



# BEAULIEU HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

No. 46 July 2025

## Editor's Column

### Recent Meetings

This year's **AGM and Talk** took place on 24 January 2025. The intriguing talk by Brice Stratford was on the folk heritage and mythological past of the New Forest; Britain's most haunted national park.

Keith Hutton spoke on 14 March 2025 about **Tony Bentley-Buckle**, a resident of Beaulieu whose courage and initiative over various assignments in World War 2 earned him an outstanding reputation. To follow on from the talk, excerpts from Tony's autobiography on pages 6-7 describe some of his adventures.



On 16 May 2025, Roger Marchbank presented **The Growth of English Wine in the New Forest** which was surprisingly grown in England from 4000BC and first in the New Forest at Beaulieu from 1956. Samples of New Forest wine were served.

Marc Heighway's talk on 27 June 2025 was on **RAF Beaulieu**; the role of Beaulieu Airfield as a RAF and USAAF base during World War 2, and the inspiring stories and strange events that occurred there.



### Forthcoming Meetings



A model of HMS Agamemnon

The talk on 25 September 2025 will be given by Mary Montagu-Scott on **HMS Agamemnon**, Lord Nelson's favourite ship, built and launched at Buckler's Hard in 1781, which ended up wrecked in 1809 on the River Plate off Uruguay.

Mary has dived on the wreck and seen its Beaulieu Oak timbers which survive against all the odds under the sea.

The last talk of the year **Anglo-Saxon Southampton** is on 13 November 2025, given by Andy Skinner of the Sea City Museum, Southampton.

The talk explores the stories of Anglo-Saxon Southampton from the 400s AD to 1066. Early in this period the south coast of England, including the New Forest, was occupied by Jutes from what is now called Denmark. Saxon Southampton became one of the most important towns of its day: a trading town linked to the wealthy kingdom of Wessex. Everything changed when the Vikings raided the town in about 800 AD.



Artist's impression of Southampton in 800 AD

John Pemberton

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## Dates for your Diary

Thurs 25 September 2025 6:30pm  
**HMS Agamemnon**  
presented by Mary Montagu-Scott  
at Beaulieu Village Hall

Thurs 13 November 2025 6:30pm  
**Anglo-Saxon Southampton**  
at Beaulieu Village Hall

## Membership

**Membership fees** of £5 per year last until the end of the calendar year. To renew membership at the start of the next calendar year, login to the website (as given below), select menu item Membership and Renew membership. Payments can be made by debit/credit card and PayPal .

**To become a member**, select Membership and Join the Society. Enter your name and email details and pay the £5 membership fee.

If you have a problem, or any other query, click Contact Us at the top of the screen. This does not require you to be logged in.

## A Cricket Anniversary

Unbeknown to most residents of Beaulieu, this year is the 250th anniversary of cricket being played in the village. The evidence of this is provided by the July 10th 1775 edition of the *Hampshire Chronicle*:

Although this is just the announcement of a forthcoming match it is reasonable to assume that it took place as it was being played for a wager. It is essentially an advertisement for the match, the intention being to attract as large an audience as possible. This is evidenced by the statement that the match will start at precisely eleven o'clock.

**During the storm on Thursday last two men and a horse were struck down by the thunder on the road near Worthy, but received only a slight injury.**  
**On Wednesday next will be played at Beaulieu, a match at Cricket, between the Gentlemen of Beaulieu and the Gentlemen of Totton, Redbridge, and Narford, for eleven guineas a side; the Wickets to be pitched precisely at eleven o'clock.**  
**On Saturday next a match at Cricket will be played on the Marsh, near this town, Southampton against Waltham, for eleven quarter guineas; the wickets to be pitched at eleven o'clock.**

How much is eleven guineas in 1775 worth today? Tables show that it was in the region of £2500, a not inconsiderable amount. Who put up the wager? We will never know, possibly the Estate owner, the 3rd Duke of Buccleuch, though he was not resident at Beaulieu at this time. Perhaps a group of the local gentry such as

the farmers. The term 'Gentleman' was used to describe the aristocracy; Yeoman and Labourer for others.

It was common practice for matches to be played for a wager around this period, the match announced in the same newspaper, below that of the Beaulieu match, also being paid for a wager. Such an event would have been the highlight of the year. Cricket at this time was probably influenced by the success the matches played amongst places such as Hambledon which was the hub for the explosion of cricket as a leisure activity. The painting below could be typical of any match played at this time.

The game played in the eighteenth century was a very rudimentary form of the modern game. All bowling was underarm with lobs often unsportingly delivered; only two stumps and a single bail, no boundaries and you wouldn't let the ball hit your legs as pads had yet to be introduced.

So where was the match played? Although newspaper reports of matches played before the formation of a club in the mid-18th Century exist, none mentioned a venue. It doesn't seem unreasonable to believe that the match was played on the same ground as now; it's reasonably flat and is close to the village.

It wasn't until 1849 that, thanks to the Buccleuch family who were keen cricketers, a cricket club was formed at Beaulieu. Indeed, as a teenager, the future 6th Duke of Buccleuch played in the very first match. Since then, the club has flourished, and continues to do so.



Anthony Norris

## Langley Iron Mill: researched by society member Roger Bird

My interest resulted from the move to Mopley and early maps that showed Mopley mill and Iron Mill Common. The possibility that iron was smelted in Langley in the 18th century led to research on the understanding of the chemistry of the iron making process and its feasibility in a rural environment. Recent research has indicated that the Cistercians introduced blast furnace smelting in England and the dissolution of Beaulieu Abbey in 1538 is the likely reason for the location of the iron works at Sowley. The book *Suthlungeley*, by near neighbour Felicity Beard (1), was an excellent source and she encouraged my investigation.

The starting point for this research was the current Historic England Record (HER) that shows a "large pond bay (dam) constructed largely of gravel 180m in length and 'Iron Mill' shown on maps of 1759 and 1789 which is thought to be a forge site. An overflow channel is around the western end and, next to it, is the probable site of the mill at SU 4446 00048. The Dark Water has breached the bay about midway, and there is a small breach towards the eastern end taking a drainage channel, and probable cut for the purpose". It was concluded that the relative absence of waste material and the lack of any appreciable silting-up on the pond side of the bay suggested the site to have been a late one and of short duration despite the observation that the bed of the river, where it cuts the bay, yielded large slabs of forge cinder.



Extract from 1789 Driver's map of the New Forest



Taylor's map of Hampshire 1759

Driver's map of 1789 shows Iron Mill Common but not the large mill pond on Dark Water and Taylor's map of 1759 shows this to be the location of the Iron Mill which dates to to be between those dates. Driver's map also shows that the Mill would have been part of the Manor of Exbury with the boundary with Manor of Stone being the Roman Road.

Further research revealed that the perambulation of 1670 passed Iron Mill Hill Common and an iron forge and Whitefield Moor was leased in 1605 for twenty-one years (2). This raised the question of whether the original mill was in existence 150 years later and whether the forge also smelted iron that was converted to wrought iron in the forge.

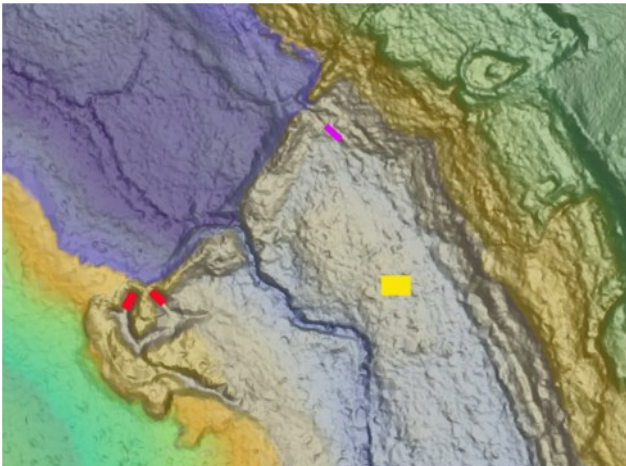
### Location of the Iron Mill

The question of the exact location of the Langley iron mill was resolved by the use of the armchair archaeologist's tool of Lidar imaging provided by the Environment Agency. Enhancement of these greyscale images showed that at the edge of the Common bordering Dark Water a bay had been constructed and the two wheel pits which still have a depth of 1.5 metres. The area is covered by trees and undergrowth making it difficult to see the extent of the channels on site.

The bay was made by excavating around 2,000 tons of earth from the bank on the Exbury side of Dark Water which means that the mill was not on Forest land. However, the HER (3) site places it in the "Whitefield wetlands" which may explain the lease of the iron forge and Whitefield Moor for 21 years by Barkeley and Powlett on 1st May 1605 as they were the landowners of Exbury and Stone Manors and indicates that the iron mill was a joint venture.

## Charcoal

This was at a time when concern over the amount of charcoal used in iron smelting resulted in a shortage of oak for the Navy's ships and smelting operations moved to waste forest areas where it was available. The adjacent Chale and West Woods on the Exbury estate total 60 acres provided the charcoal for the furnace and the water wheel would have provided the power for the bellows to provide the blast for smelting. Conventional wisdom is that the source of the iron ore for Sowley was Hengisbury Head but this would have been a long way from Langley. In view of the iron mills at Fawley shown on the Taylor map it is more likely that a local source was used. Pits Copse at Lepe is a mile away and the adjacent Stans Ore Point on the 1740 map of Bewley Manor and Mackenzie's map of 1783 indicates that this was a realistic possibility.



Overhead Lidar view of the Mill's site and bay.  
Early wheel pits in red, later in purple, and HER site yellow

Astall in 1608 and finally to Walter Long and Carew Raleigh in 1609. The mill remained unprofitable and by 1612 was £500 in debt and, by that time, the sole tenant was Carew Raleigh, who was the brother of Sir Walter Raleigh, and the venture appears to have failed around that time.

## Later Use

Taylor's 1759 map shows that this was not the end of the iron mill although the 1778 Langley Tithe maps shows that the bay was no longer creating a pond. Three Navy ships were build on Lepe beach from 1747 to 1765 and each would have required a hundred tons of iron. Later maps show a leat on the east side of the bay which indicates that the mill was on Whitefield Rough which would explain the HER location.

Unfortunately this area was excavated for clay for the brick works in the late 19th century but the Lidar image suggests a site by the bay. The leat extends a kilometre beyond this point indicating that it had been excavated to provide a tail-race joining Dark Water lower down. In 1725 William Mitford of Exbury released several parcels of land to Robert Barnes, a Fawley blacksmith and in 1763 and on the death of John Barnes, the Langley blacksmith, administration was granted to blacksmith Robert Barnes of Langley so John Barnes could have been responsible for the iron mill. The footpath from Whitefields Farm to Exbury crosses the leat by a small wooden bridge and stepping stones for crossing Dark Water in the middle of the bay shown in the Lidar image.

### Are you doing some local research?

And you'd like to write it up or have already done so. We can give you help to publish it in this newsletter.

Contact anyone on the committee (see bottom back page) or send an email to [chair@beaulieuhistorysociety.org.uk](mailto:chair@beaulieuhistorysociety.org.uk)

This research has highlighted the limited research available on the construction of water and iron mills up to the 18th century. Even in the 1950s water mills were considered not to exist in England before the 10th century. This has led to my wider interest in water mills in the New Forest and I am currently focussing on mills that potentially date back to the Domesday Records. These include the windmill on Badminston Common and tide mills at Stanswood, Lepe and Cadland.

Roger Bird

## References

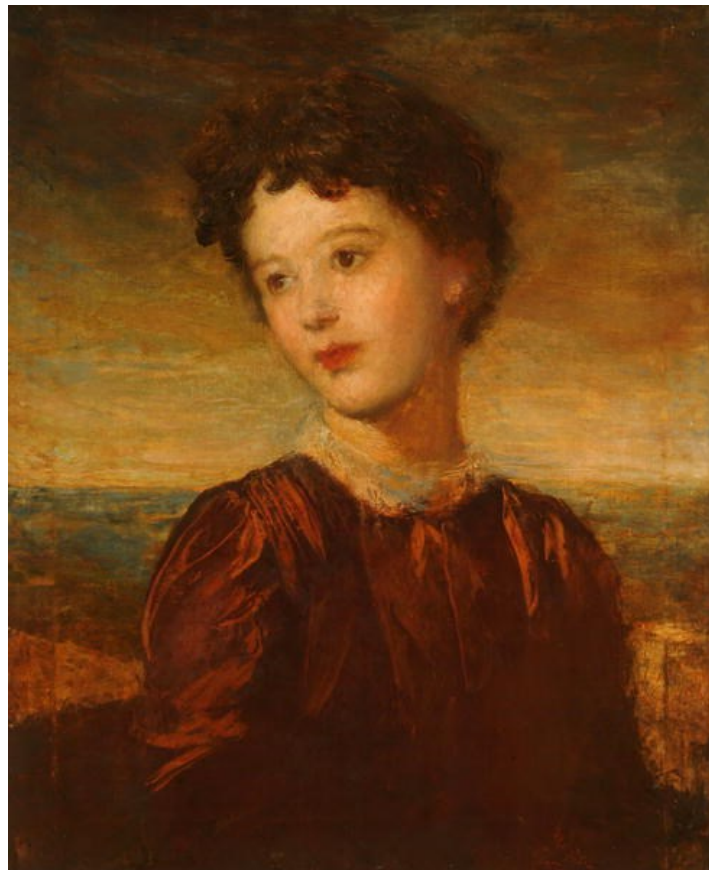
1. Beard F, Suthlangley: A History of the Waterside Village of Langley, Privately published 2020
2. Hampshire Record Office 46M48/177
3. Historic England Record 22004, Site of Pond Bay

## Lady Troubridge: Mistress of Etiquette

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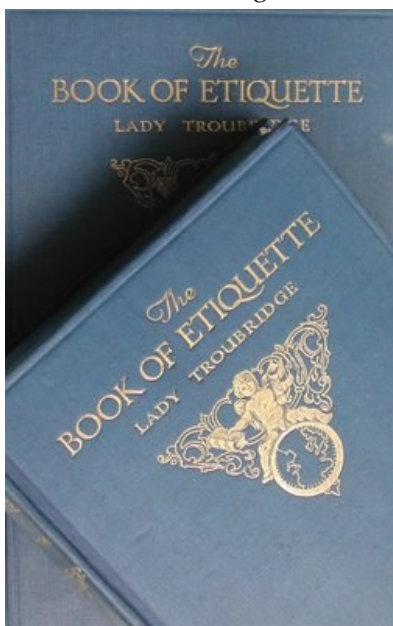
According to an unauthenticated blog when the cast of the film *Gosford Park* had to learn how to conduct themselves as a shooting party in the 1930s they were told to read Lady Troubridge's *The Book of Etiquette*.

Laura and Thomas Troubridge lived in Oldways, Beaulieu so they would be near John Montagu, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lord Montagu, Tommy's great shooting friend. Tommy acted as antiquarian to John while Laura wrote. Her obituary in *the Times* referred to her as "an author of many popular novels which were gay and amusing. She wrote with a lightness of touch that never degenerated into slovenliness." Her main field was romantic fiction and a quick read of one (she wrote several) shows that, although



Laura Gurney - Lady Troubridge by George Frederick Watts c.1880

published in 1916, her writing were typical of the genre that Mills and Boon were to adopt. She co-authored, with Archibald Marshall, a more serious book on John Montagu described as *A Memoir* and in 1925 she published her own *Memoirs (Reflection and Memories)* which give a detailed description of society leading up to and in the early years following World War One. Towards the end of her life she wrote for the women's magazine *Home Chat* as an agony aunt – a role about which she was secretive.



It was her book on etiquette that made her name. First

published in 1926 it was a tacit acknowledgement that the rigidity of Victorian society was breaking down. The 1914-18 war had crashed through class barriers as men and officers fought together in the trenches or on the production lines. The continuing shift from agriculture to manufacturing as the basis for economic growth gave rise to the nouveau riche who claimed their place in society not from inheritance but by money; and ease of travel meant that there was an ever increasing flow of Americans in London who brought with them a fresh attitude to manners and hospitality. Something was needed to ensure that people could do "the right thing". Lady Troubridge's book on Etiquette became the vade

mecum of what she called "the technique of the art of social life". It was reprinted thrice in 1926 and again in 1927, 1928 1931, 1936, 1937, 1940, 1941 and also during the 1950s.

Lady Troubridge was well placed to advise on the mores of society. Born in 1866, she was the younger daughter of Charles Gurney and Alice (nee Prinsep). Alice was known to Edward VII when he was Prince of Wales (and her sister Rachel Dudley was to become an acknowledged mistress of Edward VII as Prince of Wales). When her parents' marriage foundered, Laura was effectively brought up by her grandmother Sara Prinsep. Through the artistically inclined Prinsep family, Laura knew the artist G F Watts, an active member of the Holland Park Circle. Watts painted both Laura and Rachel in 1885. Married to Sir Thomas Troubridge fifth baronet in 1893 she had a son and two daughters (both daughters lived on in Beaulieu; Louise Shennan at Oldways and Rosemary Wentworth Dilke at Whitehall). Laura died in 1946 having survived Tommy by eight years.

Christina Dykes

## Tony Bentley-Buckle: Some Adventures

Following on from the talk on Tony Bentley-Buckle given by Keith Hutton in March 2025, here are some interesting extracts from his autobiography *Through Albert's Eyes*. Tony passed away in 2010.

When he was a still a naval cadet, Tony was in August 1939 assigned to a naval cruiser called HMS Dunedin. It was to patrol between Scapa flow and the Faroe Islands. His autobiography states:

As the nights lengthened and the further north we patrolled, the crew were occasionally treated to the aurora borealis. The streaks lighting up the sky were a magnificent sight. The patrols were to stop and search any shipping that appeared over the horizon, examining its manifest and destination. If there was any doubt, the boarding party, which generally comprised one officer, a petty officer and at least two seamen, would remain on board and accompany the ship into Kirkwall for further examination. On one patrol, after ten days at sea, the boarding parties had remained on board to escort several ships into Scapa.

The captain turned to me while on watch on the bridge and said, 'Young Buckle, there are too many officers away from the ship and when the next ship is sighted you are to be the boarding officer.'

This was most exciting for me and, lo and behold, the next day over the horizon came a small Swedish cargo vessel, which I boarded, and it was deemed after examination of the manifest that it should proceed into Kirkwall. I had been given the necessary Admiralty chart from the Dunedin showing the area of minefields and the swept channel that had to be scrupulously followed. This was too much for the old Swedish captain, who shook his shoulders, proceeded to his cabin with a bottle of port and refused to be responsible for the navigation of his ship. The Fair Island channel down which it was necessary to proceed was well charted, and I found no trouble in taking the ship, with the help of its chief officer, safely into Kirkwall. The procedure was for the boarding officer to report ashore and then wait for the Dunedin to return to Scapa at the end of its patrol.

The commander-in-chief, Northern Patrol, was Admiral Max Horton, by whom I was interrogated and asked how I had proceeded into Kirkwall. I pointed out the swept Fair Island channel, and on seeing from my uniform that I was still a cadet, it appeared to the admiral that I had shown ability beyond my present training. The admiral kindly wrote to the Admiralty proposing that I be given accelerated promotion. Shortly afterwards I received a letter from the Admiralty giving me two months' accelerated promotion, which came in very handy when I became a midshipman and my pay increased from the one shilling a day (5p) earned by cadets to the then liveable amount of five shillings a day for midshipmen.

**In September 1943, having trained as a beachmaster, Tony found himself in Reggio, Sicily for a beach landing of British forces. He relates:**

The beachmaster was in complete command of the beach during a landing and it was our duty as G Commando to ensure a safe path off the beach into the hinterland. At about half past ten that morning when the large vehicles were landing from the LSTs a DUKW motored up the beach and stopped at the exit road from the beach. On board was General Montgomery with some of his staff. We had learnt that he was a great one for haranguing the troops. He stopped and of course was surrounded by some of our army and started haranguing them. This was contrary to regulations, as my job as beachmaster was to ensure a continuous flow of vehicles off the beach.

I went up to him and during a pause in his oration said, 'Excuse me, sir, would you mind vacating the beach?'

He said, 'Who the hell are you?'

I said, 'Sir, I am the beachmaster in full command of everything that goes on on this beach and I am sorry, sir, but it is essential you leave the beach.'

He said a few more words to the troops and then I was pleased to see he moved on. That was my only direct contact with Montgomery during the war and I had the impression that he was an arrogant man. However, overall he turned out to be a very successful general.



Cadet Bentley-Buckle

**In 1945 Tony was captured as a prisoner of war and sent to Marlag POW camp in Germany. He writes:**

Knowing I had an interest in watch repairing, the Swiss Red Cross donated a set of watchmaker's tools and an eyeglass to the camp and I was allowed to use a small room across the road from our hut to carry out repairs. As will be appreciated, there were a number of watch repairs for prisoners whose ships had been sunk and their watches ruined by salt water. The Red Cross was marvellous and supplied the camp with plenty of watch spares, and this occupied many hours of my time. One day we were advised that all prisoners were going to be inoculated against typhus and the Germans graciously supplied the camp doctor with five needles for over three hundred people. As can be imagined, the needles became blunt and the camp doctor asked if I would sharpen them on my watchmaker's sharpening stone, which I did, and then they were sterilised.

One day John Worsley, who was an extremely clever artist, said he could build a dummy that would fool the guards during the Appell or roll call that took place twice a day in the square. During each Appell we had to fall in hut by hut five ranks deep and be counted by one of the guards. If a prisoner happened to be ill they used to report 'Krank im Zimmer: and a guard would go to the relevant room and check that there was a sick man there. John started off by stuffing a pillowcase with straw and gradually shaping it into the rough outline of a head. He then cut strips of papier mache which he glued to the embryo head and scraped away where necessary to maintain the shape. Eventually, when the desired head shape was achieved, he pulled out the straw, leaving a hollow papier mache head. The next thing was to make the eyes from two ping-pong balls, with the eyelids carved from beech wood. Inside the hollow head he inserted a wire frame on which the eyeballs were fixed and I made the watch mechanism that gradually turned a balance wheel fitted with pins at irregular intervals. Whenever the dummy, nicknamed Albert, was moved and a pin came into the correct position it activated the eyelids. Albert now had a hollow head with eyes blinking at various intervals, but no body. A wire body frame was made that the head hooked on to and the trousers were in turn hooked on to the frame. Two prisoners in our room became Albert's handler and they spent hours walking up and down the corridor of the hut until they had the knack of being able to make Albert walk. When they were due to go out of the camp to the bath hut in the woods, the wire frames were concealed beneath their uniform and the head inside a bath towel. The day of the planned escape arrived and three prisoners in the room who had had nothing to do with carrying Albert tossed up as to who would go first. My turn came as No. 3 and the first two, who were friends, decided to go one after the other on the same day, meet up in the woods and head for Lubeck.

I had learnt to pick most locks and make keys to fit. As it was essential to open the lock into the toilet at the bathhouse, over a period of a month I made a key to fit. On arrival the escapee shut himself in the toilet. When the bath party returned to camp with the assembled Albert, he slipped out of the back window and hid in the woods. The next crocodile formed at the camp gates, again with the two handlers, but one of the guards said, 'You have just been for a shower! Aus!'

Near panic ensued and Albert's bits were passed to two other prisoners, who had never walked him before. All went well, with the bath party going through the routine and the second escapee hiding in the toilet. At the end of the shower the two new handlers assembled Albert and walked him between them to the assembly point in the yard. Unfortunately, having never handled Albert previously, they walked him with his feet slightly in the air and one of the guards, who had been an Austrian waiter and was very quick-witted, went up to Albert thinking he was drunk and shouted at him. No reply! He then hit Albert with his rifle butt and the head fell off. Sadly, that was the end of Albert, who was re-assembled by the Germans and sent to the Berlin War Museum. The dummy was subsequently nicknamed Albert RN.



Albert RN

## Charles Rolls of Rolls-Royce: His Flying Career

As far back as recorded history can trace, and likely long before that, humans have sought to emulate birds and take to the skies. The people of the local area were no different. In fact, this region has seen more than its fair share of aviation pioneers. This should come as no surprise, as southern England, including the New Forest, with its flat terrain and proximity to the sea, provided an ideal landscape for early flight attempts.

The first manned powered flight in the world is believed to have taken place in December 1903, when the Wright Brothers successfully took off in North Carolina, USA. Back in England, their achievement inspired many to pursue similar feats, and by 1910, the country's only second-ever flying school opened in East Boldre.

But even before the school opened, Charles Rolls of Rolls-Royce fame had already completed over 200 flights in an aeroplane by 1909. An early aviation enthusiast, he loved being in the air, so much so that he also flew hot air balloons.

It was this passion for flight, and for ballooning in particular, that forged his connection to the local area. But first, some background.

Charles Rolls was born in 1877. As the son of a baron, he was wealthy and privileged, with access to the finer things in life. At 18, he travelled to France to buy his first motor car, sparking an interest in automobiles. Back in England, this passion brought him into contact with Henry Royce. Together, they co-founded Rolls-Royce, with Rolls contributing the capital and business acumen, and Royce providing the engineering expertise.

It would be easy to dismiss Charles Rolls as a spoiled playboy, but he was never happier in the early days of the company than when he rolled up his sleeves and worked hands-on with the cars. Despite his association with Rolls-Royce, his true passion soon turned to aviation. So much so that he resigned from the company to focus on flying and ballooning. He was only the second Briton ever to fly in an aeroplane.

After resigning from Rolls-Royce, Rolls attended the annual Cowes Regatta in August 1909. He brought a hot air balloon to the event, and on August 7, took off over the Solent in his basket. For many spectators, it was their first glimpse of a hot air balloon: a remarka-

ble sight at the time. Rolls flew from East Cowes to Lymington, a journey that took two and a half hours.

During this flight, Rolls captured what may be the first-ever aerial photographs of the local area. One such



photo, included in this article, appears to have been taken facing west, with Lepe visible and the mouth of the Beaulieu River in the distance. While the image may be hard to discern, you might notice a small spot on the coastline, which I believe to be the Lepe Watch House.

The following year, Rolls became the first person to complete a non-stop double crossing of the English Channel in an aeroplane. For this achievement, he received a congratulatory telegram from King George and Queen Mary, and a newspaper hailed him as 'the greatest hero of the day'.

Tragically, just one month later, Rolls achieved another first: albeit an unwanted one. He became the first Briton to die in an aeroplane accident when the tail of his Wright Flyer aircraft broke off at 300 feet during a flying display at the Bournemouth Centenary celebrations. He was just 32 years old.

During his short life, Rolls was credited with some memorable quotes. My favourite is his response when asked, after his resignation from Rolls-Royce, whether he preferred flying to driving. "Flying," he said, "because there are no policemen in the air."

Marc Heighway

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