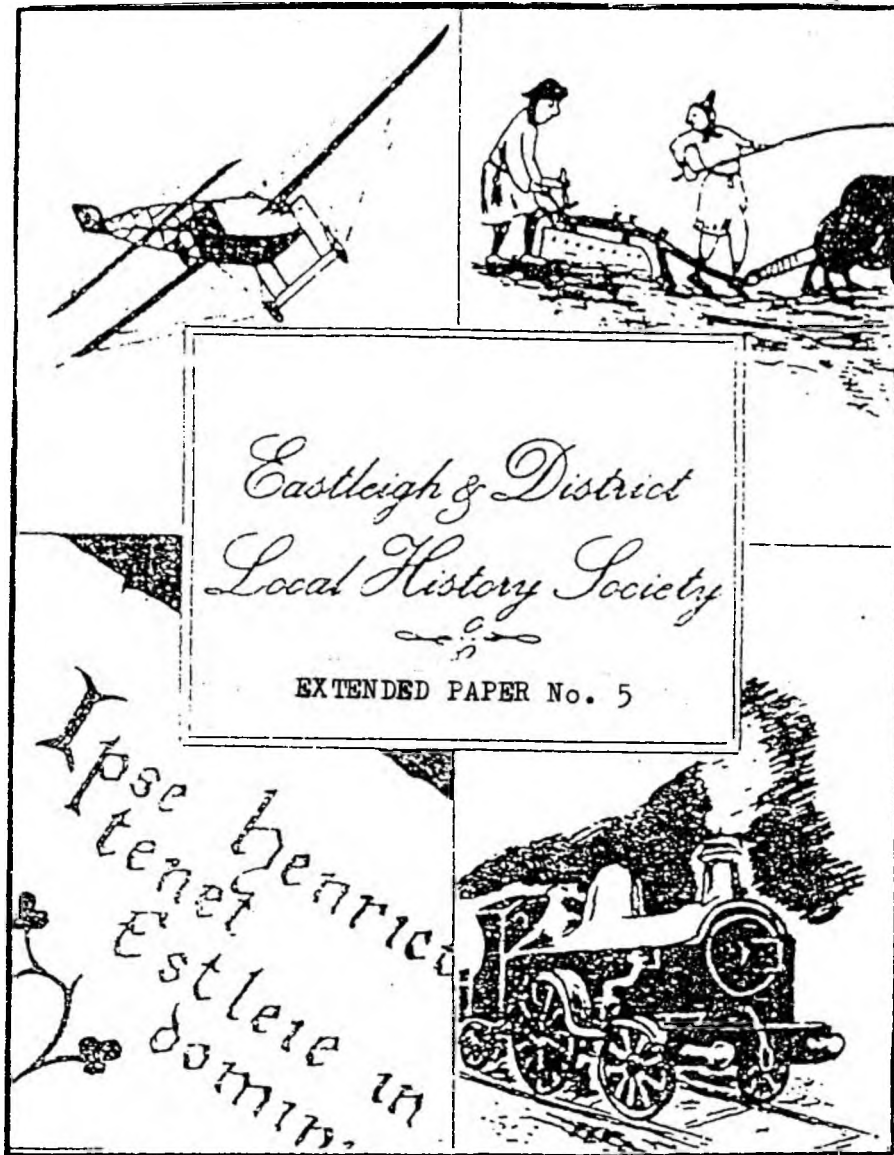


The London and South Western Railway Institute.



PREFACE

All too quickly time obliterates traces of things we had accepted as being a permanent part of the town scene, yet so fast is the pace of modern living with its changing trends, that we seldom seek to recall the shape of Eastleigh's yesteryears. However, its busiest area, the town centre, after years of little change, has seen a dramatic alteration over the last twenty years. The point has been reached in the development of the town centre at which new building is rapidly replacing the old. The 'Stute' as it affectionately became known, has gone from whence it was for many years a familiar part of the landscape to new surroundings on the site previously occupied by the Vicarage in Romsey Road. Here, Phoenix-like, it has reappeared as a fine modern building serving its members, if not quite in the way it did seventy or eighty years ago, certainly with the cordiality, comradeship and in the same spirit which was the hallmark of its predecessor.

The major source used in the research and preparation of this manuscript was taken from the James Material currently in the care of the Eastleigh and District Local History Society. I am most grateful for the help given me by Bob Franklin, Oliver Stockwell, Malcolm Brown, the present secretary of the club, and to those who in many different ways assisted me.

Photographs are from the private collection of Gordon Cox, for which I am indebted, and also from the author's own collection.

The London and South Western Railway Institute at Eastleigh.

Norman F. Norris, 1987

THE LONDON AND SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY'S
WORKMEN'S INSTITUTE AT EASTLEIGH

Hampshire's staple industry had for a great many years been firmly based upon agriculture, so the decision taken by the London and South Western Railway to remove their carriage and wagon works from Nine Elms, London, to a new location at Barton, near Bishopstoke, on the flat farmland of the Itchen Valley and east of the railway station, brought about a major change in land use in this part of southern Hampshire. Prior to this event the area around Bishopstoke had seen little change, apart from the construction of the Itchen Navigation, for centuries. However, all this altered in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Although the London and Southampton Railway had been completed throughout its entire length by 1840, it was not until two years later, when the line to Gosport opened, followed in 1847 by the extension to Romsey and Salisbury, that the station at Barton (Bishopstoke) assumed importance as a junction. Even so, impact was trivial when compared with the effect on the area of the construction of the Carriage and Wagon Works made some forty years later. The population had increased from eighty in 1841, following the opening of the railway, to one hundred and ninety-three in 1851, the number of dwellings doubling from fifteen to thirty in the same period.

From the building of the Carriage and Wagon Works in 1889 until well into the 1960s the economy of Eastleigh was closely linked to the railway industry, which provided the prime source of employment for men and youths wanting to take up apprenticeships. Since its erection in 1891 the Railway Institute had been a constant reminder of the importance of the railway to the town. Standing on the site now occupied by the supermarket of Messrs. Safeway, the Institute was a well-known landmark to generations of Eastleigh's citizens.

Such was the impact of the building of the Carriage and Wagon Works upon the locality that almost everything and everybody was directly or indirectly involved with the 'railway'. Eastleigh today with its many and diversified industries, office blocks and warehousing presents quite a different picture than did the town - or rather the village - of 1891.

The immigrant population resulting from the opening of the workshops of the Carriage Works as soon as they were completed in 1890, in general, were dissatisfied with the conditions they found at Eastleigh. They had moved into a small town which lacked main drainage, street lighting and properly surfaced roads and pavements, conditions contrasting sharply with the amenities on offer in the metropolis which they had accepted as part of everyday life. The amenities they had taken for granted were now just memories of a life they had enjoyed and had left behind.

In March 1889, at a public meeting of the Railway Temperance Society at which the Vice Chairman of the London and South Western Railway company, Mr. Wyndham S. Portal, was present, accompanied by a Mr. Govett, it was stated that in connection with the transfer of the Company's workpeople from Nine Elms to the new Carriage and Wagon Works the Company intended to provide an Institute and a recreation ground, the cricket field being very suitable for this purpose. This was an early indication of the direction in which the Chairman and Directors were thinking. Later in the summer of that year Mr. Jonas Nichols, the ground landlord, and officials of the railway company met on the site and a section of the field near the bandstand - the original site of the bandstand - was marked out for the site of the Institute.

Mr. William Panter, the Superintendent of the London and South Western Railway Company's Carriage and Wagon Works moved to Eastleigh in 1888 and quickly became interested and involved in the affairs of the village, for at that time it was little more. It was he who became the local driving force, and there seems no doubt that he instigated the initial steps which ultimately gave to Eastleigh the Railway Institute. As Chairman of the Committee established to handle problems associated with the Institute project he played a prominent part. The Committee, composed of railway employees mainly employed in the production of rolling stock from the new workshops which were pressed into service as soon as they were handed over from the builders, had the responsibility of organising the ceremonies of the laying of the foundation stone, the official opening and the organising of the sports and other festivities connected with these events.

Mr. Panter's enthusiasm to acquire a hall for the railwaymen and their families most probably stemmed from his experience of the very successful Institute known as Brunswick House that the London and South Western Railway Company had opened in London for their workers at Nine Elms Works.

The Southampton Observer and Hampshire News on Saturday 29 August 1891 carried this report in a column headed 'Development at Eastleigh'. It sang the praises of Mr. Panter in these words :-
"This gentleman commands the respect and affection of his men in a remarkable degree; and whilst he advances the legitimate interest of the capitalists he makes the moral, intellectual and physical welfare of the labourer his study. Nor is he a dreamer or theorist. On the contrary he is nothing if not practical. Mainly through his efforts the foundation stone of a Workmen's Institute was laid."

There is little doubt that among those who endeavoured to bring to fruition a Workmen's Institute in a new town which offered little in the way of recreational or educational facilities, Mr. Panter was a front runner, and for years his name and the 'Railway Institute' were synonymous.

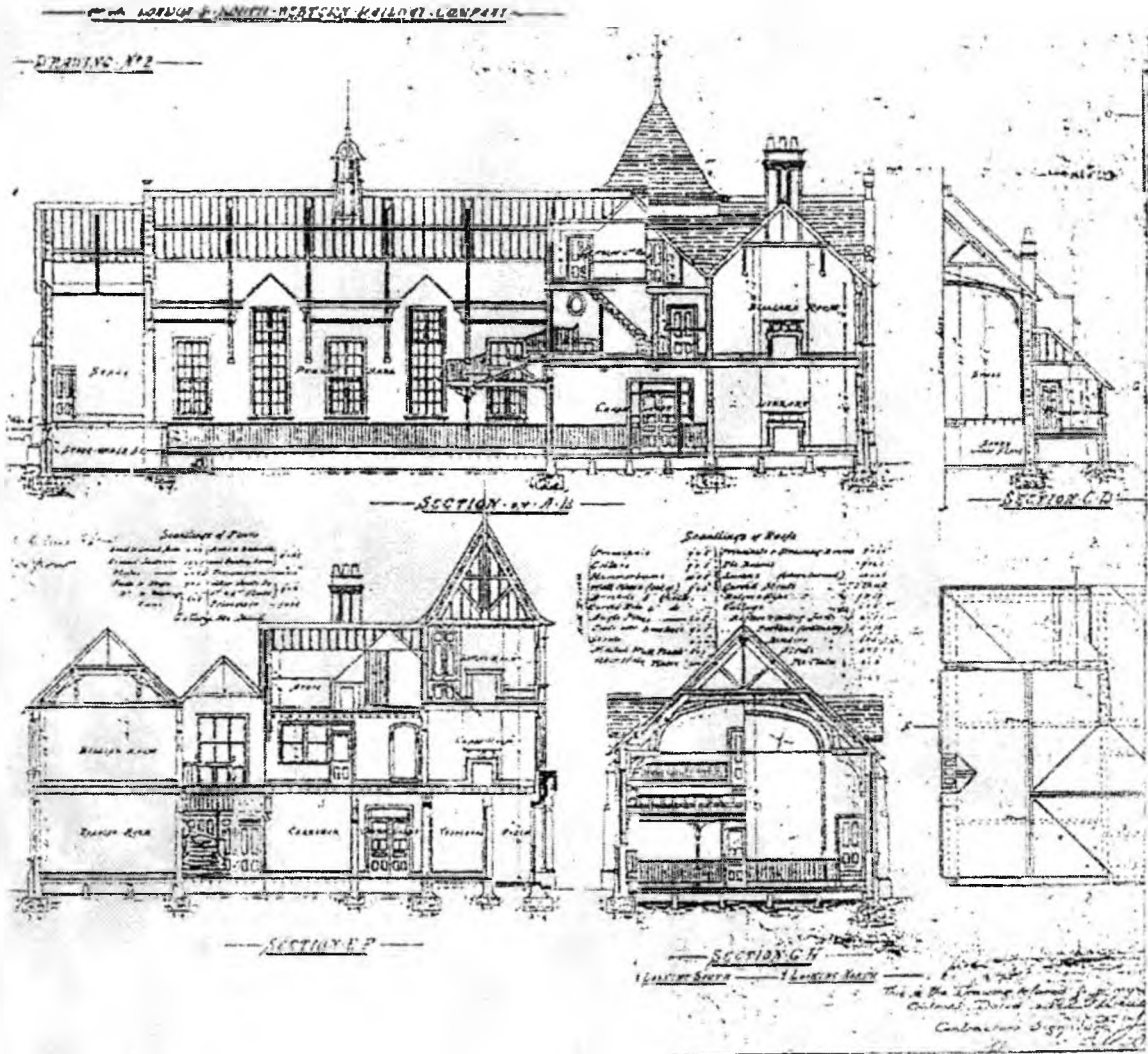
Negotiations for the building of a Workmen's Club and Institute between Mr. Jonas Nichols, builder and contractor of Southampton, and the London and South Western Railway Company were brought to a satisfactory conclusion in the closing months of 1890. The building was designed and plans prepared by the Southampton architects, Messrs. Mitchell, Son and Gutteridge.

The estimated cost of the building was close to three thousand pounds. The Hampshire Advertiser of 10 September 1890, in referring to the construction of the Institute, reported: -

"..... thus there is every promise of increased work in the village, which will speedily become a town of itself if it increases in the same way as things at the present would lead to expect it will do."

Providing an Institute for the benefit of their workpeople was an indication of the importance the Chairman and directors of the London and South Western Railway Company attached to the growth of the town and the activities their industry had created. The Conveyance completed, Mr. Jonas Nichols received an order to build the Institute and by the spring of 1891 bricks from the builder's own brickyard at Boyatt and building materials began to arrive at the site and the footings were prepared. Mr. Nichol's successful tender was two thousand seven hundred pounds. The plot of land upon which the Institute was erected measured one hundred and twenty feet by eighty feet.

Saturday 9 May 1891 dawned a bright and sunny day, ideal weather for the ceremony of the laying of the foundation stone of the Railway Institute, and a large gathering of townspeople came to enjoy and witness the event. The London and South Western Railway Company had laid on a special train to bring their workmen down from Nine Elms who eventually would be employed at the Eastleigh Works, about four hundred travelling down for the occasion as well as the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Directors, Chief Officers and employees of the company. The Lord Mayor of Portsmouth and the Mayor of Southampton were also present, together with many other distinguished visitors. From the railway station, and opposite the station, the shops were gaily decorated with evergreens, flags and fir trees placed at various points along the route to the new Institute. The scaffolding, still in position around the new building, was decked out with decorations and flags. During the morning the Fire Brigade had received instructions to water down Leigh Road, Market Street, Park View (Upper Market Street), Station Hill and Station Road.

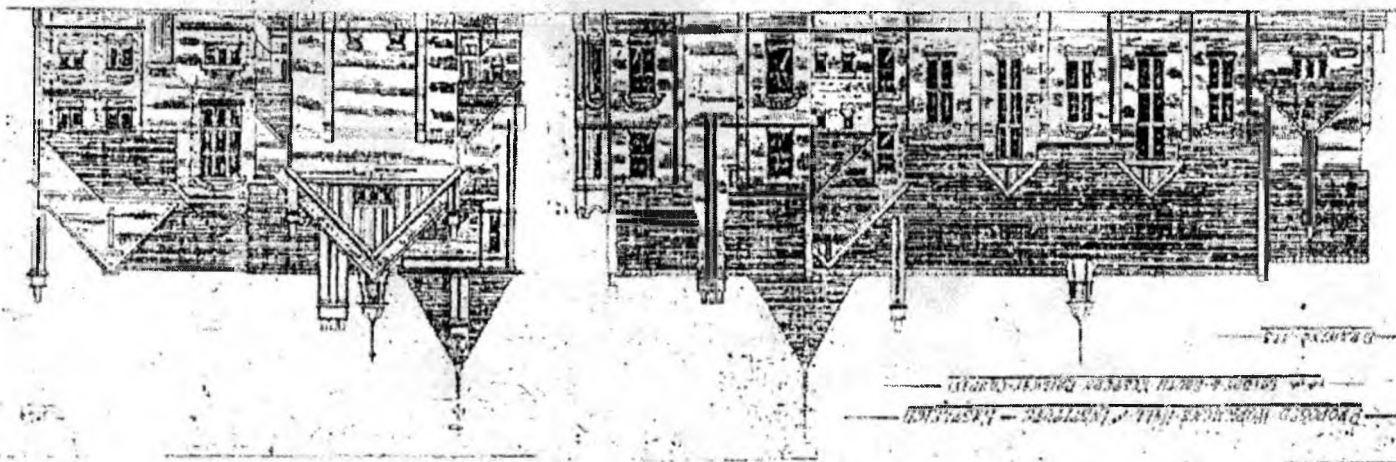
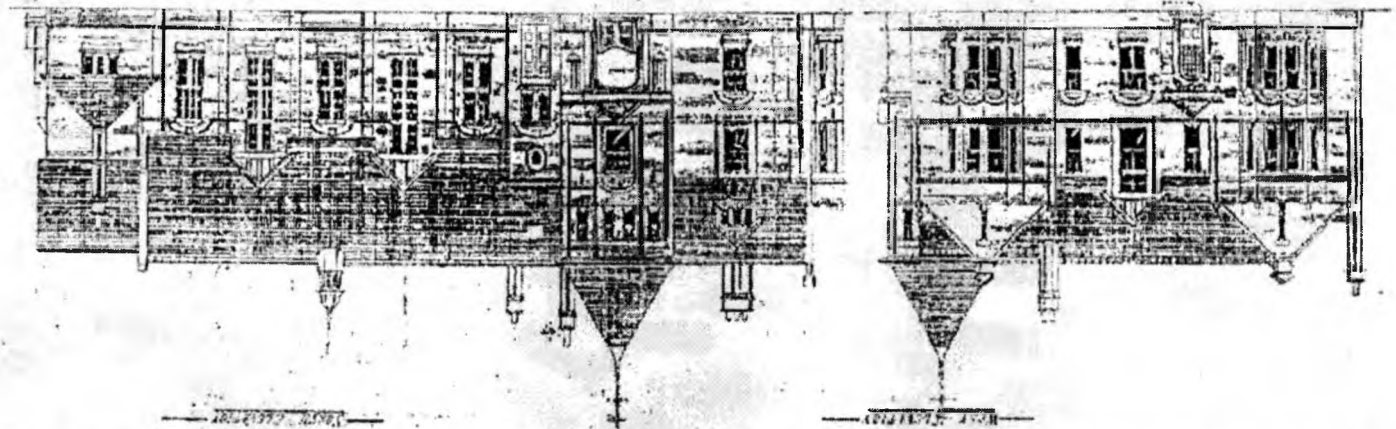


Copies of the original drawings of the proposed Workmens Hall and Institute, Eastleigh, for the London and South Western Railway Company. Architects, Messrs. Mitchell, Son and Gutteridge, Southampton 1890.

1857/58
M.A. 10000



1857/58
M.A. 10000



DRIVING ROOM
M.A. 10000
M.A. 10000

The Hon. Ralph Heneage Dutton, J.P., D.L., Chairman of the London and South Western Railway Company laid the foundation stone. Weighing three quarters of a ton, this large piece of Portland stone was laid at the south west corner of the building, and had the following inscription engraved upon it :-

*“This foundation stone was laid by the Hon. Ralph Heneage Dutton, J.P., D.L.,
Chairman of the London and South Western Railway Company May 9th 1891.”*

The Clapham Junction Band then played the National Anthem and the builder Mr. Jonas Nichols presented the Chairman with a solid English Walnut mallet, the handle inlaid with boxwood. The Reverend J. Thomas, the Vicar of Eastleigh then offered a prayer.

“That this epoch for the Parish might be the means of promoting all that was good, noble and pure.”

After the ceremony, five hundred people sat down to lunch in the recently completed lifting shop of the carriage works, a building three hundred feet long and two hundred feet wide. Mr. William Panter, the Chairman of the organising committee, apologised for the absence of some of the Directors of the Railway Company, Mr. S. Montagu M.P., Mr. Tankerville-Chamberlayne, the Mayor of Winchester, Colonel Morrah, Mr. Verrinder, Mr. F. Willan and the railway company's auditor. Mr. Dutton was presented by the railway employees with a silver trowel with a beautifully worked ivory handle together with a morocco leather case suitably inscribed.

Below is an excerpt from a speech given by Mr. Dutton at the luncheon :-

“They should not be selfish when they had a good thing, indeed, should open their arms wide and take in all the Eastleighans they could get it to hold, he hoped they would look with favour on Brunswick House, the home they had left behind, and admit all as honorary members when they liked to come and pay a visit. They wanted to know how they were getting on in the country. They hoped they would not adopt country names, but keep up the civilisation of the greatest metropolis in the world.”

The speeches concluded, a large gathering of spectators watched the athletic events or enjoyed the fun fair on the recreation ground. The festivities of that memorable day ended with a ball staged in the lifting shop it having been decorated for the occasion.

An unfortunate and tragic accident occurred which marred an otherwise joyful day when a workman engaged in assisting to decorate the Institute met with a sad and untimely death.

A meeting of the Institute Committee of Management was held at the Crown Hotel on Thursday 4 June 1891, the Chairman Mr. Panter presiding. During the course of the meeting he thanked the Committee for the successful way they had carried out their duties on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone. He thought that when the Institute was opened they would have another day's holiday and a public ball. After all expenses incurred by the laying of the foundation stone and the festivities, the Treasurer had a balance of £13 10s 4d. The Committee unanimously agreed to give this sum with subscriptions they had received plus 1s 0d from an anonymous donor, making a total of £21 8s 4d, to the widow of the poor man who lost his life helping to decorate the Institute.

About noon on Wednesday 15 July 1881 part of an arch of a gable of the Institute collapsed which fortunately caused no damage. Apparently there seemed no reason for the mishap but it may have been caused by the slow setting of the material supporting the arch. Just fifteen days later, Mr. Jonas Nichols, J.P., the builder of the Railway Institute, died on Thursday 30 July 1891. He had been unwell for some time.

*“..... and in spite of the strictest attention on the part of his medical advisors,
the stern hand of death claimed him about 10.00pm on Thursday night.”*

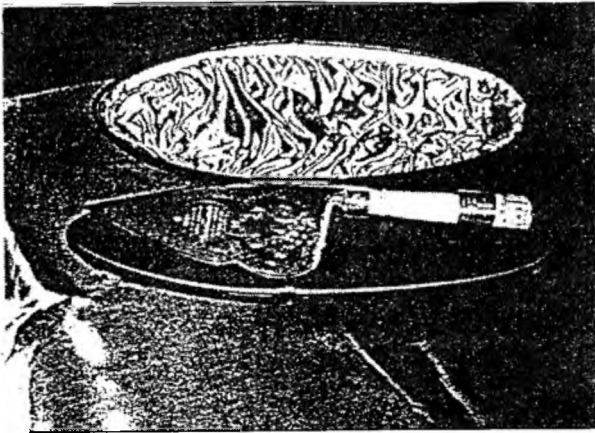
(Hampshire Independent 1 August 1891)

Despite the death of Mr. Nichols, the work of building carried on; Mr. Nichols junior took over the obligations of his father and the work on the Institute proceeded without a break. Indeed, at the time, it was thought that the work would be completed by the first of September 1891.

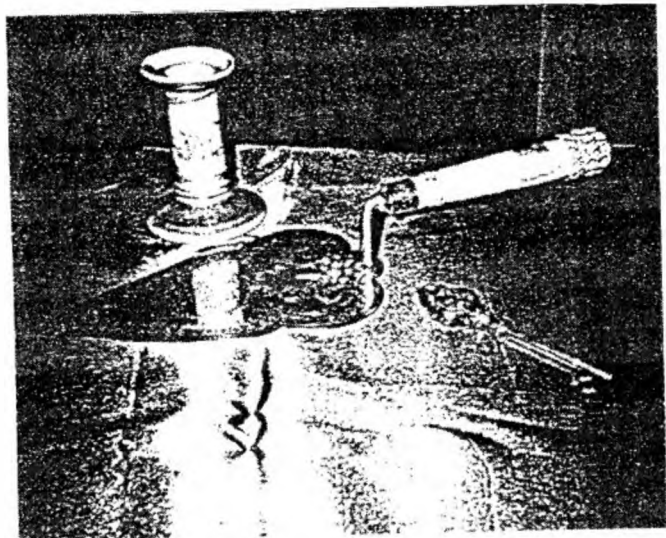
In a news item dealing with the Institute in the Southampton Observer of the 19 September 1891, it was stated that the fees for membership would be one shilling per quarter for working men and one shilling and sixpence for honorary members. Smoking concerts would be held every Monday evening during the winter.

Less than three months from the death of Mr. Jonas Nichols, on Saturday 10 October 1891 at 2.00pm, a day upon which it rained incessantly, the Hon. Mrs. R. Dutton opened the Railway Institute, her husband, the Chairman of the London and South Western Railway Company being prevented from attending the ceremony owing to illness. Mr. Wyndham S. Portal the Vice Chairman was also unavoidably absent.

The ceremony, performed in the lecture hall of the new building, was attended by a distinguished company of Directors, Civic Dignitaries, a large number of railwaymen and their families and townspeople. The hall accommodated 320 people on the floor of the hall and 130 in the gallery. The building was extensively decorated for the occasion with flags and bunting. Mrs. Dutton, having declared the Institute open, accepted with pleasure, as a souvenir of the event, a golden key artistically worked by Mr. J. Blount Thomas. The final cost of the Institute was given as £3500.



The silver and ivory trowel used by the Hon. Mrs Ralph Heneage Dutton at the laying of the foundation stone, 9 May 1891.



Trowel, candlestick (given to new members) and the gold key with which the Hon. Mrs Ralph Dutton opened the Railway Institute on Saturday the 10 October 1891 at 2.00pm

The Institute was constructed of red brick which blended well with the Bath stone used in the finials of the apex of each of the gables, the gable cappings, the sills and lintels of the windows and particularly the exterior door surrounds. The main entrance door faced upon Leigh Road and was especially noticeable with its Bath stone pilasters and Palladian style pediment surmounting the portico which carried, carved in the stone, the monogram of the London and South Western Railway Company and the date of building, 1891. The door, set in the back of the porch, was glazed with sixteen panes of glass in its top half, the top being rounded so as to fit the shape of the stone lintel. The secondary entrance door faced onto Park View (upper Market Street) and was designed to compliment the main door. Although it was not of such appearance it nevertheless had a fine Coat of Arms and the Armorial Bearings of the Company carved in the stone over the portico. Fronting onto Leigh Road at either side of the entrance were double bay windows built one above the other. Built with brick mullions and a form of ornamental castellated parapets capped with stone, these bay windows, together with the gables and entrance, conveyed to the viewer the impression of a building pleasant to look at, and being solidly constructed, epitomised the strength and the power of the British Railway companies of the late Victorian era. The bay windows and the ornate doorway were probably the features of the building that Eastleigh people will remember best, frequently seen as they passed to and fro along Leigh Road going about their daily business. The bay windows at the west front of the Institute were situated close to the left hand pilaster of the doorway, whereas the bays at the east end were separated from the doorway by about sixteen feet; this unbalanced appearance, however, did not detract from the overall picture it presented. At the right hand of the entrance and the right hand bay windows were two sash windows approximately six feet high and two feet wide, the brickwork over being arched. Directly above the left hand window of the pair was a much taller window which extended above the eaves and formed a dormer. This window balanced the windows of the first floor and contrasted with the windows of the ground floor. This can be seen in the photograph of the Institute which shows details of the front elevation. The east elevation's main feature was the square tower which rose from above the Park View entrance; this enhanced and gave the Institute one of its well known characteristics. The roof, like the majority of roofs in Eastleigh at that time, was roofed with Welsh slates. An oaken close boarded fence surrounded the building for many years, finally being removed in the early 1930s. Unenclosed by wall or fence, the Institute assumed a more attractive appearance with its structure and design becoming more apparent. A Mr. Andrews was the Chief Engineer and Mr. Drage, a District Engineer of the Railway Company, supervised the work of the builder.

The interior of the Institute was very well appointed; the ground floor accommodated a library and reading room measuring twenty-six feet by eighteen feet. Fitted with shelving, furniture and a stock of seven hundred volumes, fiction, non-fiction and technical publications, this library was a wonderful asset to the club and served generations of the Institute's members. In addition to the library there were two large classrooms and a main hall capable of seating four hundred people, having dressing rooms and a stage. On the first floor there was a billiards room with two billiards tables - this room was forty feet long and twenty feet wide; the smoking room was built square, each wall of the room being eighteen feet long; a further classroom and the stewards room were also situated upon the ground floor. On the second floor and in the tower were three other rooms provided for the caretaker's living quarters.

The Institute obviously must have been most welcome to the railway workers living as they were in a town offering but few opportunities for recreation or social activities; for the London and South Western Railway Company it served as a public relations exercise. Publicity at that time was just as important and acceptable to commercial undertakings as it is today. The Institute would project the image of a caring and benevolent employer. The Company would have been fully aware of the upheaval the move to Eastleigh had caused their employees, the search for houses where they clearly were in short supply, and for their wives a limited number of shops, few of which had goods for sale at prices and choices to compare with the shops of London.

Owing to the heavy rain the physical drill display and march past which were scheduled to take place in the open air took place in one of the large workshops of the carriage works. The London and South Western Railway (Eastleigh) Brass Band played selections suitable for the occasion. Refreshments were provided by Mr. Vowles of the Home Tavern and Mr. W. H. Gover of Leigh Road. Unstinting praise was given to the Hon. Secretary Mr. G.A. Purkess, who through all the preliminary arrangements and throughout the day's activities, had proved himself indefatigable. His efforts undoubtedly crowned the day with success, despite the atrocious weather.

The day's festivities concluded with a ball held in one of the large railway workshops which had been decorated for the occasion. The Provisional Committee which had played a leading part in organising the event was presided over by Mr. W. Panter supported by Sir Frederick Fitzwygram, M.P. for the Fareham Division. Committee members were J. Annett, R. Barrett, H. Cresswell, A. Dunning, H. Edwards, W. Elliott, W. Goddard, J. Hadkinson, H.J. Hutchings, A. Kitchen, W. T. Lofting, R. Mace, C. McDonald, H. Pearce, J. Price, J. Rowland, E. Stone, A. Summerly and A. Winterbottom.

The Institute had been completed in accordance with the contract signed by Mr. Jonas Nichols and following his death, his son, Mr. Sidney Nichols, carried on and brought the building to a successful finish. On the opening day it was announced that six hundred and fifty workmen had joined up as members of the Railway Institute. During October 1891 and the following months many concerts were staged at the Institute, mainly on Monday evenings. In November, caretakers were appointed; they were Mr. and Mrs. Robbins, who for many years had been in the service of the late Captain T. Hargreaves of The Mount at Bishopstoke.

Two workmen lost their lives whilst performing duties indirectly connected with the building of the Institute. On 4 May 1891 Mr. William Draper, a platelayer aged thirty, was knocked down by a train and killed instantly. He had been directed to take bundles of evergreens to the new Carriage Works, where they were to be used to decorate the lifting shop in connection with the laying of the foundation stone of the Institute. He had taken one bundle and had left for the second when the accident happened. An empty carriage attached to the 3.13 pm train from Portsmouth was being shunted when it struck Mr. Draper. He left a young widow and a small family. In those days, when the Department of Health and Social Service and the Health and Safety at Work regulations were non-existent, one may only surmise as to how the family lived after the loss of the breadwinner. This fatality occurred five days before the death of another workman mentioned previously.

A pleasing and interesting gesture by the Institute Management Committee was to present each member with a commemorative candlestick to mark the opening of the Institute. One wonders if any of these candlesticks are still existing, perhaps gracing the mantelpiece of a descendant of an Institute member of 1891.

The Institute after its opening and having a substantial membership settled into providing entertainment and education. Concerts were organised and these became a regular feature in those early years. Classes were held on a variety of subjects, and apparently were quite popular. The library was an instant success and gave pleasure and the means whereby knowledge could be acquired on numerous topics. The billiards room was in great demand, many an Eastleigh lad learning the rudiments of the game here. The late George Wright, one time member of Eastleigh Council and proprietor of Eastleigh's two cinemas, not only played bowls for the Club but was a fine snooker player to boot.

The facilities for education benefited not only the employees of the London and South Western Railway Company, but also the Company. It gave the workers, especially the apprentices, opportunities to improve their knowledge, in particular with regard to the technology required for constructing locomotives and rolling stock; it also went a considerable way to ensure that the Company had a continuity of craftsmen and office workers in their employ who could bring skills and expertise to the trade or profession in which they were engaged. The Institute and the amenities it offered to railway workers and their families compensated, to a degree, for the lost comforts and delights of London.

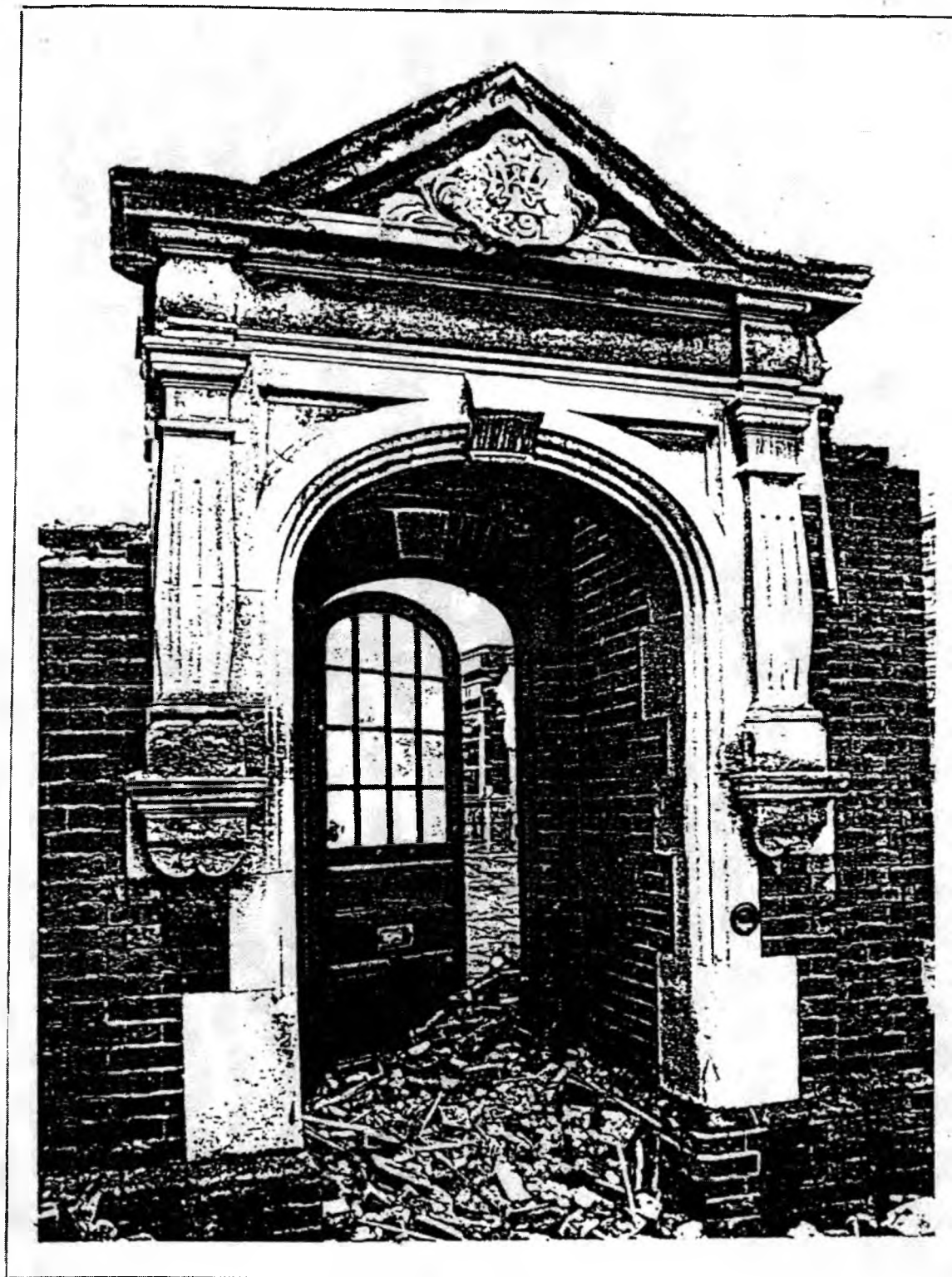
Every community reacts and contributes its own characteristics to local history. At that time, 1891, a railwayman felt himself more closely drawn to others who worked in the same industry than to non-railway townspeople. Those working in the railway industry from 1888 until just after the First World War formed by far the greater proportion of Eastleigh's male population. A good deal of thought and energy went into the creation, maintenance and administration of the Railway Institute, as indeed it did for many of Eastleigh's clubs, all of which had a goodly number of members who were employed 'on the railway'.

Religion played an important part from about 1750 until the end of the first quarter of this century in shaping the life of many communities, with churches of all denominations being well filled. Instances of religious involvement, particularly with the working classes during this period, occurred in the coal and slate mining communities of North and South Wales, in Yorkshire and in many other areas of the industrial north and the Midlands. In the formative years of Eastleigh, the Churches, the Working Men's Clubs, and the Conservative and Liberal Clubs each in its own way contributed to the cultural and physical well-being of the community. In this the Institute played a leading role.

In addition to those employees of the London and South Western Railway who came from London to the Carriage and Wagon Works, 1903 saw the transfer of the locomotive running sheds from Northam to newly constructed sheds close to the south side of Campbell Road. Many of the transferred enginemen found houses at Arnold and Doncaster Roads and at Newtown, the name given to the development lying to the north of the recreation ground. This influx of railway workers and their families into Eastleigh no doubt served to swell the Institute's membership. Phase two of the exodus from Nine Elms took place in 1911 when the locomotive works was moved to Eastleigh, although the first of those to be employed in the new works arrived the year before. The Institute had already been in existence for eighteen years, and the newcomers under their Chief Mechanical Engineer, Mr. Dugald Drummond, came to a town much different from that which the earlier arrivals had found.

The shortage of housing to accommodate the rapidly increasing population had been largely overcome. The railway company providing but a small proportion of the housing need of its workers, it was left to private builders to meet the demand and this they did at great speed. Houses sprang up in the town centre, built in terraces which in the main were owned by landlords who let them at rents which from time to time increased at a much faster rate than the wages of the tenants, so much so that an organisation to combat the continual rise in rents appeared in 1891. The Locomotive Works was fully operational by the latter part of 1912, the population of the town having risen to about fifteen thousand three hundred in that year, an increase of ten thousand eight hundred since 1891.

The Railway Institute stood on the site now occupied by the supermarket of Messrs. Safeway, and with Lloyds Bank on the opposite corner of the junction of Leigh Road and Market Street, they made an impressive pair of buildings, enhancing the architectural scene of this part of the town centre. The Institute built of red brick and Lloyds Bank faced in Portland stone were a direct contrast in design and building material, but despite the difference in appearance, the two buildings formed a harmonious composition, and with the Eagle Building nearby in Leigh Road and the premises of Messrs. Baker and Company - diagonally opposite Lloyds Bank - ranked high as buildings in Eastleigh's formative years. The Institute had preceded the building of the Council Chamber and Offices by eight years. Many buildings similar to the Institute are to be seen up and down the country, having been erected by various industrial concerns to bring recreation and educational facilities to their workers. The more enlightened employers of the nineteenth century were not averse to such gestures of benevolence towards their employees, gestures which conferred mutual benefits.



The Railway Institute's Main Entrance
Dated 1891
In process of demolition almost 90 years after its opening.

Although the Institute could not be regarded as being of major importance in the life of the community, it nevertheless played a significant part in the town's recreational and social activities. Many generations of Eastleigh's citizens, most of whom were employed within the railway industry, along with their families, enjoyed the facilities the Institute provided. During a decade or so following the First World War hundreds of children, sons and daughters of Institute members, enjoyed the 'Bun and Orange' concerts to which they were invited around Christmas time. This annual event was eagerly anticipated, when each child received a currant bun on entering the hall and an orange when leaving. Conjurors and magicians played a prominent role at these concerts, baffling the children with their skills and magic.

During the Second World War the Institute was pressed into use as a 'British Restaurant' which proved to be a great success, at least, it was to its patrons, fulfilling a need at a time when it was most difficult to obtain a meal in a town which then had little to offer in the way of restaurants. Many had reason to be grateful for the Institute's restaurant.

Demolished in 1982 to make way for a supermarket, the Institute had served the railway community in the capacity for which it was built, for ninety years. In addition to its members, the Institute gave hours of pleasure to countless non-members, as its facilities were available for hire for dances, whist drives, socials, concerts and various other functions, and many wedding receptions were held there.

Not until it became clear that demolition of the Institute was inevitable did objections to its demise become vocal. Taken for granted and barely eliciting a second glance as people went about their daily business, the Institute, about to disappear from the scene, suddenly came to be seen as a fine example of late Victorian architecture. A few local organisations indicated their regret and disapproval and some members of the Borough Council raised the subject at meetings of the Council and its Committees. The supermarket which has replaced the Institute has dispelled, to an extent, many of the fears of those who regretted the change. However, the supermarket is architecturally ahead of others in Eastleigh, its brickwork displaying the craft of the bricklayer and the skill of the architect, leaving little for adverse criticism.

From the date of its completion in 1891, until its demise, the Institute owed a great deal of its success to the building itself with its various rooms and the large hall, which gave scope for numerous social and educational activities in which members participated; also in great measure, to those who served as Chairmen, Secretaries, and as Committee members, in their wise choice of stewards, which reflected the prudent manner in which the Institute was managed and administered.



The foundation stone of the original Railway Institute
as built into the new Institute in Romsey Road.

From the beginning, the London and South Western Railway Company arranged things so as to be fairly certain that their policies regarding the management of the Institute were given due weight and consideration. With this in view they nominated men from top and middle management of the Carriage and Wagon Works (after 1911 this included men from the Locomotive Works) to serve on the Institute's management committee to ensure that the Company's point of view was not only heard, but often acted upon. The London and South Western Railway Company and their successors, the Southern Railway, right up to the nationalisation of Britain's railways, retained the right to nominate persons to serve on the Institute's Management Committee. The names of three who were nominated by the Company to serve on the Committee spring to mind, namely Mr. Charles A. Shepherd, the Manager of the Carriage and Wagon Works, Mr. C.R. Garrett, a section head employed at the Locomotive Works offices, and Mr. Harold Marriott of the Costing Office of the same works.

Although there have been many chairmen, secretaries and stewards connected with the Railway Institute since its opening in 1891, I have been unable to obtain a complete list of these people. However, the following are the names of some who served the Institute: -

Chairmen	Mr. William Panter	1891	
	Mr. Bert Dawes		
	Mr. Frank Hale		
	Mr. Frank Service		Who served for around a quarter of a century
	Mr. Robert Franklin	1978 - 1986	
Secretaries	Mr. J.A. Purkess		The first secretary, appointed 1891
	Mr. Fred Elkins		
	Mr. Robert Franklin	1958 - 1978	
	Mr. H. Dunn		
	Mr. J. Whyte		
	Mr. Malcolm Brown	1986 and currently holding that position	
Stewards - Caretakers			
	Mr. and Mrs. Robbins		The first caretakers appointed 1891
	Mr. E.A. Harding	1922 - 1932	
	Mr. A. Langrish	1932	
	Mr. F. King		
	Mr. Brooking		
	Mr. A. Miles		
	Mr. Berlini		
	Mrs. June Franklin	1968 - 1978	The first lady to hold this office
	Mr. Swann		
	Mr. D. Keating		
	Mr. D. Tinkler		

A well-respected Vice Chairman had been Mr. Harold Marriott.

Mr. P. Joslin had Chaired the Finance Sub-Committee for many years.

Those named above may not be in chronological order, and the dates at the side of some of the names, except those dated 1891, may not be strictly accurate. Also, there must be those of all three categories who I am unable to trace.

In the world of sport several of Eastleigh's townspeople started their sporting careers as members of the Institute. Names which were well known locally as well as nationally were the late George Wright, one time Alderman and a Mayor of Eastleigh. He had been a Hampshire Champion bowls player, had played for England and had captained England's bowls team in the British Empire Games of 1934. Vince Hawkins and Albert Rice were two of Eastleigh's boxers who learnt much of their craft and boxing skills at the Railway Institute. The boxing tournaments which formed a part of Eastleigh's carnival celebrations for many years were staged at the Institute and were very popular.

The successful operation of an enterprise such as the Railway Institute, offering a diversity of recreational facilities, requires a good deal of administrative organisation. The General Management Committee and the Finance Sub-Committee of the Institute play an important role in this regard. The secretary, as the Executive Officer, is responsible for the day to day administration of the Institute, the weekly cash turnover of which compares with many of the town's businesses. The steward also shoulders considerable responsibilities and to a great extent his or her personality and energy ensures the convivial and relaxed atmosphere enjoyed by the members.

The new Institute is proving to be as popular as its predecessor of 1891. It is only five years hence that the Institute enters into its second century in providing recreational and sporting activities for its members. The wheel has turned almost full cycle and, as in the Institute's early days when the Chairman, Mr. William Panter and Mr. J.A. Purkess, the Secretary, were addressing themselves to the successful running of the new Institute, so today the Chairman and Secretary are pursuing the same aim, not an exact parallel, for times and the way of life have changed since the days in 1891 when Mrs. R. Dutton declared the London and South Western Railway Institute open.