life. Due to various vicissitudes, chiefly the usual one of lack of money, this had never been built, but in that year a drive for funds was made and the Memorial finally came into being in a slightly modified form. It was unveiled on 17th September 1954 by Mrs. Catherin Hichens, the widow of Lt. Cdr. Robert Hichens, D.S.O., D.S.C., R.N.V.R., a solicitor from Cornwall who became perhaps the most renowned of all Coastal Forces Officers.

The ceremony was the occasion for a great re-union, and will vividly remain in the memory of those in the know for the astonishing feat of the then Captain Coastal Forces, Captain J. M. Hodges, D.S.O., R.N., who to his horror found himself with no bible when about to read the Lesson, it having been removed during an earlier shower of rain. Without batting an eyelid, he recited it from memory and no-one was the wiser.

But the end was in sight. F.P.B's, while providing unparalleled training for junior officers, were expensive to run and expensive to maintain, and in 1957 their Lordships decided that the cost of keeping the remaining 15-odd craft was no longer justified. "Hornet" they said was to be closed down, and suggestions made for its disposal by sale or for any other use, and the boats paid off with the exception of the two latest experimental gas turbine engined craft - H.M.S's Bold Pioneer and Bold Pathfinder. It was a sad blow but not altogether unexpected, as already for several years a large part of "Hornet's" administration had been taken over by "Dolphin" and half of the base itself was in use for accommodation as H.M.S. Dolphin II.

So an era came to an end, and with it a tradition. The two "Bolds" (later to be superseded by the "Braves") became once again the 1st Squadron and found a hospitable home at "Dolphin" for the next eight years. In 1966, so does history repeat itself, they crossed the water once more and, as in 1936, were based on H.M.S. Vernon. There they remained until July 1970, when even this vestigial remnant of past glory was removed; all that remains today of Coastal Forces is three unarmed vessels operating from Portland for Fleet Training.

But so far as "Hornet" was concerned - if such a thing can be said of a shore Establishment - there was life in the old girl yet. For years rumours abounded; it was going to be pulled down and used for building land - the Army was going to take it over - it was to become a Borstal - but in the event none of these things came to pass and the buildings slowly decayed. Nobody seemed to want the place, but in fact this was far from true, as with the vast increase in sailing since the war the various Naval Establishments in the area had been hard put to it to find suitable moorings for their growing number of craft and had their eyes longingly on it.



H. M. S. Hornet today

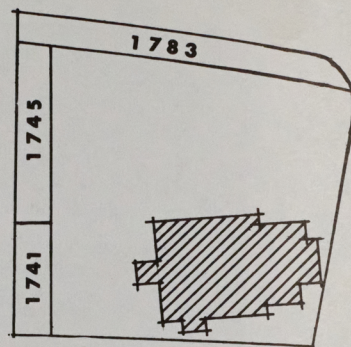
After several representations, and through the sympathetic influence of the then C-in-C, Portsmouth, (Admiral Sir Wilfred Woods, G.B.E., K.C.B., D.S.O.), the Admiralty finally agreed to its use for this purpose. Conditions stipulated that it was to be run under the auspices of the C-in-C who would appoint the Chairman, with a Committee of representatives of the Establishments concerned; that the primary function of the new Centre was to provide berths for Sail Training Yachts and craft belonging to Naval Establishments and that the agreement would be reviewed annually. It was also to be clearly understood that no public funds would be made available.

As the Hornet Naval Yacht Centre, the base was officially re-opened on 23rd May 1964, its renaissance being attended by Admiral Woods and the Mayor of Gosport (Councillor H. W. Cooley, I.S.M.), and still under the "self-help" terms originally imposed has proved a boon to Naval sailing enthusiasts ever since.

So "Hornet" flourishes yet, though the mutter of powerful engines in its pens has been replaced by the more peaceful slapping of sails and the rattle of rigging in the breeze. All that remains to remind the visitor of its colourful history, linked so closely as it has been with the history of Motor Torpedo Boats, is C.M.B. 103, sadly in want of repair, and in front of what used to be the Wardroom, the Coastal Forces War Memorial. Seldom now will a wreath be found on it; but, it should be observed, one will always be seen there following a visit to Portsmouth by the present German E-Boat Squadrons. Our erstwhile enemies at least, in their chivalry, do not forget.

Alverstoke Burial Grounds

by G. H. Williams, C.B.E.



In the last issue I described the churchyard of St. Mary's Church, Alverstoke, as it is today. I now come to the history of this and other burial grounds within the 18th century boundaries of the parish.

The church was Norman or possibly Saxon in its origin, though the present structure was built in about 1863 - 1905 (1). There is a tendency for old churchyards to be above the level of their surroundings because of the accumulation of graves, but here we have the complication of a site sloping southwards towards ground that was swampy within living memory and that may have been a former course of the Alver (2). The churchyard is only slightly above Green Road on the north, but is four steps up from Church Road on the south. One can only speculate to what extent the levelling is deliberate, and to what extent it is due to a preference for burying on the south side (rather than on the north side which was associated with the Devil), as suggested by the present Rector in his pamphlet on the church; there used to be more room on the south side than there is now, as the church was considerably widened when rebuilt a century ago (3).

The burial registers go back to 1559, and the sexton's books, with the detailed position of the corpses and other information, to 1736. The oldest legible inscriptions in the church and churchyard are dated 1664 and 1669 respectively, but there are records of tombs there dated 1615 and 1642 respectively (4).

It appears from the sexton's book that the southern part of the churchyard was extended westwards by 24 feet in 1741. In three years he buried over 60 men in what he described as the New Ground (5). Nearly all were seamen, but there were also a soldier, a clerk, a servant, 2 strangers and a blackamoor. Most of them probably died at Fortune Hospital, where many seamen were dying at the time (6). The church seems to have been fairly liberal at this time, as they buried in the churchyard a man who hanged himself and a seaman who was hanged at Spithead (7).

There are (or were) two notes in the Vestry Books for 1745 :

"Whereas the Churchyard or Burying Ground of the said Parish is so full of Dead Bodies, An enlargement of the Churchyard is thought proper & Requisite A Purchase shall be made by the Parishioners of the said Parish from the Reverend Mr. Nicholas Tindal the Present Rector of the said Parish of all those his two Tenements & Gardens thereunto belonging situate at the West End of the said Parish Church Yard" (8); "The new churchyard at the west side of the Church was opened, formerly gardens belonging to the Rector and sold by him to the Churchwardens" (9). This extension must have been to the north of the 1741 New Ground.

According to an Act of Consecration in the church, the churchyard was further extended in 1783 by taking in "from the Waste" a piece of ground 217 feet by 20 feet. The sexton's book in 1784 and 1787 shows three burials in what he then called the New Ground; one of these was of a pauper, but two are identifiable as in vaults within, or partly within, 20 feet of the north side of the churchyard (A10, A14). Thus this extension must have been along the north side, which is about 217 feet long; there are no legible dates earlier than 1783 in this area. The line of lime trees would have been about 2 yards inside the pre-1783 boundary, though the age of the existing trees is uncertain.

There were also burials inside the church. The following entries in the sexton's book are worth reproducing :

12 March 1737/8	Mr. Thos. Peavey, the Midle alley of the Chancell a Long Side of the 2d Seat from the Minesters Pulpot.
26 Oct. 1740	Mr. Charles Munckton the Rector of Stoak; he lays in the Chancell.
26 Nov. 1743	Frances Palmore widow. Clost to the side of Esqr Holmes seat in the church.

In 1805 a new burial ground was opened the other side of Green Road, on the site of the present Parish Centre and the land to the west up to the Avenue (10). Only a minority of graves in the old churchyard are later than this.

In 1854 an Order in Council closed the old churchyard and the vaults in the church with immediate effect and closed the 1805 burial ground with effect from 1855 (11). Burials in existing vaults in the old churchyard continued under licences from a Secretary of State (12) until 1929. Four stones were erected there after 1855, but one person so commemorated was buried in a vault (B178), one in Ann's Hill cemetery (C1), one at sea (C4) and one probably elsewhere (C3). A tablet dated 1961 relates to the burial of ashes (A114).

RUBBING OF PART OF INSCRIPTION ON SLATE LEDGER SLAB (C5) OF
CAPT. RICHARD HODGES, 1675, HIS TWO WIVES AND THREE OTHER
PERSONS.



In 1901 a faculty was granted for the release of a narrow strip of the 1805 burial ground to widen the footpath of the Avenue. In 1965 the St. Mary, Alverstoke, Burial Ground Act enabled the church to clear this burial ground to make room for the Parish Centre and incidentally for the widening of Green Road. The human remains were removed to Ann's Hill and the tombstones, with the exception of one mural tablet which remains on the east wall, destroyed.

In 1844 St. Mark's church was built. Though a chapel of ease it had its own churchyard; the burials there were recorded in St. Mary's burial register and sexton's book. In 1911 St. Mark's was demolished, though the outline of its walls survives; some of its internal memorials were moved to St. Mary's. Its churchyard then spread into the site of the church. The last recorded burial there was in 1962, but the churchyard has not been formally closed.

So much for the burial grounds administered by St. Mary's church. But the parish of Alverstoke used to be much larger than it is now. St. John's Forton (built in 1830-31), became a separate parish in 1840 or 1841, St. Matthew's, Gosport, and St. Thomas's, Elson, in 1845, Holy Trinity (built in 1696) in 1860 and Christ Church (built in 1863-5) in 1913 (13, 14). In 1911 a small part of Alverstoke parish was transferred to the ancient parish of Rowner (13). The above mentioned Order in Council closed Holy Trinity and St. John's graveyards in 1854 and 1855 respectively. That of Holy Trinity was cleared (except for one grave) in 1962 and that of St. Thomas's in 1968. St. John's still has some graves. St. Matthew's and Christ Church never had graveyards.

Ann's Hill cemetery was opened in 1855. It was extended eastwards in about 1888 and to the west of the road in about 1902. It is now the normal place of burial of Gosport civilians.

There are also Service cemeteries in the old parish. The building of Haslar RN Hospital started in 1746, and many thousands of men dying there and in the ships in the neighbourhood were buried all over the south-west part of the hospital grounds. The burials included many men from the wreck of the Royal George in 1782 and many of the casualties of Sir John Moore's army evacuated from Corunna in 1809. In 1826-7 an area north-west of the Georgian officers' quarters was enclosed by a wall and was consecrated; the tombstones were collected there. Burials continued there till 1859 and there are still well over 100 stones there (15).

Haslar RN Cemetery in Clayhall Road was opened in 1859 and extended in about 1904; parts of it have been cleared of headstones. Inside it there is a cemetery for Turkish seamen whose remains were moved from the Hospital grounds in about 1900 (15); this has a fence, with Turkish Emblems, dated 1964, and two headstones dated (in Turkish numerals) 1267 of the Hegira, i.e. AD 1850-51.

There remains also the boundary wall of another Service cemetery behind H.M.S. St. Vincent. According to Ministry of Defence records, the site was bought by the Board of Ordnance in 1800 and consecrated in 1809. A Ministry plan of 1847 shows it as a mainly military cemetery with an extension to the north-east, used as a convicts' cemetery, in or close to the area now occupied by a corrugated iron fence round a former bathing pool; this extension must have been reclaimed from Forton Creek between 1840 and 1847, as the area concerned is shown as water in the tithe map of 1840. By 1946 only one headstone remained.

There were also less official places of interment. Bodies were buried rather casually outside Haslar Hospital grounds (16). Many prisoners from the prison hulks were buried on Rat Island. The Alverstoke Churchwardens' accounts for 1745-6 have items: for burying two men at Jilkicker, 2s/-; for burying three men between Jilkicker and Blockhouse Point, 3s/-. Those for 1847-8 have three times: for burying a man on the shore, 1s/-. There are similar items in other years (17).

To end on a lighter note, there are in Stanley Park 9 graves of domestic animals, 1894-1946.

Sources

- (1) The date of completion of the chancel is usually given as 1865, but correspondence in a box of diocesan deeds at the Co. Record Office shows that it was 1863.
- (2) Report of Commission on Defence of UK, 1860, p.69; Dr. L.F.W. White, *The Story of Gosport* (1966), pp. 34, 35.
- (3) Rev. W. E. Rees, *St. Mary's Church, Alverstoke*, 1968 (on sale at the church); tithe map; picture in Gosport Records No. 1.
- (4) Location lists at end of first sexton's book.
- (5) In the sexton's book for Nov. 1741 to Aug. 1744 and its index there are 8 references to the New Ground. Other entries refer to these, and one can identify nearly 60 men buried (heads to the W) in 4 adjacent rows of 15 each from S to N and about 10 buried elsewhere in the New Ground. 4 headstones in or near the New Ground are mentioned; none is now in position, but all 4 are described in the location list at the end of the book as being in the SW part of the churchyard. The pre-1741 graves now existing extend westwards to a line 24 feet from the west wall; the 4 rows of graves in the New Ground would have just filled the space between this line and the wall.
- (6) Dr. L.F.W. White, *op. cit.*, p.70.
- (7) Sexton's book and its index; John Morss and John Miller.
- (8) Co. Record Office 20M60/42.
- (9) A. Walford, *Historic Sketches of Gosport*, 1887.
- (10) Co. Record Office, diocesan deeds & 20M60/54 & 55.
- (11) London Gazette, 31 March 1854 & 9 February 1855.
- (12) Burial Act 1853, S.4.
- (13) Records in Alverstoke church.
- (14) Vict. Co. History of Hants., Vol. 3., 1908, pp.206, 207; N. Pevsner & D. Lloyd, *Buildings of England, Hampshire*, 1967.
- (15) W. Tait, *History of Haslar Hospital* (1906), pp.68-71.
- (16) Dr. L. F. W. White, *op. cit.*, p.177.
- (17) Co. Record Office, 20M60/46.



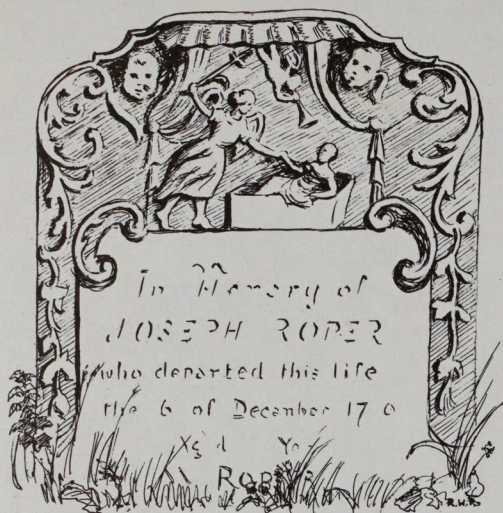
This old picture purports to show the celebrations at the Restoration and Opening of Alverstoke Church in 1834. Another version however describes it as the children of the Sunday School proceeding to dine at Stokes Bay on the day of the Coronation of Queen Victoria in 1838.

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Next Lecture November 8th, 1971, at the Thorngate Hall
Speaker Mr. Willis Fear (Archivist to the City of Portsmouth)
Subject "The Records Office and the Part a Society Can Play"



HEADSTONE (A64) OF JOSEPH ROPER, 1772 - THE RESURRECTION.



HEADSTONE (B210) OF SARAH (SALLY) BROOKS, 1780 FATHER TIME, WITH CHERUB AND SKULL

From a tombstone in Alverstoke Churchyard (Original spelling)

B.222 James Thompson 1804 Aged 44

Farewel vain world I have had enough of thee
And now am careless what is said of me
What faults you have seen in me take care to shun
And look at home enough there's to be done

Cut Here

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