

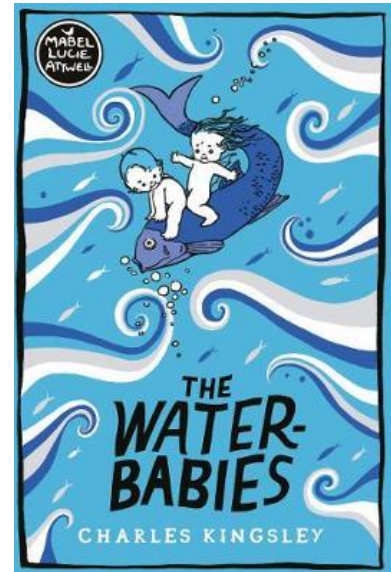


# Alresford Historical & Literary Society

## NEWSLETTER 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021

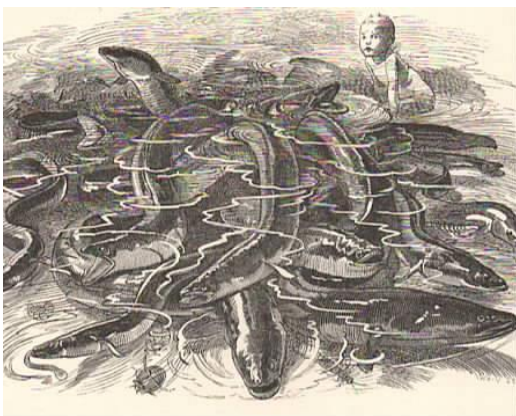
### THE SOCIETY'S PLANS & NEWS

Since taking over as Secretary in February I have been emailing monthly Newsletters to members announcing and reviewing our monthly online Zoom meetings and including some additional news and snippets. But some of our members do not have internet access, so if you have felt left out I do apologise. From this month printed copies of Newsletters will be delivered to those without email. This is important as we are planning our first physical meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> November. We want everyone to come - so put it in your diaries.



### NEXT ZOOM MEETING - Wed 20<sup>th</sup> October

*“The most wonderful and the strongest things in the world, you know are just the things which no one can see”.*



So wrote Charles Kingsley. He often visited Itchen Abbas staying at the Old Plough Inn, the predecessor of the Trout and now The Plough again. He immortalised the village in *The Water Babies*. On his visits here he used to fish what he described as 'the loveliest of vale rivers' and in *Hereward the Wake* he described the waters of the Itchen, so clear '*that none could see where water ended and where air began*'. Kingsley was a visionary of his time with a mission, wonderfully free from wokeness, to right the social wrongs of his age.

**Download** a superb free transcription of the 1889 Macmillan & Co edition of *The Water Babies* at [The Water-Babies, by Charles Kingsley \(gutenberg.org\)](https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/10000)?

**This month** we are delighted to welcome **Peter Covey-Crump** to present a Zoom talk. On 20<sup>th</sup> October, His talk is entitled **“Charles Kingsley and the Water-Babies”**.



Here's the link which opens at 7.15 for a 7.30 pm start:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82418738839?pwd=UTJ5eFlxcXVZc0xBckNJMTU1RUhGQT09>

## GLIMPSES OF ALRESFORD'S PAST (6) – by Brian Tippett

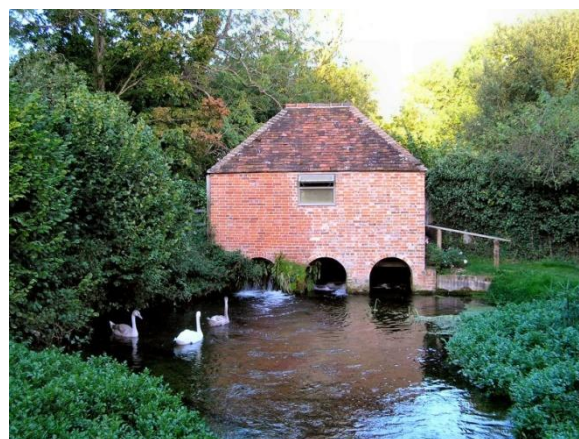
George Bridges Rodney and Old Alresford Pond

In the late 1740s George Rodney (a naval commander who was to become one of Britain's most famous admirals) put in hand the construction of a new house on the site of the old Manor House, Old Alresford, and then in 1757 he bought Alresford Pond. Delighted with his new domain, he wrote a little-known description of the house and its setting which included the following:



*“This pond is said to have extended from the Great Ware [Weir], on the West part, to a Palace of the Bishop of Winchester, which actually stood at Bishop's Sutton, and we are told that boats were wont to pass and repass from the Palace to Alresford town, at which time the pond is supposed to have covered above two hundred acres of land. But the sedge and rushes, through neglect and length of time, having gradually encroached on its borders, a great part of it is now converted into water meadows, so that the water, when it is highest, does not now extend to above one hundred acres. It is supplied by two rivers, one running from Sutton and the other from Bighton, and is stored with immense quantities of fish, viz., pike, trout, perch, tench, carp, roach and eels, which all grow to an uncommon size and are esteemed excellent in their several kinds. Of the last, there are sometimes above a ton weight taken in a night, especially about the months of September and October, on dark and rainy nights”.*

Rodney's remarks on the gradual silting up of the Pond and the quantity of eels caught on autumn nights correspond very interestingly with what we can see of the Pond today and help explain why the building of Alresford's Eel House (now restored) was a worthwhile investment.



The Society's forthcoming new history of Alresford includes much more about Lord Rodney and the Pond. [BT]



### REVIEW OF LAST MEETING

Our De Lucy Commemoration Dinner  
(September 15th Zoom Meeting)

New Alresford was founded in 1199 by Godfrey de Lucy, Bishop of Winchester, so we decided to celebrate de Lucy Day (11<sup>th</sup> September) with a virtual mediaeval feast. Alas, fewer than thirty

people joined in, but it was good for the Society to contribute to the Winchester Heritage Week, and an informative & jolly time was had by those who took part.

A brief culinary recitation from Chaucer set off linguistic discussion but the main event of the evening featured some extraordinary edibles described and in some cases actually produced.

The most oddly named recipe was for Venison Custarde, which Glenn and Jo cooked up for the occasion. Glenn reports: *This turned out to be a delicious meat pie using egg as a binder* <http://www.medievalcookery.com/recipes/venisoncus.html>. *Rose pudding* <https://britishfoodhistory.com/2019/05/17/medieval-rose-pudding-rosee/> *was pleasant, but the rose flavour was lost. Mead was seen to meet with approval, as were wines from lost Plantagenet lands in France.* So a good time was had by all. [GG]

## THE SPITFIRE PILOTS' MEMORIAL

See our website: <http://www.alresfordhistanlit.co.uk/page15.html>

Members will have seen the recent report in the *Hampshire Chronicle* of the dedication of the memorial to three Spitfire pilots who crashed and died in a terrible training accident while flying over Abbotstone during the second World War. What may not be known is the remarkable way in which what might otherwise have been a forgotten tragedy came to light. The incident was witnessed by Stan Upton, now 91 but then a youngster working in the fields. Stan happened to mention the incident one day in conversation with Glenn Gilbertson who was moved and interested by the story and immediately began to look into it. He wrote a piece about it in *Alresford Articles* and then began to think of the best way in which the lives of the three brave young men could best be remembered, as they deserved to be. He put his ideas to our Committee who agreed that planning permission and funding should be sought for a monument on Folly Hill. That was just the beginning of a long process which might so easily have run into the sand, but with great energy and patience Glenn drove the project forward, drawing interested parties together, finding contractors, designing a suitable memorial and supervising the installation. The society has given support and contributed funds, but it is clear that without Glenn's creativity and persistence the newly dedicated memorial on the crest of the hill above Itchen Stoke would not be there today. It is very much his achievement that the three young men are now fittingly remembered. [BT, MD]



## THINKING AHEAD – FUTURE MEEINGS

We are planning to restart “proper” meetings in November. The Methodist Church has served us well and we are very grateful to Andrea Sutton and others who have helped us there for many years. But for logistical reasons we plan to move our meetings to St John’s (the Church itself, not the JP Hall) starting in November. Sorry, tea and biscuits will be off the menu for the moment.

### 17<sup>th</sup> Nov – LIVE IN ST JOHN’S

“Unremarked Ancient Curiosities in Alresford” by Peter Pooley

This will be our first post-pandemic meeting live in St John’s Church, possibly with a parallel Zoom transmission. But do please come as the Church is big enough to allow social distancing. More information will be provided in the November Newsletter.

Best wishes to everyone  
Mike Dickens, Secretary