



# BISHOP'S WALTHAM MUSEUM

## Newsletter for the Volunteers and Friends of the Museum Spring 2025 Issue 33

Editor: Tony Kippenberger

### A message from the Chair of Trustees, Roy Stainton

The Museum has quietly gone from strength to strength over the past few years. 'Quietly' because we continue to have a highly competent group of Trustees, our dedicated volunteers who take good care of the Museum assets and welcome visitors, the Friends of the Museum who kindly subscribe to and provide the foundations of our financial stability, a highly supportive Parish Council, a collection of exhibits of which we can be justly proud and an admirable location which we manage in conjunction with English Heritage. We are fortunate indeed to be housed in such an important and historic environment.

So, we are doing well but what goes on in the background?

You will know more about what we offer and have achieved as you read the various articles in this newsletter. But behind that we are required to conform to a variety of regulations, set by the Charity Commission, the Arts Council and our English Heritage landlords. Currently we are putting together our responses to the needs of Accreditation, the Annual Report and the MPA (Maintained Property Agreement). The preparation of these and other documents focuses our attention on such diverse issues as the provision of equal opportunities, budgeting for a viable financial future, and the disposing of litter and general rubbish from the site. In order to be able to deal effectively with such matters, we have created a formal Action Plan which we review in

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dedicated Trustee meetings every four months. In this way, we identify important issues, determine how and by whom they are to be tackled, and set ourselves targets. A continuing topic is marketing, or more specifically how we can retain our annual visitor numbers and, better still, increase them. Although entry to the Museum is free, we rely upon the generosity of our visitors to ensure our future viability by the donations they give.

So, if you feel you would like to support our activities and join our management team, do please get in touch.

### Dates for your 2025 diary

**18<sup>th</sup> March:** Grand opening of the West Tower Platform

**10<sup>th</sup> April:** The Museum Trust's AGM – with speaker Don Bryan on the Civil War in Hampshire with refreshments

**12<sup>th</sup> April:** Volunteer training. For anyone who did not do training in 2024

**3<sup>rd</sup> May:** Museum opening for the season. Exhibition about the Bishop's Waltham Railway, as part of the nationwide Railway 200 celebrations (200th anniversary of the birth of the modern railway)

**27-29<sup>th</sup> June:** Bishop's Waltham Festival at the Palace

**6<sup>th</sup> July:** "KidStreet" event for children aged 5-15. Community organisations take over the High Street, we'll be there!

**TBC August:** Museum Summer Social

**19<sup>th</sup> July:** Party at the Palace

**12<sup>th</sup> September:** Heritage Open Days – North Turret tour

**13<sup>th</sup> September:** Heritage Open Days – Palace tour, traditional skills on display

**14<sup>th</sup> September:** Heritage Open Days – Walking tour of Bishop's Waltham

**20<sup>th</sup> September:** Fete in St Peter's Churchyard, we'll be there

**16<sup>th</sup> October:** Bishop's Waltham Society Meeting – Penny Copeland will be giving a talk on the Austin and Wyatt archive

**26<sup>th</sup> October:** Museum closing for the season

**21<sup>st</sup> November:** BW Parish Council Volunteer 'Thank You' evening at Priory Park

## Volunteers Report

By Dawn Woodford

We have had a very fruitful year at the museum and visitor numbers are increasing, and this is in part due to our dedicated band of volunteers. We have been fortunate in recruiting a number of new people to join our 'team'.

Apart from our social get-together at the Bunch of Grapes in January, we have had several training days at the museum and a volunteers/friends quiz at the Bunch of Grapes in the summer. It was a

perfect summer evening enabling us to sit in the garden. To our 'surprise' we won by a mere point. This was followed by a fish and chips supper. We've just had a re-match – but lost by 3 points!

We also had a summer social event in the museum for members, volunteers and anyone who contributed to the exhibition, again a very friendly evening helped by the atmospheric ambience of the ancient building.

A trip to New Theatre Royal in Portsmouth with a 'Behind the Curtain' Guided Tour was enjoyed by about a dozen of us. This old building has seen closures, fire damage and war damage, and considerable renovation has now been undertaken to provide an intimate and cosy theatre with much ornate plasterwork and frescoes.

A few volunteers have attended Penny's Research Mornings or Afternoons. These will continue later this year. Please come along and browse through the hundreds of photos in the museum, looking at old maps, studying the many folders of literature kept in the drawers or maybe there is something of interest you would like to research and not sure how to? There is much to see and learn about our very interesting and historic village.

The first event will be the 'grand opening' of the platform in the West Tower. This is now fixed for 18<sup>th</sup> March.

Once again, we would like to express our thanks and gratitude for all your help in keeping the museum open for all to enjoy.

To end: one or two weather notes from a century or more ago, from extracts by George Titheridge.

March 1885: Fearful storm raged over the South causing the bridge at Botley to be washed away

April 1886: Heavy storms, considerable damage

February 1890: Severe frosts, so cold tea froze in tea pot

March 1891: Pond froze over, heavy snow, many roads blocked

December 1914: Wettest December ever known...

June 1921: Very hot and dry, 112 consecutive days, no rain

So nothing much has changed!!

See you all soon.

## Malt Lane Excavations

By Penny Copeland

I'm sure many of you have followed the progress of the Malt Lane site with interest, and many of you have visited the site with me when Emma, the site manager was kind enough to explain it to us. The final report is yet to be published, but here is a quick idea of what was found (we are hoping Emma will give us a talk later this year).

The earliest items were Mesolithic (8-10,000 years old) flint tools – similar to those found under Sainsbury's, and there were a few very rough Roman items that were just knocking around, rather than on a Roman site.

Excitingly, the archaeologists finally found some Saxon pottery in a big pit so perhaps Willibald was here?

Then we move to the "Anglo-Norman" period, either side of the Norman Conquest. This is the majority of the features, and it is particularly represented by post hole alignments – timber buildings all over the site (see photo right). This is also similar to the site under Sainsbury's.

In the medieval period we seem to have a tile kiln, stone and iron working, so perhaps it was a building site for the new Palace, but there was also a cess pit and probable well.

And finally, a maltings was found (the Bishop's Barn demolished for the bypass was often said to be a maltings) as well as the culverting of the River of the Lord after the medieval period.

When the final report is published, I'll post a link and a layman's version on the website.



A mesolithic "core" left over after making tools



Tony Kippenberger holding a large piece of Saxon pottery!



Typical line of post holes that is likely to be one wall of a building. There is a flint walled cess pit behind, and the back of Town House – where the render covers the remains of the Palace boundary wall.



A medieval lead "ampulla" for holding holy water from a shrine – a sign that someone at the site had been on a pilgrimage.



This is probably a malting oven for heating the barley to make beer...

## Collections News

By Penny Copeland

As you may know, we have finally been called by the Arts Council to submit our application for re-accreditation. This involves a lot of paperwork, but not nearly as much as Anita had to do back in 2015. We will work steadily towards it, but be prepared to receive emails with lots of policy documents so you can comment or vote on them at the AGM!

2025 is the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the railway since George Stephenson's "Locomotion No.1" travelled 26 miles between Shildon, Darlington and

Stockton in September 1825 (<https://railway200.co.uk/>). We are honouring this by revisiting a previous exhibition on the Botley to Bishop's Waltham railway.

This exhibition was put together by Alan Inder, a much loved volunteer to the museum and many other local societies – he was also instrumental in creating the railway boards you can see at the pond and at the level crossing gates that he found and persuaded Hampshire County Council to have erected as a memorial after the station was demolished. We are hoping to borrow some very interesting artefacts for the exhibition cases too.

Many thanks to everyone who donated items to the museum this year – I'm sad that we can't accept everything but we have so little storage space that we dare not! Our criteria are that objects must have local provenance and add to our story (just being old or quirky is not enough...). The Collections Policy is one of the accreditation documents.

On the subject of storage, we are always trying to make the best of what we have. Thanks so much to everyone who responded to our call for help to empty out the back store to put in the newly acquired shelves from the Youth Hall! As you can see from the picture of the kitchen, there was a surprising amount of stuff in there but I'm happy to report that it nearly all went back in...



The mountains of stuff that came out



In the store, after the clear out. Behind this wall is one of the areas in the parlour where the plaster falls off – but it's not even damp on this side...



The new (to us) shelves, now in position

## Our Finances

By Nick Whitehead

The Museum has had a good year, financially, with donations rising from £1350 to just over £2,100. This was at least partly due to our introducing a new donation machine in July, whose purchase was made possible by a grant from the Parish Council. Our grateful thanks to them.

Expenditure on equipment was higher this year, with just over £1,000 being spent on the donation machine, a new professional computer printer and six hygrometers to show temperature and humidity.

We were particularly pleased that the number of members increased from 2023, and now totals 46, with a corresponding increase in subscriptions.

## The West Tower at the Palace by Penny Copeland

The finishing work to the West Tower platform has now been completed.

It is made of a substantial metal frame with hardwood floor and steps up to it. Inside the tower, it is now possible to look all the way up and see the fireplaces, the windows and garderobe doors like never before.

Looking down, you can see into the basement or cellar of the tower accessible only via a trapdoor probably both then and now.

It has been quite the logistical feat to get the platform in, and we can expect a lot of English Heritage promotion and interest in the site. This is in addition to the 78,000 visitors English Heritage counted that we had between April 2023 and April 2024!



Part of the structure being craned in...



The "viewing gallery" – at a safe distance



The platform itself!

## Researching Family History by Rob Romer

Researching family history has long been a keen interest of mine and I am always interested to hear family history stories relating to Bishop's Waltham. I have no known family history connections to Bishop's Waltham myself but I thought, as a research project, I would see if I could find a connection, however tenuous that may be. I would start by doing more detailed research into the siblings of the main characters in my family tree and then broaden out if necessary.

Two important resources that can be used in family history research are the

Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages, and Census records. Both of these can be easily accessed on various family history websites. From 1837 all births, deaths and marriages had to be registered. Starting in 1841 there has been a census every 10 years with information on individuals. Census information includes name, address, age, gender, occupation, marital status and relationship to the head of the household. The Censuses are released to view after 100 years. Unfortunately, the 1931 census was destroyed by fire and there was no census in 1941. In 1939, however, a register was taken of all civilians in England and Wales. The information gathered was comparable to the census and was used initially in the production of identity cards and later for rationing. The 1939 Register is available on several family history websites.

It was through the 1861 census that I was able to find the connection I was looking for. I discovered that the nephew of my 4<sup>th</sup> Great Grandfather had lived in Curdrige. On the census documents it had the address as Common Enclosure, West side of Curdrige in the parish of Bishop's Waltham. This was Edward Thornborough Parker Shewen. He had been born in Wales and had lived in Alverstokey. He was a retired colonel, Royal Marines. I have found that middle names can be very useful for the researcher if they are clearly surnames. That was certainly the case here. Parker was the maiden name of his mother and Thornborough the maiden name of his maternal grandmother. One of my maternal grandmother's middle names was Shewen.

Membership of family history websites can give you access to a wealth of other records. These include parish records, trade directories, wills and probate, military records, passenger lists, newspaper articles and much more. You may also be able to access the family trees of other members. I have found that occasionally they can be a good starting point but they can equally send you off in the wrong direction! It depends on how accurately those trees have been compiled. I would always

check that sources of information had been recorded before using anything from them.

Something that only occasionally happens, but is wonderful when it does, is when you discover a photograph. In this respect, for those local to Bishop's Waltham, the Museum could prove to be a valuable resource. The Museum has a large collection of photographs. These include portraits, school photographs, and those relating to work, social and leisure events, and sport. For much of the collection there are names attached to the photographs.

Amongst its catalogued items, the Museum holds many named receipts that could be used to investigate business interests. The Museum has a very large number of documents from Austin and Wyatt including rent books from the 1910s which are currently being transcribed. These could be useful for finding out where people lived. Amongst more recent material that can be researched are newspaper cuttings and parish newsletters. Much older material includes copies of books that list residents in Bishop's Waltham who paid tithes to the church. There are also records from the 1600s of who paid tax to the government for windows and hearths. Many of those with property saw such taxes as less intrusive compared with income tax. There are also records of rent paid to the Bishop from 1464 to 1660 and various householder lists dating from the 1300s.

The Museum holds handwritten versions of the Census from 1841 onwards. As previously stated, Census information is available on many family history sites where it would be considerably easier to find the information you want. Two of the main ones are Ancestry and Findmypast. In common with most of them, paid subscription is required although you will be able to make some limited searches free of charge for a short time. There are also some good free sites including FamilySearch which is funded by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Finally, you can access all of these sites for free through

the computers in the Hampshire Libraries, including Bishop's Waltham and the Hampshire Record Office. And if you need more help, the Hampshire Genealogical Society has a help desk at the Record Office in Winchester.

## Can you help – with George Garnett? By Tony Kippenberger

Talking of family history, 100 years ago last year (2024), a gentleman named George Garnett gifted to the Parish the plot of land on the east side of St Peter's churchyard – to the right of the line of tall lime trees. This generous act is commemorated by a stone just inside the churchyard, at the end of the lane from the library.



Since nobody appeared to know anything about him, the Bishop's Waltham Society (BWS) – prompted by Emma Mackenzie – decided to do some research. BWS Trustee Nigel Russell undertook the task and looked for help from Di Hunt, Peter Emmerson and Godfrey Hebden. Sadly Nigel died just 6 months later and so the task was passed to me.

We have made good progress and had prepared a 24 page booklet for publication last Christmas. But I took the opportunity of an October talk to the Society to expand on this "local boy makes good" story by including a lot of background history about the town

between 1830 and 1930. This was very well received and so we now plan a bigger book using George's story as a wonderful 'coat hanger' on which to tell a wider history of the town during its very exciting Victorian industrialisation. A period epitomised by the Garnett family.

Edward Garnett, George's father, the illegitimate son of a tanner's daughter, was one of the first generation to receive a Victorian education and later became Parish Clerk and a small landowner. George himself began working as an apprentice brickmaker aged 15. However by the time he retired he was manager of Claylands Brickworks, the 44 acre site that that employed over 200 people in Bishop's Waltham. He was also a Parish Councillor who made many charitable donations to the town's residents.

BUT – and this is a big BUT – we haven't been able to trace any of George's relatives in the area (or elsewhere). So we are putting out an appeal for anyone who knows anything (yes, anything) about the following individuals and – in particular – their surviving families.

**William and Alice (George's sister) Simmonds.** He was a gardener and in 1911 they lived at 3 Albert Terrace. William died in 1927, but Alice lived there until at least 1939.

**William and Kate (George's sister) Cooper.** He was a local farmer and in 1911 they lived at "Garfield" off Garfield Road (then in their 50s/60s). They were still living there in 1939. She had inherited the 3 acre field owned by her father, Edward Garnett – hence Garnett's field becoming 'Garfield'.

**Fanny Strugnell** (George's sister) was widowed in 1855 but was certainly working as a cook at Northbrook House in 1901.

**George's eldest son Ernest George Garnett** (born 1877) married Ellen Day in 1901. He ran his own Building and Contracting business from their house on Winchester Road. They had five children: Evelyn, Phillip, George, Gladys and Millicent.

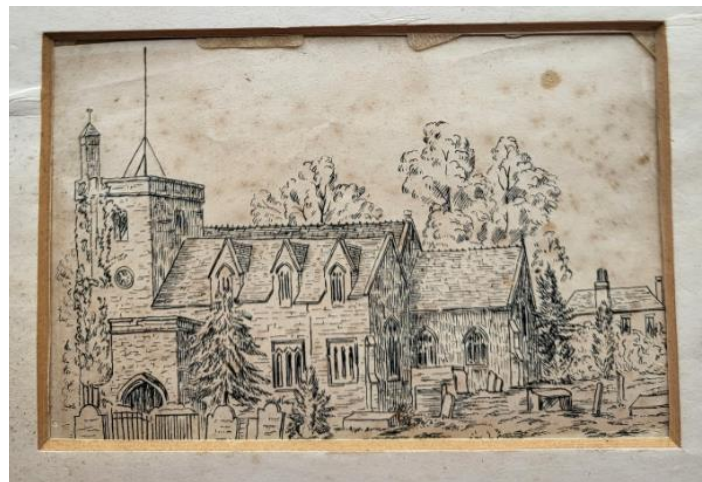
**George's daughter Millicent** (born 1883) married William Hooker-Taylor (born 1863), a farm bailiff and later farmer in Upham, in 1902. They lived at Pope's Cottage in Upham and had a son, William Hooker-Taylor born in 1904 (who may later have had a daughter, Katharine M Hooker-Taylor, in 1929). Millicent's husband died in 1941 and she died in 1946.

**Charles Hugh Garnett** (George's youngest son) born 1889. He emigrated to Australia in 1912 when he was 23 but then joined the Australian Army and saw action in France in 1917. He was gassed and repatriated to Australia the same year. He married Vera Adelaide Percell but subsequently returned to the UK in 1925 leaving Vera behind – they had no children. Charles died, in Devon, in 1954.

All our research is based on information that is already in the public domain, but we would like to inform any relatives of our plans and we would dearly love to see any photographs they may have – we have none!

So if you recognise any of these names or families please let us know or, if you know of people who might know more, please pass this request on.

Any/all information, ideas or even vague suggestions can be emailed to Tony Kippenberger via [info@bishopsalthamsociety.org.uk](mailto:info@bishopsalthamsociety.org.uk).  
THANK YOU!



A sketch of St Peter's Church drawn by George Garnett, now in the Museum's collection.



# What's in a name?

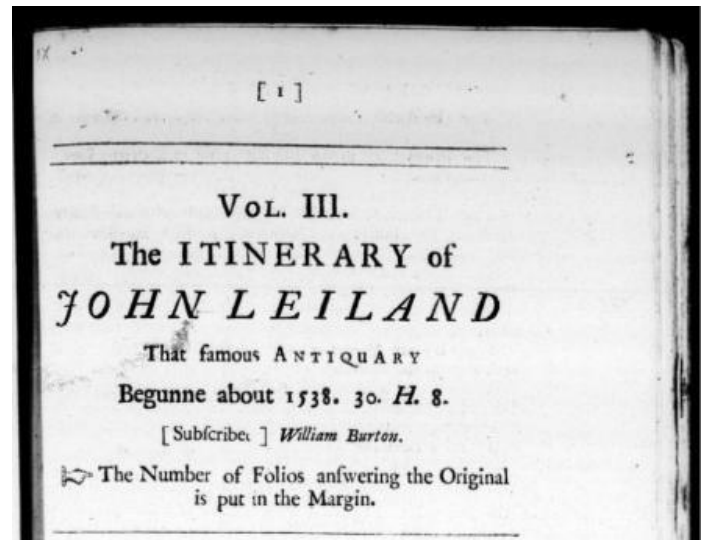
By Penny Copeland

We frequently get queries about the name of our town "Bishop's Waltham" so I thought I'd do a bit of digging so see how it developed.

Waltham is thought to have originated as early Anglo-Saxon "Wealdhām", roughly translating as Walt-ham "forest homestead" or Walt-hamm "forest river meadow". It seems to have only been used between around 450 and 550AD, so there are only 15 Walthams in England. However, research by Cox and Huggins shows that all of them were substantial estates in 1086 Domesday book and were all owned by the King, clergy or local magnates, frequently with hunting parks and were close to Roman roads. The name of Waltham seems therefore to apply to a royal estate close to a forest that may even have been a Roman settlement originally.

The "Bishop" obviously relates to the Bishops of Winchester who owned the town and most of the land around it after it was swapped for Portchester in 908. The most notable building is, of course, the Bishop's Palace where the museum is fortunate enough to be based. As most of the early documents that list our town are written FOR the Bishop, there was no need to state the obvious. These documents include his rent books and pipe rolls going back to the 1200s. The town is always referred to as just "Waltham" - "Bishop" doesn't seem to appear until the 1500s.

John Leland wrote a travel "Itinerary" in 1535-43 and included a short description of "Waltham" as a "right ample and goodly Maner Place motid aboute". However, a few pages earlier he refers to the "Hamelrise" Creeke (Hamble River) as "cummyng from Bisshops Waltham" so it appears that it is already being called that, but perhaps in only a descriptive form.



In the 1586 Hampshire Lay Subsidy Rolls it appears as "Waltham Episcopi", the Latin version of Bishop's Waltham. As there are a few Walthams in Hampshire, and both these documents covered more than one, presumably there was a need to differentiate between them?

From here on in, things get messy... The Saxton map of 1575 and the Keer map of "Southampton"[shire] in 1605 has the town as "Bisshops waltham", yet the Norden maps of 1595 and 1607 and the Jansson map of 1646 has "Bushwaltham" (perhaps copying from each other).

See <https://www.oldhampshiremapped.org.uk/> for more information by kind permission of Martin and Jean Norgate.



Saxton's Map 1575



Norden's Map 1607

In a will inventory of 1665, it is "Bsp Waltham" (a contraction of Bishops). It is still, however "Waltham Tything" in the 1693 rentals under a heading of Bishops Waltham Manors, but these are translations which have been simplified for easy reading so are unreliable from a spelling point of view, and of course are prepared for the Bishop!

The 1908 History of the County of Hampshire records a couple of other ways of distinguishing our Waltham from the others – "Waltham Woolpit" (15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries) and "Waltham Westputt" in the 17<sup>th</sup> century but sadly doesn't give more information.

Just to throw a complete spanner in the works, so to speak, take a look at the Thomas Penford token on loan to us from Bishop's Waltham Society and that of James Bllakley, both dating to 1666 in our collection – both referring to "Bishops Wallton". Tomas Brafe's token has the town as "Bishops Waltom".



The Bllakley Token



The Thomas Penfold token

A book of 1713 Poll Freeholders has the heading "Bps-waltham Hund." and a sub heading "Bishops-waltham" in the index, so using a dash to connect the words. In the text it appears as Bishops Waltham or BishopsWaltham but they are squashed into a narrow column.

The Faculty (church planning consent) to build the west gallery in St Peter's Church dated 1733 (issued by the Bishop) clearly has the apostrophe "Bishop's Waltham", so this may be the earliest example. The ecclesiastical court case documents of 1735, however, are without apostrophes.

The 1760 Enclosure award has "Bishop's Waltham", the Parish wedding book of 1799, and baptism book of 1820 all have it as "Bishop's Waltham" so I think we can assume it has been adopted by then... Which raised the interesting question – as "Bishop" wasn't consistently added until after the Palace was ruined, did the town want him back in name if not in body? Or was it a way of reminding the Bishop the town existed?

And the apostrophe? That apparently originated in Old English to show the absence of a letter when "es" was added to a name to show possession e.g. "Bishopes" Palace. With the new-fangled apostrophe, the "e" was replaced to make "Bishop's", probably starting in the 1500s. However, like today, no one

really understood how to use it so it was used quite randomly for a long time, even by Shakespeare (information courtesy of Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

In the Georgian period spelling starts to settle down with increased literacy and the publication of dictionaries for the first time. Place names, however, are not in dictionaries, but as maps become more common in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries then that probably led to them settling down too...

## Bishop's Waltham's Prisoner Escape in 1966

by Roy King

Bishop's Waltham hit the national news headlines on the afternoon of Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 1966. The following is an extract from the government publication "Hansard" following questioning of the Home Secretary on the day after:

*"A party of thirteen prisoners were returning to Parkhurst Prison on the Isle of Wight after appearing at Winchester Assizes as witnesses for the defence in a case against a prisoner for the alleged stabbing of another prisoner.*

*The coach was driven by a civilian driver and contained an escort consisting of one principal officer and six discipline officers in the coach itself, followed by a police escort car containing a driver and two constables. The prison officer escort was armed with staves and the prisoners were handcuffed in the following way. Two men who were on the escape list were each handcuffed to an officer; the remainder of the prisoners were handcuffed in pairs to each other, apart from one odd one who was handcuffed to an officer. This left two officers and the principal officer in charge free for general supervision.*

*The case at the assizes concluded at about 3pm and the coach was in the Ashton Lane area of Bishop's Waltham when one of the prisoners shouted*

*"RIGHT" and immediately a melee broke out in the coach. Some prisoners threw themselves across officers and one struck the driver across the back of the neck and endeavoured to seize the wheel. The driver braked suddenly and with the jerk officers and prisoners were thrown off balance. Before the coach came to a standstill nine prisoners escaped. The police escort car stopped and the constables joined in the pursuit of the escaping prisoners.*

*Four of those escaping were recaptured yesterday but five are still at large."*

All the prisoners were recaptured in the days following the escape apart from one, thanks in part to the national newspaper coverage and the good people of Bishop's Waltham!

The escape was understandably big news in the town. More than 120 police officers, 14 dogs from five counties and an Army Air Corp helicopter were involved. Gerald White remembered climbing onto Duke's Mill and watching the chase from the roof as "all hell was let loose" in his Oral History.

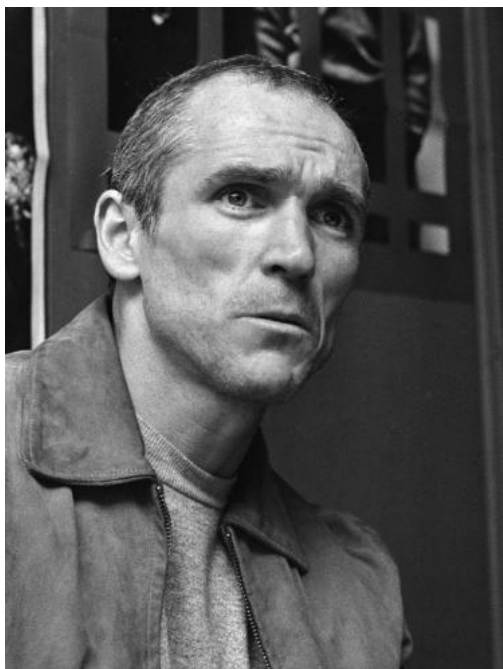
Three prisoners were chased across Stephen's Castle Down after being spotted in a chicken house at West Vernon House on Vernon Hill, and were eventually caught at Metland Farm in Dean. One policeman was helped by a motorist chasing over fields with barbed wire fences despite at least one of the prisoners having no shoes or socks on...

Others were captured in Bishop's Waltham and Corhampton. Ironically, one of them was found in the Civil Defence Training Grounds in Bishop's Waltham (part of the former brickworks at Claylands). Mrs Anne Ford, wife of a warden, lived in a caravan next to the kitchen where he was trying to find food and called the police.

Two got away from the area, John McVicar stealing an A40 car from Waltham Chase that was later found in Portsmouth, before he was spotted in a stevedore's café near the docks. All of the escaped prisoners were serving time for violent offences so it is not surprising that all the children in the neighbourhood

were told to stay indoors (pers. com. Julian Parrot).

John McVicar (1940-2022) was the most high profile of the prisoner escapees and was on the run for over four months. Whilst on the run, he attempted to rob an armoured security van before being recaptured and sentenced to another 15 years in prison consecutive to the eight he was already serving for robbery with violence, assaulting police officers and possessing offensive weapons.



McVicar photographed by Rob Bogaerts/Anefo - Nationaal Archief, CC BY-SA 3.0 nl.  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=27151901>

He was sent to another maximum security gaol at Durham, from where he managed to escape again in 1968. He was on the run for two years living incognito in London with his girlfriend (later wife) and having a son. He was declared public enemy No.1 by Scotland Yard until he was apprehended and made to continue his 23 year sentence (he was paroled in 1978).

During and after his imprisonment, McVicar completed a post graduate degree at Leicester and went on to be an author and crime journalist. He was not impressed with his son when he turned to crime too, and by all accounts ostracised him. His autobiography "McVicar by himself" was made into a film starring Roger Daltrey, lead singer

of rock band "The Who" (and co-starring Adam Faith).

McVicar died at the age of 82, living in a caravan in Maldon, Essex.

## More Escaped Prisoners? By Penny Copeland

In researching the McVicar story in newspapers of the day and our Oral Histories, it became apparent that the McVicar episode is not the only prisoner escape story in Bishop's Waltham – it's not even the only one in the 1960s!

In January 1960 three men escaped from Parkhurst Prison itself through a skylight and over the wall. They had a dinghy waiting for them, and they achieved the rare feat for any escapees of reaching the mainland.

The men stole a car from Lee on Solent and abandoned it in a field beside The Avenue in Bishop's Waltham. The car had been noticed earlier by Moira Maidment of Swanmore, who was helping her husband to deliver newspapers. The police were alerted and brought in forces from all around.

In our Oral Histories, Pauline Henderson described the top of Claylands as being "black with Policemen" and the whole village knew what was going on. The men themselves were spotted on the Winchester Road by local police constable PC Peter Wyeth riding by on his scooter looking for them. PC Wyeth chased them across fields and after a struggle pinned down one man – "Wyeth Earp gets his man".

PC Wyeth lived in the Police House (now an estate agent in Cross Street). Another cold, wet and hungry prisoner knocked on the door and gave himself up to the Durley Village Postmistress Miss Betty Bland, who handed him over to three policemen (after giving him a hot chocolate and bread and cheese). The final one was arrested 14 months later in Wimbledon.

Is the moral of these stories don't try and leg it through BW?