

John Smith

Citizen of the Year 2014

John has lived in the village for nearly 40 years and over the past 10 years has freely given his time and energy into researching the history of the village and has assembled a vast archive of events, including photos, of West End and its people. This has become known as the West End History Project and has contributed to providing a lasting record for the Surrey Heath Museum. An ever changing photo display based around a theme is always on display in the meeting room at The Sports Pavilion. This encompasses several generations and is of interest across all age groups. Displays at village events such as the Ag and Hort show and the village fete are always a welcome feature together with a display of historical photos at the social club and Camberley galleries. Articles and photos have been sent to Surrey History Centre in Woking where the records are preserved and archived. They are on permanent loan from John and available to anyone who should request to view them.

John has been instrumental in obtaining listed status on the War Memorial and has also recorded all the listed buildings in the village. The War Memorial jubilee was instigated by John, and after money was donated by various organisations both John and Michael Glazier planted the gardens, which significantly enhance the area. You'll always see John at village events taking photos to ensure traditions are kept alive for future generations.

John has managed to collate the majority of the Bisley and West End Parish Magazines dating back to the first one in 1914. John now writes a monthly article in the parish magazine on behalf of the West End History project. John also produced a booklet on the history of the West End Social Club which was available to purchase from the club.

And from a Parish Council perspective, John has spent hours and hours scanning parish council minutes dating back to 1968 and provided them to the Surrey Heath Museum. Again a lasting record of village history. The history page on the Parish Council website was also written by John.

Recently John presented West End Church with an album of all the casualties from the First World War. John worked on this in conjunction with the War Graves Commission obtaining their permission to copy reports. This project has taken a couple of years to complete.

All of the above is hugely time consuming and space consuming also. The shed in John's garden is bursting with over 3000 archived photos, slides and articles. As history is always being made this number is constantly growing.