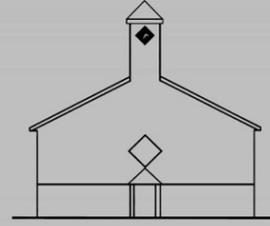


The Clock Tower



The Newsletter of the Friends of Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre

Issue Number 10: May 2008

FOMA at the London Marathon!



April Witheridge at the end of the London Marathon

On 13th April 2008 April Witheridge, daughter of John Witheridge, FOMA Vice Chairman, ran in the London Marathon for the first time and raised a fantastic £500 for the Friends of the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre (MALSC). April completed the gruelling course in 5 hours and 55 minutes, but not without injury – note the bloodied left shoe. To say thank you to April, there will be a special presentation at MALSC on Saturday 7th June at 10.00 am.

April's personal diary of her exciting day can be read in *News and Events*.

About The Clock Tower

The Clock Tower is the quarterly journal produced and published by the Friends of Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre (FOMA).

Editorial deadlines

The first Monday (or Tuesday when a Bank Holiday occurs) of February, May, August and November. Articles, letters, photos and any information to be considered for inclusion in the journal must be received before this date by the Editor, Mrs Amanda Thomas, 72 Crabtree Lane, Harpenden, AL5 5NS, Hertfordshire; amanda@ajthomas.com

The copy deadline for Issue 11 of *The Clock Tower* is Monday 4th August 2008.

Publication date

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Front Cover Accreditations and Website Information

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The banner design (incorporating the logo) and the title *The Clock Tower* were designed by Alexander Thomas.

The Clock Tower is also available on: <http://ajthomas.com/theclocktower>

Further Information

Further information on the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre can be obtained on the MALSC CityArk website <http://cityark.medway.gov.uk/> or by writing to Medway Archives Office, Civic Centre, Strood, Rochester, Kent ME2 4AU. Telephone +44 (0)1634 332714; fax +44 (0)1634 297060; email: malsc@medway.gov.uk

General enquiries about the Friends can be obtained from the Secretary, Cindy O'Halloran, at the above address, or by telephoning +44 (0)1634 332238/332714. Membership enquiries should be temporarily directed to the Membership Secretary, Jean Skilling: 15 Port Close, Lordswood, Chatham, ME5 8DU, Kent. jean.skilling@blueyonder.co.uk

The Committee

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Tessa Towner: 37 Ravenswood Avenue, ME2 3BY, Kent.
picketywitch@blueyonder.co.uk

Vice Chairman

John Witheridge: 28 Greendale Gardens, Gillingham, Kent.
dewitheridge@hotmail.co.uk

Treasurer

Jean Skilling: 15 Port Close, Lordswood, Chatham, ME5 8DU, Kent.
jean.skilling@blueyonder.co.uk

Archivist

Stephen Dixon: stephen.dixon@medway.gov.uk

Secretary

Odette Buchanan: odette_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk

Minutes Secretary

Cindy O'Halloran: cindy.ohalloran@medway.gov.uk

Membership Secretary

Position Vacant (temporarily Jean Skilling, contact details as above)

Members

Dr Kate Bradley: k.bradley@kent.ac.uk

Dr Sandra Dunster: S.A.Dunster@gre.ac.uk

Elaine Gardner: lanagardner@fsmail.net

Bob Ratchiffe: 12 King Edward Road, Rochester, ME1 1UB, Kent.

Richard Stoneham: rpstoneham@aol.com

The Clock Tower Editor

Amanda Thomas: 72 Crabtree Lane, Harpenden, AL5 5NS, Hertfordshire.
amanda@ajthomas.com

From the Chairman

Tessa Towner, Chairman.

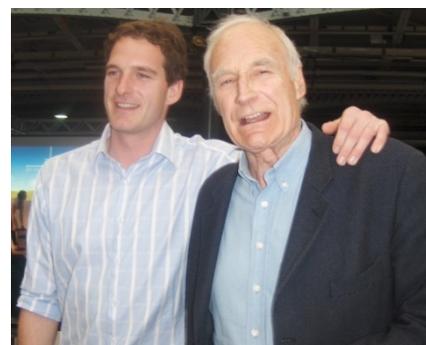


It was with surprise and sadness that we heard at our AGM that Stephen Dixon our archivist is leaving MALSC for pastures new after 18 years. He will be taking the post of Archive Service Manager at Essex Record Office at Chelmsford. We are very sorry to see him go and send him on his way with all our good wishes for success in his new position. Stephen was the driving force behind the setting up of the Friends, and a great help to us with his sound advice. We will miss you Stephen, and at the same time look forward to working with his successor, when appointed.

We also say goodbye and best wishes to Lisa Birch, our Membership Secretary, who has done a wonderful job for us but is now moving to a new job with the Institute of Heraldic Studies at Canterbury. Please note that the position of FOMA Membership Secretary is now vacant – volunteers for this job are most welcome! We are very grateful to Jean Skilling for temporarily standing in.

I spent the Bank Holiday weekend with the bookstall team of the Kent Family History Society (KFHS) at Olympia for the *Who Do You Think You Are Live* show, the exhibition for the successful television programme which explored the family history of well known celebrities. Whilst the show was very exhausting, we all had a good time, and one of the team even managed (inadvertently) to insult television presenter Dan Snow in a restaurant the night before the show by calling him Dan Cruickshank! Those amongst us who avidly watch history programmes will know that the only similarity between these two well known presenters is their christian name, and needless to say Dan quickly corrected her. The following morning we spotted his father, Peter, and relayed the faux pas. Peter (who worked for many years a television journalist before teaming up with Dan to present their own documentaries) thought the story hilarious and on Sunday morning actually introduced his son to the audience as “Dan Cruickshank,” causing great amusement. Our team member did apologise and here is the photo taken as a reward for that apology!

Dan ‘Cruickshank’ and his father Peter Snow



We all had a great time at the *Who Do You Think You Are Live* show and hope to have a presence at the KFHS Open Day in September at the University of Greenwich at Medway.

News and Events

Cindy O'Halloran, Friends' Secretary



We held our AGM on Wednesday 16th April 2008. The meeting was well attended, and thank you to all those members who were able to come along and share in the afternoon. Following the meeting, everyone very much enjoyed the talks from Sandra Dunster, the new Kent Team Leader for the Victoria County History's *England's Past for Everyone* (EPE), and Kate Bradley, lecturer in social history and social policy at the University of Kent at Medway.



From left to right: Sandra Dunster Kent Team Leader for the Victoria County History's England's Past for Everyone (EPE) and Tessa Towner, FOMA Chairman

From left to right: Archivist Stephen Dixon and Bob Ratcliffe, FOMA committee member and President of the City of Rochester Society.

On 13th April 2008 Bob Ratcliffe featured in the BBC Television programme, Song's of Praise, when he acted as a guide to Rochester Cathedral for presenter, Pam Rhodes.

Bob Ratcliff and Patricia Salter's article George Bond, Architect and Surveyor, 1853 to 1914, features in this issue of The Clock Tower.



FOMA members arrive for the Annual General Meeting

Many members came from further afield to attend the AGM and it is always a pleasure to meet members and put faces to names on the membership list. A change to our Constitution was proposed at the AGM, and applies to Committee members only. In future all elected Committee Members will be expected to attend three meetings per year minimum (not

including the AGM) and this proposal was agreed. Copies of the Constitution and Rules are available from the Secretary if required.

There have been several changes to the Committee. New members are Elaine Gardner, Dr Sandra Dunster, Dr Kate Bradley, Richard Stoneham and Odette Buchanan; Tony Farnham did not stand for re-election to the Committee this year. Our thanks to Tony for his work on the Committee and for his talks on barges undertaken for FOMA over the past two years.



Lisa Birch, our Membership Secretary, and pictured, has moved on to a new job with the Institute of Heraldic Studies at Canterbury. Lisa will be sorely missed at MALSC; she was a very hard working member of the team here and popular with our customers. We all wish her well in her new job. We now have a vacancy for a Membership Secretary. Jean Skilling, our Treasurer, has taken over the role on a temporary basis. If you are willing and able to take on the

job, Jean will be pleased to hear from you! In addition, I am now stepping down as Secretary and handing the role over to Odette Buchanan. I shall continue as the Minute Secretary to the Committee and as a staff contact.

On 29th March and 5th April, MALSC hosted two very successful Open Days, the highlight of which was undoubtedly the newly restored 1822 map of Rochester. Whilst both open days were free for all, April Witheridge and her father John, FOMA Vice Chairman, made sure that no one left without giving a donation to her London Marathon fund.



FOMA Vice Chairman, John Witheridge accepts donations for the London Marathon.



Lunch is served at the first open day!



Everyone wanted to see the newly restored 1822 map of Rochester

As many of you may now be aware, our Archivist, Stephen Dixon, will be leaving us in June to take up a new post as Archive Service Manager at Essex Record Office. Stephen has been at MALSC for over 18 years and his work on Cityark has been invaluable. Without his foresight and hard work, Medway Ancestors and the digitisation of records online would not have gone ahead. Cityark is very well used with over one million hits per month and many out of area members are very grateful for the facility. Under Stephen's leadership, we recently received a 'very good' rating in the new Compulsory Performance Assessment. We hope that he remembers us when he is sitting in his new custom built Record Office with his legions of new staff! We will no doubt have an office outing to visit him when he has settled in. Unfortunately, this leaves the Archive staff at MALSC very depleted with just April Lambourne and myself to struggle manfully on - or should this be womanfully?

FOMA at the London Marathon!

On 13th April 2008, April Witheridge, daughter of Vice Chairman John Witheridge, ran for FOMA at the London Marathon and raised the fantastic sum of £500.

To follow is her diary of that exciting day.

A Worm's Eye View of the London Marathon

The sun is shining, the air is fresh, perhaps an ideal setting for a first attempt of a dream called The London Marathon. The crowd is swelling both in size and volume. Calls and counter calls between both the watcher and the contestants. Happy rivalry, plenty of well meaning advice. The feeling of butterflies and even worse. The countdown...the surge. Heavens! No movement? "Oi! Stop pushing!" We are going nowhere. Now movement, a steady forward motion, elbow raking, feet slapping. Have I entered the wrong sport? This is more like wrestling. Ah! Now we are moving. More room to step out without treading on the person in front...or perhaps an elbow in your side? Oops. Sorry. The crowd cheering on their relations and friends. What did that man just say to me as I passed? "Good luck, love, take care." Isn't that nice. Listen to the roar of the spectators. The clapping, the drumming, the balloons. Aren't they great.

Now downhill. This is hard. Trying to hold back and keep away from them in front. Oh no, it's raining. Still, they do say that a little rain helps. My feet are sliding. This is hail not rain, I am glad I'm wearing a cap. Too many people running and I can't step out. Seems never ending and we don't seem to be getting anywhere. Mile Eight. Good, move over to the side and grab one of those foil sheets. Ooh, this rain and hail. I'm freezing! That's better. A bit awkward though. Hope the wind doesn't get up or I will be back where I started off.



*April Witheridge (in orange vest, standing left) at mile 25 of the London Marathon
"There's dad and Colin: give them a smile just for the birdee!"*

Oh - look, there's dad and my brother, Colin. "Thanks for coming, you two, see you later!" Listen to the crowd. Aren't they great. Constant clapping, cheering loudly. The rain has stopped, so I'll wrap up this sheet. "Oh, thank you." A policeman has taken the foil sheet from me and he called me "Miss". How nice.

Over Tower Bridge. What a Noise! Turning out towards the Isle of Dogs. I must be barking mad. Canary Wharf: I used to work there. Rain and hail again. "Hello Cheryl!" that's my sister. She's done this many times, seven or eight. It was nice of her to come for me.

Back to Tower Hill. More hail and yet more foil sheets; by God it's cold out here, "Baby it's cold outside". London Bridge. What a roar from the crowd. Oh, I see, it's that man again, the one with a belt and little else. Well, not quite, plenty of else! Whoops, sorry, I wasn't looking. Control yourself, girl. Hello, there are those Nigerian runners again. I must be catching up. Or perhaps they're slowing down to look at that fellow in the belt and little else. The Embankment now. Must look out for dad and Colin on the right. Their right or mine? The crowd are clapping non-stop, Someone's calling encouragement on a loud speaker, people are calling out the names of the runners to encourage them on. I must take a break and walk a while. Hello dad, yes I'm ok, just easing my feet a bit. It hurts with every step. What's that? Oh, yes, they have been bleeding for some time, "Bleeding feet!"

There's Big Ben. Oh my feet! Not far now. Birdcage Walk. Would they let me run on the grass? Let's give the Queen a wave. "Hi, Queenie!" Oh, there's the finish line. Tears of joy. Get a grip of yourself girl, get a grip.

I've done it!!!! Hurrah! Here's my medal "Thank you." Walk now, tread softly. Get my bag from Blue Point. My phone's just rung. "Yes, hello, Colin. Got it. Got my medal. See you at the changing rooms." Sit down and rest the feet, take off these shoes OOOOOHHHHH. What a great crowd. Never again. Oh, I don't know...perhaps!

Calendar of Forthcoming Events and Exhibitions

31st May 2008

This year is the 100th annual Barge Match and we are hoping to follow the race on the Kingswear Castle. The Kingswear will get under way around 10 am, returning at about 5pm. The projected cost will be £20 – 25 per head. If you are interested in participating, please contact Cindy O'Halloran **immediately** (see below) as a few tickets are still available; contact details can be found below.

12th May to 24th June

One for the Road, the Story of Chatham Pubs

An exhibition by Roy Murrant

Exhibitions are free to view.

27th May 7.30pm

A talk by Roy Murrant:

One for the Road

Talks are £3 for members £4 non-members.

10th June 7.30 pm

A talk by Catherina Clement:

The Role of the Cathedral 1640 1660

Talks are £3 for members £4 non-members.

24th June 6.30 pm

We will be meeting at Rochester Cathedral for a guided tour by Bob Ratcliffe. This will hopefully include some areas not normally open for viewing. The cost will be £5.00, which will include a donation to the Cathedral.

26th June to 1st August

The Bombing of the Drill Shed

An exhibition by Drill Hall Library Staff

Exhibitions are free to view.

5th July 11am to 5pm.

River Trip on the Kingswear Castle up river to Darnett Ness and back to New Hythe.

8th July 7.30pm

A talk by Drill Hall Library Staff:

13 Sep 1917 The Bombing of the Drill Shed

Talks are £3 for members £4 non-members.

4th August to 14th September

Exhibition: 150th Anniversary of the Strood to Canterbury Railway

Exhibitions are free to view.

6th August 7.30pm

A talk by Bob Ratcliffe:

Railways of Rochester

Talks are £3 for members £4 non-members.

16th September to 24th October
Ad Perpetuam Memoriam-350th Anniversary of Oliver Cromwell's death
An exhibition by John Witheridge
Exhibitions are free to view.

30th September 7.30pm
A talk by John Witheridge:
Ad Perpetuam Memoriam-350th Anniversary of Oliver Cromwell's death
Talks are £3 for members £4 non-members.

28th October to 2nd December
Who? What? Where? When? Unidentified Photographs in the Archives
An exhibition by Tessa Towner
Exhibitions are free to view.

4th November 7.30pm
A talk by Irina Shub:
Reminiscence of an Immigrant - my life in Soviet Russia 1970-1990
Talks are £3 for members £4 non-members.

4th December to 3rd January 2009
Post-war Housing Development in Medway
An exhibition by MALSC Staff
Exhibitions are free to view.

Wednesday 10th December 10.00 am to 12.00 noon
Mince Pie Day
at 2.30pm
A talk by Michael Gandy:
Seeing it through their songs
Talks are £3 for members £4 non-members.

Unless otherwise indicated, all the above are held at the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre, Civic Centre, Strood, Rochester, Kent ME2 4AU. Further information is available from Cindy O'Halloran, Friends' Minutes Secretary, at cindy.ohalloran@medway.gov.uk or on +44 (0)1634 332238/332714.

Please note: You may be aware that Medway Council is being relocated to Gun Wharf. This move does not include the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre and until further notice, we are still to be found in the Clock Tower building.

FOMA Members

Tina Bean



Australian member, Christina Bean, has kindly sent us this article about her research into the Gransden family and how she could not have done this without MALSC's online service, CityArk. A naturopath and an e-learning developer and consultant, Tina has been interested in family history since she was a child.

Although I have always been interested in family history, I didn't start to take a serious interest until my first child was born in 2003. My mother and I have always been closer to her mother's side than to any other branch so I chose to research the Gransden family name. Within a short period of time I had discovered how this family had arrived in Australia and that my grandparents had been cousins. My discovery of how the Gransdens arrived in Australia is still not complete. Out of a family of eleven children, three emigrated to Australia. Of the rest at least four lived to marry and it is probable that the remaining children died young. It is not known exactly why members of this Gransden family emigrated to Australia but the conditions of the day and of the family can probably give some good indications. At the time the eldest child, Mary Ann, decided to emigrate, the family was very poor. Sarah Gransden, née Wood, grandmother to Mary Ann, had moved with her husband from Kent to Hampshire and died in the workhouse; she was described as *pauper* on her death certificate. Mary Ann took advantage of the Bounty assisted immigration scheme to encourage the emigration of women to Australia, and was one of the earliest women to take advantage of the scheme, sailing from England on the Layton in 1833. When she arrived in Australia, Mary Ann took a job as a general servant working in a public house in the Rocks, Sydney. Later she and her husband moved to Bathurst and became farmers.



From left to right: Tina Bean with Alex Warnecke on her lap, Shirley Guest, née Gransden, with Sophia Warnecke on her lap, and Tina's mother, Sharon Carter.

The next eldest child, Robert Gransden, followed a few years later, though it is unsure exactly when and how he arrived in Australia but he was there by 1841. Robert lived in Sydney for some years before following his sister to Bathurst and also becoming a farmer. It is probable that Robert came over as a crew member.

The final child to emigrate to Australia was Edwin Gransden who arrived in Australia in 1855 on the Washington Irwin as a crewman. He deserted ship and followed the gold rushes from New South Wales to Victoria and finally to Queensland. On the way he married and deserted at least one wife, possibly two, before finally settling down in remote Queensland with a family. Other Gransden families more remote from my branch emigrated to Canada and the United States. All seemed to emigrate at times of depression and difficulty.

I have had a lot of help along the way with other Gransden researchers around the world. However we had all reached a dead end with the marriage of Richard and Mary Gransden in about 1750. The children of this family were known to come from Cobham in Kent and transcriptions of the parish records for the births of these children had been obtained to check the details. However these records had been obtained by a distant relative in the days before the IGI and before the records had been handed over to a central body. All I had to go on were the handwritten notes of the priest who had copied the records out of the registers for my relative. These I double checked in the IGI but we could find no further details for a possible marriage or baptism for Richard Gransden or his wife. Eventually I decided that I may need the help of a researcher in Kent.

I contacted a researcher who was suggested to me by the Kent Genealogical Society but unfortunately, or rather fortunately as it turned out for me later, she was too busy to help. She suggested I look at the CityArk site, and when I realised what the CityArk site was about I was incredibly excited. I started going page by page through the Cobham parish registers for the years around 1750. Still I could find nothing for the marriage of Richard and Mary Gransden, but for the first time I was able to find records for the Gransdens I knew about. However I was confused when I discovered burial records for Gransdens I didn't know about, but as I became more familiar with the language and the writing I realised that these Gransdens were probably adults and not the children of Richard and Mary Gransden at all.

I started to look around surrounding parishes for Richard and Mary and then I started to look earlier, searching for the baptism of Richard. As I had no idea what Mary's maiden name was I could not look for her baptism. Finally I found a baptism in Rochester for William Gransden son of Richard and Anne Gransden. Having an Anne Gransden was interesting as this was one of the unexplained Gransdens I had found earlier in my search and I now realised that Anne Gransden was probably the mother of Richard and it was her burial that I had found and then later a burial for another Richard. This had been attributed to the son on my Richard but it would have meant that he died very young, yet he was not noted as a child. So I concluded it was probably the father of my Richard Gransden who had died. It could not be my Richard Gransden as he was still having children at this time.

I have very little information about these Gransdens. They do not seem to have been particularly well off but they are not mentioned in any of the parish records that I have read as having received charity of any kind. It is probable that they were agricultural labourers.

All this was still guess work, but by now I was getting much better at reading the parish records and I went back over the Cobham records, reading every book from start to finish. Finally I found what I had been looking for, very hard to read but definitely the correct baptism, that of *Richard son of Richard and Anne Gransden baptised this day 20th of Januarie 1720*. Now that I had confirmed Richard's baptism I started going through all the surrounding towns and churches. I had a road map of Britain from my last holiday in 2000 before I had found out about my Kentish links. I used this map to find out what towns were nearby and started investigating the records for towns close to Cobham. Gradually I found records at Chalk for the marriage of Richard and Anne Drew but it was not until I found the parish records at Meopham that I found the baptisms for both children. This gave me details for the Drew family for another two generations and the Gransden family for another generation. I now had a father for Richard Gransden, John Gransden. This was further back than had been accomplished in over 30 years of other people searching, but one of the most exciting things was that I could now direct other people to the records to verify my work.

By this stage I had put my findings up on a web site and others were starting to help me search. We have still not found a father for John Gransden although we would like to get hold of a will for Thomas Gransden who had many children in Meopham and may well be the grandfather to our John. What we have found, though, are the details for the baptism of John's wife Elizabeth Haslin. This, in combination with a document from the visitation of Kent in 1619, was able to link us into some prominent families in the Kent area including the Barham and Courthope families; the former has a strong line of descent going back to 1440.

In earlier times the Gransden family seems to have been a bit wealthier. The will for Thomas Gransden has his occupation as husbandman and I hope to find more information when I receive a copy of this. Marriages to the Haslin family and through those connections to the Barham and Courthope families show a family that is of some status and certainly has enough money to need to make a will. At least one of the Haslin family members was a knight as can be seen by a tomb stone in Meopham churchyard, and the CityArk site was useful for this information as it directed me to a local cemetery transcription project that had details of a Haslin grave. [<http://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/Research/research.htm>]

This is as far as I have researched this branch of my family, and I feel I know much more about my roots and have gradually developed an understanding of many of the events that have shaped this history of my family. Up until now I have just used the records on the CityArk site to help with my own research but I have been so pleased with the amount of information I have been able to obtain here in Australia.

I would like to help others with their research and to this end I have sought permission to start transcribing some of the records from the CityArk site to FreeGen. FreeGen is a site associated with FreeBMD. The aim of the site is to provide a database of all Baptisms, Marriages and Deaths from parish registers. I have signed up to help with this transcription and will be transcribing records from Meopham. I am hoping that by doing this others will be able to utilise both CityArk and FreeGen to help take their research further and find out more about their families. Many people find reading the old parish records extremely difficult and it can take months to find a particular record because of the difficulties reading the records and the quality of the records. I hope that with this transcription work I can help others who like myself want to find out more about where they came from. I can only thank CityArk for enabling me to do this.



The 2005 reunion of the Australian Gransdens in Australia

Readers' Letters

We welcome letters and emails from readers with their comments. If you have anything you would like to say please write to: Mrs Amanda Thomas, Editor, *The Clock Tower*, 72 Crabtree Lane, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, AL5 5NS or email at amanda@ajthomas.com

29th February 2008

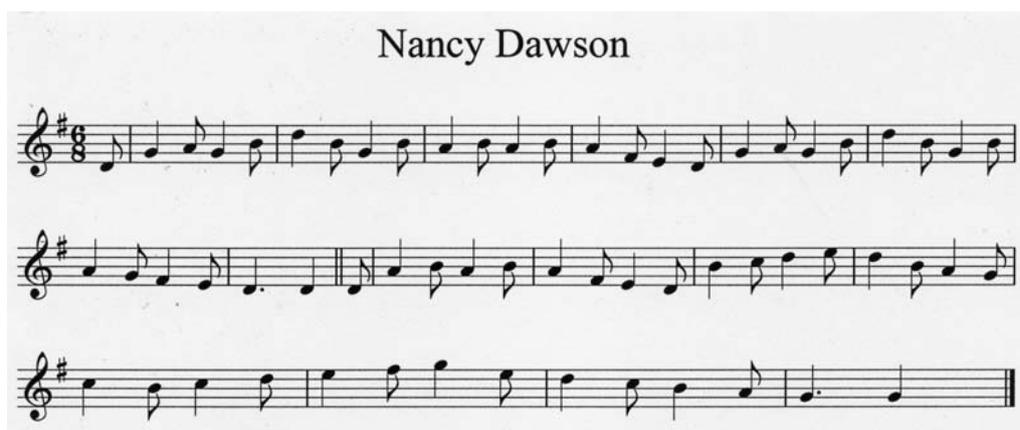
Dear Amanda,

Another splendid Clock Tower, for which many thanks. I was intrigued by the song on the back page and looked up the tune *Nancy Dawson* in Claude M. Simpson, *The British Broadside Ballad and its Music* (Rutgers University Press, 1966, pp. 503-5). I attach a copy for interest which I have re-set for *The Clock Tower*. Simpson tells the story: 'Nancy Dawson (c.1730-1767) was a dancer who achieved great acclaim when in October, 1759, during a revival of Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, the man who danced the hornpipe became ill and she took his place. Her popularity resulted in a long run for the ballad opera in Covent Garden and threatened Garrick's prestige at the rival Drury Lane.' A ballad entitled *Nancy Dawson* attributed to George Alexander Stevens, was first published in October 1760. There were many derivatives and parodies, of which *The Chatamites* was clearly one (the music covers two verses each time). The tune is related to *Here we go round the mulberry bush* and *I saw Three Ships*.

All best wishes,

Andrew Ashbee

Honorary Curator of Snodland Millennium Museum and the Chairman of Snodland Historical Society.



27th March 2008

Dear Amanda,

I read with great interest the article on the Rosher family [Issue 09, February 2008]. I recall when I was young boy, probably in around 1928 or 1929, certainly before 1930, visiting the Rosherville Gardens. We visited the gardens once on one of our regular outings from my Aunt Babs'* house in Northfleet [*Edith Millicent Dunmall married Harold Groves], through the tunnels to Springfield to buy watercress. The gardens were derelict back then, covered with weeds, so you couldn't make out much, but our aunt told us how wonderful they used to be.

Ken Dunmall,
British Columbia, Canada

28th March 08

Dear Mrs Thomas

I refer to your article on the Rosher Family which appeared in Issue 09 of *The Clock Tower*. The following details might be of passing interest regarding Rosherville Station.

The station was opened on 10th May 1886 by the London Chatham and Dover Railway on the branch to Gravesend West. It became an unstaffed halt, 'Rosherville Halt', on 17th June 1928 and closed on 16th July 1933. The branch itself was closed to passengers on 3rd August 1953. I can recall visiting the site in the late 1950s (when goods trains were still running) and seeing the derelict stationmaster's house and the island platform with its wooden, covered overbridge and steps. There are several photographs of the station in *Bromley South to Rochester including Gravesend West Branch* by Vic Mitchell and Keith Smith, Middleton Press, 1993.

With regards,

Simon Shreeve.

14th April 2008

Dear Mrs Thomas,

I enclose some photographs of my father, one taken in his sergeant's uniform in the early 1930s with a fellow soldier.

My father is the chap on the left, of course. The other shot was taken at his desk late in his working life when he was a legal executive at Messrs. Lewis Bell and Darleys (Solicitors). He was for many years in the 1930s and '40s an assistant in the Town Clerk's Office at Gillingham, and when the then Town Clerk died



suddenly in 1946, father was appointed Acting Town Clerk until a replacement was appointed six months later. Unfortunately they required a qualified solicitor and my father was never articulated. Having left the Territorial Army (TA) in 1938, he joined the Local Defence Volunteers (LDV), later the Home Guard, in his old rank as sergeant and served in an AA Rocket battery until it was disbanded at the end of the war.

My grandparents, on both maternal and paternal sides, lived in Rochester in the late 19th Century. My maternal grandfather, James Southcott, came from Swindon, where he was appointed boilermaker at the Great Western Railway Works. He joined the navy in the 1890s and married my grandmother, Lily Croucher, in 1900. When he left the navy in the early 1920s, he took on a part-time job as a mace bearer for Rochester Corporation. Incidentally, we have the original documents relating to James Southcott's apprenticeship and his Naval Service Record which indicates that he joined at Chatham in 1896 and was pensioned off in 1919.



My paternal grandfather, George Leonard Keys, had been married before. At the age of 50, he married my grandmother, Ellen Smith, in 1896. My father, George Leonard Victor Keys, was born the following year. Grandad was a coachman in the employ of a local solicitor. He died in 1917 at the age of 70. My grandmother Keys was for many years housekeeper for Miss Snowdon-Smith who ran a private boys' school in Watts Avenue, Rochester.

In the 1891 Census Ellen Smith and George Keys are recorded as being in domestic service as a maid and coachman to a parish priest in a village near Hollingbourne, which was obviously how they met. He is described as a widower and had seven children by his previous wife.

So, you see, we are a locally based family. My wife Jacqueline (Peggy) and I married in 1950 and have lived in the Medway Towns ever since.

Mr J L Keys,
High Halstow,
Rochester.

Issue 10, August 2008, of The Clock Tower will include John Keys' article, 166 City of Rochester HAA Battery RA.

15th April 2008

Dear Amanda,

Re.: Prefabs and Post-War Housing in Medway: an appeal for Photographs and Reminiscences

As part of our exhibition programme for 2008, we are staging an exhibition in December for housing in Medway from 1945 to the 1960s.

We are especially interested in the prefabs and development of the post-war housing estates around Medway and would love to include the memories and photographs of any local residents who were in the area at the time.

I'd be most grateful if you could print this letter in The Clock Tower as it is an appeal to readers who may wish to contribute or know someone who may be able to help with the following questions:

- Perhaps you remember moving into a prefab or watching their construction? The photograph shows the Warren Wood Estate.
- Where were they and what do you remember about them?
- Do you have any stories about living on the new estates that grew up around the towns after the war?
- What was it like living there?
- Do you have any photographs that we could include in the exhibition?



Warren Wood Estate, Rochester

If you do have photographs, we would, of course, scan the originals and return them to you and we are happy to take hand-written, typed or taped reminiscences, however short.

If you have any relevant material, please contact April Lambourne or Cindy O'Halloran at the Studies Centre on 01634 332714 or email april.lambourne@medway.gov.uk. Many thanks.

Yours sincerely,

April Lambourne,
Archives and Local Studies Officer,
MALSC.

2nd May 2008

Dear Amanda,

Can you help? I have recently posted a message on the Cityark message board as follows:

THE HOMES FOR LITTLE BOYS, SWANLEY, HEXTABLE.

I am writing the history of these Homes between 1883 and 1955. I would like to make contact with anybody who had any links with the Homes, either directly, as a boy or member of staff, or indirectly through a member of a family. A lot of boys came from the Medway area; many of them joined the navy after having been trained at the Swanley Home. Many served in the wars of the 20th Century and a lot of them were casualties on land and sea as well. We have produced a first book of memoirs by those still alive in the UK and abroad. If you do have links I will be pleased to send you a copy. Here are some of the names that might ring a bell: 'TODD' SWEENEY, JOHNNY HAWTHORNE, DON HARRINGTON, JAKE BLAKE, 'FATTY' RULE, MR LOWES, MR JENNER, EDWARD ELLINS, BOBBY FLETCHER, DENNIS CHAWNER, 'GANDY', MR 'DAFFY' and hundreds more. I will be very pleased to hear from anyone who can help in this research.



Looking through Pembroke House archives recently I discovered the names of many boys who were sponsored by the Orphanage when they were admitted to the Homes. We have a group of them here in this photograph from the Furness School Archives in the 1940s. That is Don Harrington in the middle of the front row.

The Swanley Homes were opened in 1883, an off-shoot of a similar institution in Farningham, Kent. The distinctive thing about Swanley was that once Lord

Furness of the Furness Withy Line funded the building of Lady Furness House, in 1909, to train young boys for a life in the Merchant Navy it became known as the Naval Orphanage. Many boys were trained in navigational skills and seamanship and joined training ships as apprentices.

The 'Homes for Little Boys' is now Furness School, in Hextable and would be pleased to hear from anyone who was there as a boy, a member of staff, or indeed anybody who had family members who went there, from Pembroke House or elsewhere.

Orphaned boys came from all over the country and especially from naval areas like the Medway and Portsmouth. We have made contact with people at home and abroad. Do get in touch with me if you are interested in this project and I will let you have more details.

Greg Daxter.
36 Lyncombe Crescent,
Higher Lincombe Road,
Torquay,
Devon. TQ1 2HP
Tel. 01803 296267

Issue 10, August 2008, of The Clock Tower will include an article by Greg Daxter.

Kingswear Castle Boat Trips



We have booked tickets on the Kingswear Castle to follow the 100th Medway Barge Match on Saturday 31st May 2008, 10 am to about 5pm. Tickets for this event cost £25 per person. Lunch is not provided, but food may be purchased on board or bring a picnic.

Please contact me *immediately* as a few tickets are still available

We will also be joining the ship on Saturday 5th July 2008 for a trip up river to Wouldham. Tickets for this event will be £20 per person. Departure times to be confirmed.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact me for tickets as soon as possible.

Cindy O'Halloran
01634 332714
cindy.ohalloran@medway.gov.uk

MALSC in the Local Community: Medway Shoots the Breeze

Irina Shub, Local Studies Librarian



Irina joined the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre team in 2005. Originally from St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad) in Russia, she has always been fascinated by the English language and history. Throughout her career as a librarian, she has worked in various libraries, and when she and her family moved from London to Medway she applied for the position of a Local Studies Librarian at MALSC.

Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre (MALSC) launches online conferencing this January

The development of the internet has made it possible to reach out to wide audiences by creating online *Learning from the Archives* web pages, aimed at children and families, and providing teaching resources for schools. In addition to the benefits of easy access to the online resources, there is still nothing better than expert personal guidance and interaction between the presenter and the audience.

The latest development in educational activities at the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre (MALSC), one which combines online resources and personal interaction, is the introduction of Breeze sessions, to local schools, starting this year. Breeze is a web based software set of collaborative tools produced by Adobe Acrobat Connect, part of the Adobe Acrobat family (formerly *Macromedia Breeze*). Breeze sessions are video conference meetings where the presenter can share screens, chat, broadcast live audio and video and show the participants content that includes Breeze presentations, slides (PPT files), Flash applications (SWF files), Flash video (FLV files), web pages (HTML and HTM files) and images (JPEG files). This year the service is being offered to primary schools with a view to expanding it to secondary schools next year.

Sessions can either stand alone or be held in conjunction with a visit to the Centre itself. Stand-alone sessions provide an excellent opportunity for MALSC to reach out to schools unable for whatever reason to visit us. We anticipate that stand-alone sessions will be most beneficial to schools based in the rural areas of Medway and later on to secondary schools which, due to timetable restrictions, find it hard to arrange outside activities. Schools that do visit MALSC will benefit from work in small groups where pupils can handle original documents - such as old photographs, maps and school logbooks. Students will also learn to use the Centre's equipment - in particular microfilm and microfiche readers (not encountered in the school environment), allowing them to browse old local newspapers, parish records and many other illuminating historical sources such as fisheries, apprenticeships, workhouses, and burials. During their visit, the youngsters will also discover how MALSC operates and meet the professional team. The students will conduct independent research, seeking answers to whatever questions that arose during the pre-visit Breeze session.

Breeze in action at a Medway school



For both formats, the learning objective is the acquisition of skills needed to conduct an independent enquiry designed to answer a specific question. The student will:

- Gain familiarity with resources available
- Learn to select appropriate resources
- Acquire specialised terminology
- Learn to extract appropriate data and specific information by using note-taking skills
- Analyse and evaluate data and information extracted
- Develop their ability to organise and present information in a coherent and sequential form, which will answer the question posed.

To assist the development of this completely new service, we sketched out a list of topics available for various subjects attuned to National Curriculum requirements. For example: Medway Victorians (History), What Do Medway Newspapers Tell Us? (English in conjunction with a cross-curricula theme), Counting in Context – Census Returns, Statistics (Maths, History), Let's Make a Difference – Building Designs, Parks, Open Spaces (Geography, Design Technology, Art, Architecture), and others. In general, we believe that the best approach is to be guided by curriculum needs and we have been emphasizing to the schools that the topics are open to discussion and we are happy to adapt them to suit individual schools.

With this flexible approach in mind, we hope to build a database of many sessions on various subjects over a period of time. We think Breeze sessions are capable of enriching the school curriculum significantly. We want to reach out to all Medway schools, and to become the first point of call when they confront local history.

As this article goes to press, I shall be presenting our first Breeze session to Walderslade Primary school. Rich in historic and geographic interest, the topic is Chatham Waterfront Development.

Archives Update

Stephen Dixon, Borough Archivist



We were very sad to lose Archives Assistant Lisa Birch on 25th April after 14 months, but are glad she has found a position at the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies in Canterbury. Lisa is well equipped for her new post on account of her longstanding personal interest in genealogy and family history and her work at MALSC. We wish her well in her new job.

On a more personal note, I am leaving MALSC after just over 18 years to take up the position of Archive Service Manager for Essex County Council at Essex Record Office in Chelmsford. In this regard, it may be worth reviewing the time I have spent in the Medway Towns.

The former Rochester upon Medway City Council, which inherited a large quantity of records from its predecessor authorities Rochester City Council, Chatham Borough Council and Strood Rural District Council on its creation in 1974, had recognised by the 1980s that provision for their storage should be improved and at the same time resolved that its documentary heritage should be opened up to public research. By arrangement with Kent County Council (KCC), Archives Authority for this area until 1998, a new service was therefore formally opened by Michael Roper, Keeper of the Public Records, in the presence of Dr Michael Turnbull, Bishop of Rochester in April 1990. Prior to and after the formal opening of the service, KCC transferred archival collections with a local bearing from West Kent Archives Office, now the Centre for Kentish Studies, to Strood, in order to create the kind of fully-rounded and relevant local government archive service expected by archive users.

This service, funded entirely by the City Council, was unique during the period 1990-1998 as an archive service operated by a district council. During this period, a report prepared for the Local Government Association during the period of Local Government Review concluded the service would be viable for complete administrative transfer over to a new unitary authority, independent of KCC.

During the period 1990 to 1993 the service was variously named Rochester upon Medway City Archives, Medway Area Archives Office and Medway Archives Centre and my job title fluctuated between Archivist to Rochester upon Medway City Council, Medway Area Archivist and Manager, Medway Archives Centre, depending on the viewpoint of the respective partner authorities. My job title was settled as City Archivist in 1993 and then on the creation of the unitary authority in 1998 as Borough Archivist.

Public visits have increased from 900 in the first year of operation (1990 to 1991) to between 7000 and 10,000 currently and the stock has increased 2,500% or to about 2 miles of linear shelving with an outstore in Chatham for modern records stored for client council departments, while staffing and funding have remained about the same in real terms. The first searchroom, operated on the ground floor 1990 to 1993, accommodated 5 researchers and one searchroom supervisor.

The three archive staff of the period 1990 to 1993 were joined by two heritage officers or local studies librarians from the local town centre libraries, together with their collections on 18th March 1993 and later that year by a local studies assistant (Janet Knight, the longest serving member of staff after myself). The new Rochester upon Medway Studies Centre, complete with much enlarged public searchroom on the first floor, opened in April 1993. This new service remains in operation to this day, having been renamed Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre with effect from 1st April 1998 when the new unitary authority, Medway Council, assumed control.

Milestones since 1990 have included the inauguration in December 1990 of a modern records transfer system by which redundant council files and plans were passed to archives for appraisal and retention thus ensuring continuation of the local government record and serving as the basis for the present modern records service introduced in 1998, the piloting of an archives database using the cumbersome UNIPLEX word processing system in the mid 1990s (CityArk Phase I), the specifying in 1997 of an intranet archives database (CityArk Phase II) delivered in 1998 and published online in mid-October 1999, which I believe was the first local government piece-level archives database published, the establishing of the friends of Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre (FOMA) in 2005 to 2006 and the publication of Medway Ancestors, the first parish registers published online.

Recollections of customers and local characters include Ron Foster, a long serving councillor and local historian of Chatham and its dockyard, E.H. Couchman who could little have known how his collection would delight Internet users, Rod Hull, Bluebell, Capt. Hoadley who vividly remembered the Royal Marines cadet disaster, Charlie Jarrett, a prominent citizen of Frindsbury Extra and Freddie Cooper, who I am glad to say is still very much alive. I will not embarrass any others!

I am pleased the service has established cordial relations with numerous organisations in the area, securing the initial or continuing deposits of their records, examples being the numerous parish churches, Rochester Cathedral, Ford Almshouses, Hawkins' Hospital, the City of Rochester Society, King's School and Old Roffensians, the Methodist Church Medway Towns Circuit, parish councils, the Castle Club and many voluntary bodies. I have been particularly pleased to have arranged and listed the records of Hawkins' Hospital, Strood RDC, the Methodist Circuit, Chatham Memorial Synagogue, Gillingham MSS, the Couchman Collection and the Wheatley MSS and to have edited the cathedral list, originally compiled by Anne Oakley, for publication on CityArk. I am also delighted to have acquired collections long thought missing including the records of Hoo Rural District Council, Hoo Highway Board and the Jezreelites. The only significant part of the puzzle that remains missing is the records of Rainham Parish Council, absorbed into Gillingham Borough in 1929.

All of these accomplishments could only have been possible with highly motivated and cooperative colleagues and I take this opportunity to thank them for their high quality work, dedication and can-do mentality despite working under-grade and under pressure with diminishing resources. Staff at MALSC are always keen to place the interests of the public foremost and my colleagues justly deserve their reputation for friendliness and helpfulness.

Although there is some uncertainty as to when and where MALSC will relocate as part of the council's overall relocation strategy, I feel I am leaving on a high point, especially in view of FOMA's going from strength to strength. I am particularly indebted to past and present

committee members for their support and enthusiasm, in view of which I am confident of FOMA's continuing success and relevance.

Finally, although it is a wrench to leave MALSC, my colleagues, public and the collections after so long, I will not be far distant. Essex and Kent are contiguous historical counties, with a shared boundary in the middle of the River Thames.

Accessions

Letter from George Payne, The Precinct, Rochester, on Kent Archaeological Society headed paper, to a Mr. [A.A.?] Arnold [of Cobhambury, Cobham, FSA?], describing the excavation of the Rochester City walls. 19 February 1893. 1 item, paper. [Found inside Notes on the Architectural History of Rochester Cathedral Church, as above] (DE1168 [part])

Title deeds to 5 messuages formerly part of Windmill Field originally of 2 acres at Snodland, bought by Joseph Bateman from John Roots, abutting Turnpike Road leading from Malling to Strood on east side, land of James Formby on west side, land of John Martin on the north side (formerly owned by Joseph Bateman) and land of Henry Jemmett (also formerly owned by Joseph Bateman on south side), parties Bateman, Peters, Tasker, Neame, Franklyn and Steinmetz 2 membranes 1861,1863 (DE1171).

Additional records of the New and Latter House of Israel or Jezreelites of Jezreel's Tower, Chatham Hill, Gillingham, Israel's International College, The Woodlands, Woodlands Lane (later Woodlands Road) and Israel's Hall, Napier Road, New Brompton, comprising:

Biblical verses, quotations, preaching notes and homilies (entitled *scraps, picked up*) of George Moore of new Brompton, head officer 1883-1885 (1 volume).

Extracts from Alexander Pope's poem *Messiah: A Sacred Eclogue in Imitation of Virgil's Pollio* (1712), with accompanying notes, c.1884 (1 volume).

Roll of new members 1882, Biblical quotations under subject headings, directory of English members and extracts from Sixty Propositions to the Philadelphia Society [by Jane Lead, 1697] c.1882 (1 volume).

Private notebook of James Jershom Jezreel, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, containing mainly Biblical quotations and homilies, with index August 1883, sold by J. Vernon, 229 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne (1 volume).

Diary or minute book 1880-1883 (1 volume).

Minute book 1884-1885 (1 booklet).

Minute book May-December 1885 (1 booklet).

Minute book March-June 1885 (1 booklet).

George Moore's diary 1885 (1 booklet).

Homilies, sermons, talks, notes and Biblical quotations by George Moore, Peckham, 1885 (1 volume).

Esther Jezreel's diary *while working for her lord and master in America* 1881, 1882 (2 packets/envelopes).

Journal account book, Jezreel in account with Messrs. Berwick and Co., 1889-1891 (1 booklet).

Journal account book, Mrs. Fanny M. Ball, The Woodlands, in account with Messrs. Berwick and Co.,1889 (1 booklet).

Chatham Tithing members' voluntary giving register 1884-1885 (1 booklet).

Vouchers or receipted bills 1884-1888 (5 bundles, of which 2 original).

Tithing sheets from British bodies (Maidstone, Peckham, London, Oxford Street, London and Stratford, London), Ashton under Lyne, Lancashire, Lincoln, Lincolnshire, Harrogate, West Riding, Yorkshire, Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Scotland, Jersey, Channel Islands) and members, 1884-1886 (1 bundle) [associated with in-letters].

Letters from enquirers and members 1884-1885 (30 bundles).

Copy letter from James Jershom Jezreel to E. Easton, Head Trustee over the whole continent of America, 30 October 1883 (1 sheaf).

Letter from Esther Jezreel (Chosen Handmaid of the Lord to finish His work) to the four pillars, 6 June 1885 (1 item, paper).

Letters from enquirers and members in the United States of America (Grand Rapids, Michigan; Boston Chelsea, Massachusetts; Detroit, Michigan; Chicago, Illinois; Fowlerville, Michigan; New York; Port Huron, Michigan, etc.) 1886 (1 bundle).

Correspondence concerning James Cumming of Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, Scotland and Rogers and Coupe families 1882-1884 (1 bundle).

Tithing sheets from bodies in the United States of America (locations as above) 1883-1886 (1 bundle).

Laws for the shaping and making of the males' clothing of the Society of Christian Israelites, printed at Gravesend by William Deane 1861 (1 booklet).

A guide for the male and female to be appointed by the judge or judges of a body of people to attend at the doors as doorkeepers, printed at Gravesend 1864 (1 booklet).

The naming of children for the Society of Christian Israelites, printed at Gravesend 1858 (1 booklet).

Pencil draft of flyer illustrating the Flying Roll c.1884 (1 item, paper).

Residual dissociated papers, prayer cards and printed matter c.1880s (1 bundle) [UFP].

Wooden handled pens, one patterned c.1880 (4 items).

(DE1173) [See also DE514, DE1122].

Additional records of the Dean and Chapter of Rochester comprising Letters patent, parties (i) King Charles II and (ii) Dean and Chapter of St. Andrew's Cathedral, Rochester [*sic*], for exemplification and preservation of inspected copy of Act of Uniformity and *Book of Common Prayer* (1662)* 1 membrane, Great Seal 5 January 1663 (DRc; DE1174).

Clients' records of Pearsons, Solicitors, Cremona House, 29 Balmoral Road, Gillingham, comprising title deeds to properties in the Medway area *including* Bleak House, Upper Shorne and 186 High Street, Rochester, parties Foord, Dunstall, National Telephone Co. Ltd., Roots, Tuff, Arnold, Elliott, Thomas, National Provincial Bank Ltd., Gibson and Cook, with site plans and abstracts of title reciting from 1885, 1907-1982, *including* notice of registration of premises as a building of special architectural or historic interest, 1950 (1 bundle/17 items) and 49 Best Street [and cf. Caroline Square], Chatham, parties Lambard, Fry, Pound, Woodgate, Acworth and Warde, 1814-1889 (1 bundle/3 items)

Royal Navy or HM Dockyard, Chatham service and personal records of members of the related Phillips family of Gillingham and Strood and Baker family of Strood.

Arthur George Phillips M37587 of Gillingham and 32 Cambridge Terrace, Strood, Supply Warrant Officer.

Certificate of service 1923-1943 (1 item).

RN Supply Branch history sheet for A.G. Phillips, 1923-1943 (1 item).

Testimonials and service records pertaining to advancement and movements of A.G. Phillips, with some internal branch correspondence pertaining to branch activities at HMS St. Angelo, Malta (1945), 1923, 1943-1946 (1 bundle/56 items/pp.).

Civil Registration certificates for family members 1903-1968 (3 items).

Notebook containing record of ports visited on cruises and shore based billets, HMS Ramillies, Sheerness 1923-1924, HMS Royal Oak 1924-1927, HMS Ceres 1927-1929, HMS Wessex 1930-1931 and 1931-1932, Wellesley Nautical School, Blyth, Northumberland 1932-1933, HMS Vindictive 1933, HMS Medway 1933-1935, SS Somersetshire 1935, HMS Marshal Soult 1935, HMS Garland 1936-1938, HMS Pembroke, Chatham 1938-1939, HMS Ganges, Shotley, Suffolk 1939, HMS Litanian 1939, HMS Elfin 1939-1942, HMS Pembroke, Chatham 1942, HMS Anson 1942-1943 (HMS Iron Duke 1942, HMS Forester[?] 1942-1943, HMS Iron Duke 1943), HMS Pembroke, Chatham 1943-1944, Force L 1944, SS Christian Huygens 1944, SS Ville d'Oran 1944, HMS St. Angelo, Malta 1944-1946 and SS Ascania 1946; 1923-1946 (1 booklet)

Photograph album containing views of former German giant floating dock at Malta, showing HMS Royal Oak docking with tugs, c.1926 x c.1927; fancy dress group; HMS Ceres dance and concert band *The Cereans*, Malta 1929; HMS Ceres concert party groups 1929; HMS Ceres at sea c.1929; HMS Ceres alongside, Malta 1928; damaged bows of HMS Caledon after collision with SS Anates, seen from HMS Calypso 1928; artist's reconstructions of HMS Caledon/ SS Anates collision events; HMS Ceres entering Malta 1927; Forth Bridge, Lothian/Fife, Scotland and the Battle Squadron, Atlantic Fleet in line ahead 1925; montage of HMS Ramillies c.1923; battle squadron steaming line ahead c.1923; HMS Royal Oak, forward gun turrets and forecastle in heavy seas c.1926; HMS Royal oak leaving Portsmouth, Hampshire 1924; HMS Royal Oak at Malta c.1924; HMS Royal Oak [?] firing a broadside c.1924; forward gun turrets, forecastle and spotter plane, HMS Royal Oak, Gibraltar 1925; warships including HMS Royal Oak [?] and submarines alongside or at anchor, Trieste, Italy 1926; group of ratings on run ashore from HMS Royal Oak, Kavala, Greece 1926; destroyers of the former Imperial German Navy aground at Scapa Flow, Orkney Islands c.1924 x c.1926; group of Supply Branch officers and senior ratings, HMS Ramillies, ship's waist c.1924; informal group of ship's company, ship's waist, HMS Ramillies c.1924; junior ratings, ship's waist, HMS Ramillies, Gibraltar 1924; group of officers and senior ratings with bread-baking trophy, ship's waist, HMS Royal Oak 1925; ship's waist, HMS Royal Oak, off Algiers, Algeria, Africa 1925; junior ratings and Royal Marines of HMS Royal Oak at Cartagena market, Murcia, Spain 1925; Phillips and PO on ship's waist, HMS Royal Oak [?] c.1925; Phillips and colleagues ashore, Algeria or Greece [?] c.1925; Phillips, colleagues and local inhabitants ashore at Kavala, Greece 1926; informal aquatic sports and picnic group of HMS Royal Oak ship's company and Royal Marines ashore at Budrum, Turkey 1926; group of HMS Ceres winners of All Comers' Race 1928 *includes* Commander VAC Crutchley VC; HMS Medway c.1933 x c.1935; HMS Medway Supply Branch's issue of Christmas cakes 1932; concert party groups HMS Ceres [?] off Malta [?], c.1928-c.1929; daymen's whaler, HMS Medway 1933; HMS Garland at sea 1935; HMS Garland oiling at sea, viewed from HMS Queen Elizabeth 1936; HMS Garland dressed overall c.1936; ship's company, HMS Garland at Gibraltar 1936; funeral procession, victims of HMS Hunter mining, Gibraltar 1937; HMS Hunter arriving at Gibraltar 1937; mass grave and coffins of German sailors from Deutschland [cf. Lutzow] at Gibraltar 1937; a Gunnery Branch PO [Cyril Phillips?] c.1937; wedding group c.1937; Phillips and junior rating Malta c.1937; Phillips and junior rating Malta 1928; Phillips and two Supply Branch colleagues c.1937; hoisting in Walrus, HMS Anson 1942; HMS Anson at sea, forward guns in action 1942; staff officers and civilians, Force L Headquarters, Southwold, Suffolk 1944; HMS Marshal Soult at anchor c.1935; submarine HMS L71 under steam c.1935; demonstration of rescue by Breeches Buoy from HMS Marshal Soult to harbour jetty c.1935; Phillips on leave with Mrs. Phillips and friend or relation, Ramsgate [?] c.1937; Phillips in tropical uniform, Hong Kong 1933; chart of HMS Bulldog's second Summer cruise 1934 (1 volume/89 photographs).

Naval stores book used as photograph album containing views of HMS Royal Oak's Atlantic Fleet's regatta crew receiving rum ration in camp at Lamlash, Isle of Arran, Scotland July 1925; trophies; news-cutting regarding same; steam launch alongside at Rosyth, Fife, Scotland 1925; HMS Ceres concert party and ratings, Ghein Tuffeia, Malta 1929; Cairo, Egypt 1926; Pyramids and Sphynx, Cairo, Egypt; local inhabitants, Egypt 1926; concert party and ratings in harbour, Malta 1929; church, Pontevedra, Galicia, Spain 1924; HMS Ramillies and Revenge off Folkestone 1923; landing liberty men at Weymouth, Dorset 1923; HMS Resolution in Palma Bay, Majorca, Spain 1926; on board HMS Ramillies off Pontevedra and Gibraltar 1924; warships in Rosia Bay and Gibraltar Bay, Gibraltar 1924; HMS Royal Oak in rough seas in Gulf of Lyons, France/Mediterranean 1926; HMS Ramillies with HMS Warspite and Malaya ahead in the Bay of Biscay, Atlantic 1924; members of HMS Royal Oak ship's company and lady friends at Bournemouth, Hampshire 1924, Argostoli, Kefalonia, Greece 1926 and Malta 1927; on board HMS Ceres at Malta 1928; senior ratings at Torquay, Devon 1931; on board HMS Wessex at Ilfracombe, Devon 1931; HMS Westcott at sea 1931; 6th. Flotilla leaving Rosyth 1931; Royal Fleet Auxiliary War Mehtar at Chatham Dockyard 1931; newscuttings on Atlantic Fleet's Spring cruise 1932; Phillips at home with wife and parents or in-laws, 1931-1932; on vacation with family at Eastbourne, Sussex 1932; group of RN Supply Branch, HMS Pembroke, Chatham 1932; wife and

parents or in-laws 1932; HMS Medway at Miyajima, Japan 1933; submarines alongside HMS Medway, Hong Kong 1933; submarines alongside HMS Medway at Wei Hai Wei, China 1933; HMS Phoenix coming alongside [1933 x 1934]; HMS Phoenix submerged, Wei Hai Wei 1934; torpedoes in the fore well deck, HMS Medway 1934; Chinese junks; SS Chusan wrecked on rocks at Wei Hai Wei 1932; Chinese funeral procession, Hong Kong 1934; English church, cemetery, signal tower, old fortress, and naval facilities, Wei Hai Wei; coastal scenes, Kowloon and Hong Kong; local inhabitants, Hong Kong; old German forts and sights, Tsing Tau [cf. Qingdao], China; Phillips and senior ratings on board HMS Medway at Wei Hai Wei 1933; diver's launch and recovery of old torpedo, Wei Hai Wei 1934; scenes in Cheefoo, China 1934; scenes in Peking 1934; Miyajima, Japan 1934; Manilla, Philippines 1934; Jesselton, British North Borneo [cf. Sarawak] 1934; Tokyo, Japan 1934; Nagasaki, Japan 1934; Kobe and native inhabitants, especially members of the fairer sex, Japan; more views of Miyajima, Japan; ship's company picnic, Skiathos, Greece 1928; family at home 1935; PO Cyril Phillips 1937; wedding day 1935; at home 1935; with family at Sheerness 1937; HMS Garland seen from HMS Arethusa between Barcelona, Spain and Marseilles, France 1936; HMS Ardent and Worcester after collision, Malta 1937; PO Cyril Phillips and lady friend 1941; HMS Garland in rough seas 1937; senior ratings 1936; Phillips on board HMS Garland 1936; the manners of Japan; Palma, Majorca, Spain 1936; Malaga, Falangists and scenes from the Spanish Civil War 1937; Barcelona, Spain 1936; Miyajima, Japan 1935; HM King George VI arriving on board HMS Anson and inspecting divisions, with Admiral Tovey and Vice Admiral Frazer, Scapa Flow, Orkney Islands, Scotland 1943; HM King George VI crossing over to HMS Hindustani with Admiral Tovey; accountant staff on board HMS Anson 1943 (x 2); HMS Anson weather deck and guns frozen over, Arctic convoy, Christmas Day 1942 (x 2); Lieutenant Commander Cochrane on the forecastle [?] Christmas Day 1942; Daymen's Mess fancy dress party group, Christmas Day 1942; senior ratings stowing brushes on board at Scapa Flow 1942; stores staff including Sub Lieutenant McAvoy on board, Scapa Flow 1942; marching contingent of Women's Royal Naval Service, Blyth 1941; WRNS divisions being inspected by HRH The Duchess of Kent; groups of WRNS, Blyth 1942; groups of senior ratings, HMS St. Angelo, Malta 1945; HMS Belfast in Bighi Bay, Malta 1946; Royal Naval Hospital Bighi, Malta 1945; Merchant Navy and Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve officers on board SS Ville d'Oran on passage from Naples, Italy to Malta 1944; officers, senior ratings and WRNS ratings ashore in Malta 1944; HMS St. Angelo, Malta 1938; HMS Anson and Vengeance illuminated off Malta on occasion of Victory in Europe Day 1945; groups of senior ratings, Malta 1945 (1 volume/441 photographs/cuttings).

Naval stores book used as photograph album containing views of fireworks over Grand Harbour, Valetta, Malta showing Fort St. Elmo, HMS Armada, Fort Ricasoli, RNH Bighi, HMS Trafalgar, Marne, Meteor, Brecon, on occasion of Victory over Japan Day (15 August 1945); front page of Times of Malta reporting Japan's acceptance of peace terms 15 August 1945; crowds in Palace Square, Valetta, Malta on VJ Day; Fort Ricasoli, Malta 15 August 1945; motor torpedo boats and HMS Gregale in Pieta Creek, Malta 15 August 1945; HMS St. Angelo, Malta 15 August 1945; Sliema Creek, Malta 15 August 1945; senior ratings relaxing in Malta 1944; Master at Arms Donaldson on his wedding day, Malta 1945; Phillips and family members at home 1942; HMS Speedwell 1946; family members in London c.1940; Phillips and his wife in Margate 1938; Phillips and a junior rating on board HMS Garland in dry dock, Malta 1938; group of junior rates and senior rate reading South China Morning Post [?] Sports Special, on signal bridge, HMS Medway, Hong Kong 1935 (1 volume/42 photographs).

Loose photographs supplemental to above albums comprising studio and individual portraits of Phillips and group photographs of Phillips and naval colleagues, family members, warships, and employees and delivery vans of Dale and Son, 30-32 High Street, Rochester, grocers c.1915-c.1946 (1 bundle/41 items).

Photograph of Homeward Bound public house, Gas House Lane, Rochester, surrounded by flood water c.1953 (1 item).

Phillips' wedding photographs 1935 (3 items).

Studio photograph of Edwardian lady, possibly Harriet Maud Phillips c.1910 (1 item).

Postcard photographs of St. Mary's Church, Higham, Higham Canal and barge and Railway Tavern, Higham c.1910 (3 items).

Cyril Henry Phillips C/J109785 of 11 Holmside Avenue, Gillingham, Petty Officer (died on active service 27 February 1942), comprising:

Admiralty death certificate 1942, certificate of the Inspector of Seamen's Wills 1942, gunnery history sheet 1926-1937, certificate of educational test Part I 1926 and certificate of service 1924-1942 (5 items, paper).

Photograph album containing views of the destruction by fire of SS Ausonia with HMS Queen Elizabeth in attendance, Arab woman and child, HMS Hood and HMRV Victoria and Albert, HMS Bulldog, Alexandria and the Pyramids, Egypt, HMS Porpoise, 4th. Destroyer Flotilla, Cyprus, Haifa, Mount Carmel, and Jerusalem, Palestine, seaplanes, torpedo and depth charge exercises, gun crew closed up on board HMS Bulldog, Famagusta, Cyprus, HMS Blanche, ratings' concert party groups 1935, engine spaces, HMS Queen Elizabeth, HMS Bulldog in dock, HMS Bulldog, dogs and members of the ship's company alongside, recovering crashed

seaplane, aircraft and naval ratings at Mersa Matruh, Egypt, hospital ship and torpedo carrying biplanes; c.1933-c.1936 (1 volume/127 photographs)

Studio photograph of Leading Seaman Cyril Phillips in tropical square rig, Malta c.1935 (1 item)

HMS bulldog in Grand Harbour Valetta, Malta c.1935 (1 item)

George Albert Baker of Montfort Road (and later 32 and 56 Cambridge Road), Strood, comprising:

Apprenticeship indenture of George Albert Baker of Montfort Road to James Little of Strood and Frindsbury as shipwright and bargebuilder, 1900 (1 membrane)

HM Dockyard, Chatham card indemnifying Baker as a member of a reserved occupation, c.1917 (1 item, card)

Certificate of service under the Admiralty of G.A. Baker, shipwright, Constructive Department, HM Dockyard 1919 (1 item)

Marriage certificate of G.A. Baker and Elizabeth Martha Gardiner, St. Nicholas, Strood 1910 (1 item) (DE1176)

Additional records of Rochester, Chatham and Gillingham Gas Company, comprising:

Rochester, Chatham and Gillingham Gas Company (later South Eastern Gas Board)

Photograph album containing 10" x 8" and 8" x 6" views of interiors and exteriors of gas company premises and groups of staff, viz. offices, lecture theatre, cash counter, window display, advertising hoardings and showrooms 95 High Street, Rochester 1920, 1921, 1923, 1931 (Rochester Historical Pageant and Civic Week), 1935; main showrooms, window display, exterior flashing gas sign and offices, Victoria Bridge, Gillingham (day and night) 1922-1923, 1926; Chatham showrooms, lecture hall, basement 74 High Street, Chatham 1929; Rainham showrooms (day and night) 1930; Messrs. Paine and Co., outfitters and pawnbrokers, 40 High Street/1 Station Road, Strood (night-time) c.1930; George Kent, wholesale and retail grocer and provision merchant's shop, 196 High Street, Rochester and Robert Lane and Son, oilmen's shop 208 Star Hill, Rochester at night-time c.1930; Charles Woollett and Son, art dealers' shop, 19 High Street, Rochester at night-time c.1930; H.W. Herbert, newsagent's shop, 20 Ordnance Street, Chatham 1929; Rochester Cathedral nave and choir lit by semi-indirect gas lighting at night-time 1925; plain reading index 1928; Stand No.3, Empire Exhibition, Town Hall, Dock Road, Chatham 1930; Parkinson Stove Co. display at Gillingham Exhibition, Gillingham Park 1938; Wright and Co. display Gillingham Exhibition, Gillingham Park 1938; Rochester, Chatham and Gillingham Gas Co. display, Gillingham Exhibition, Gillingham Park 1938; Davis Gas Stove Co. display, Gillingham Exhibition, Gillingham Park 1938; Vines Lane, Rochester lit by directional reflectors 1932 [?]; phases of erection of Distribution Department stores and workshops, Gas House Road, Rochester 1929-1930; Distribution Department in use, loading dock, main store, general office, carpenter's shop, stove repairers' shop, blacksmith's shop, mess room, lavatory, plant and men 1931; crack in brick wall, 95 High Street, Rochester 1934; kiosk containing 18" governor on Strood Esplanade 1936; Rochester Bridge at night-time; City Way, Rochester at night-time 1936; furnace constructed for HM Dockyard, Chatham 1937; apprentices Peter Underwood and Eric Smith at nursery school, Chatham 1945; model kitchen display, Gillingham Municipal Housing Exhibition 1945; men casting hot plate burners at Gillingham Works, Pier Road, Gillingham c.1935; specimen hot plate burners and bars xmade at Gillingham Works, Pier Road, Gillingham c.1935; showroom display 1948; factory emergency treatment room display, Corn Exchange, Northgate, Rochester 1947; showrooms, Victoria Bridge, Gillingham c.1935; display of gas by-products, Corn Exchange, Northgate, Rochester 1947; showroom display on cricket test match theme, by Miss Regan, artist 1948; window display on theme of Spring and the seasons 1948; Gas Co. float, Medway Towns Carnival, seen outside the Distribution Dept., Rochester [?], 1948; laying of 12" high pressure gas main under railway viaduct, Oak Lane, Upchurch c.1948; Second World War memorial above fireplace, 95 High Street, Rochester 1949; water heater display at Chatham showroom, 74 High Street, Chatham 1948; Chatham showrooms 1949; South Eastern Gas Board stand at unspecified exhibition c.1948; domestic science rooms Warren Wood Secondary School for Schools, Rochester and Christchurch Secondary School for Girls, Chatham c.1948; displays of kitchen with gas supply, c.1948; the mayor of Rochester in regalia inspecting a cooker on the St. William's Way estate 1948; cooker and boiler, St. William's Way estate 1948; salt bath heat treatment furnaces and waterising plant, Distribution Dept., Rochester [?], c.1948; cooker and boiler, Eastcourt, Twydall estate, Gillingham c.1948; cooker and boiler, Eastcourt, Featherby Estate, Gillingham c.1948; cooker and boiler, Wayfield Estate, Chatham c.1948; fish-frying range, R.C. Whittaker, 288-290 High Street, Chatham c.1948; presentation of prizes by mayoress of Rochester, Festival of Cookery Competition, 95 High Street, Rochester, watched by R.H. Munns, Sales and Service Manager, Kent County Division 1951; discussion group, 95 High Street, Rochester, attendees named, 1953; gas heating unit to greenhouses at Rochester Greyhound Stadium, Maidstone Road, Rochester c.1948; restaurant kitchen at 91 High Street, Chatham c.1948; group of Kent County Division [?] Sales and Service staff on occasion of visit to Ascot Gas Water Heaters Ltd. Works, Neasden, Middlesex 1952; twin Baker Perkins ovens c.1948; City and Guilds examination areas, Distribution Stores, Gas House Road, Rochester 1954;

demonstration of Australian cookery by Miss Nancy Jepp of Melbourne, Chatham Town Hall, in presence of J.D.C. Woodall, Sales and Service Manager, Kent County Division and audience 1954 [cf. Australia]; Bratt-Colbran luminous panel heaters in the nave of St. Mary Magdalene's Church, Gillingham Green, Gillingham c.1950

Photographers: T.E. Howe, 24 High Street, Chatham, J.N. Willis, 67 High Street, Chatham and others. 1 volume/173 prints. 1920-1954.

British Gas South Eastern

Regional Organisation Review District Level 4 1991. 1 x A4 booklet. [Depositor's work copy]

Records of Rochagas Sports and Social Club 1944-1977 (DE1179)

Printed flyer advertising Edwin Harris' Olde Curio's Shoppe, Rochester, in style parodying the Court of Pie Powder, Rochester. 1908 1 p.

MS monograph entitled *A tale or legend of Rochester Castle in the olden time by an inhabitant of modern Rochester*. 1855. Author Miss Anne Stone, daughter of Mr. H. Stone of Hall Place, Bexley, banker. Presented to Eastgate House Museum, Rochester by Miss Elizabeth Newnham, 4 Wayville Road, Dartford 1949. 1 booklet.

Stencil typescript transcript of: architectural survey by Robert Smirke of Stratford Place, London of Rochester Cathedral (1825); the opinion of James Savage of 34 Walbrook, London on the tower (1826); and personal journal of Robert Stevens DD, Dean of Rochester on the repair of Rochester Cathedral by Lewis Nockalls Cottingham (1825-1826). 1 booklet, Compiled 1972. (DE1182).

Personal and Royal Air Force (RAF) service records of Edward (Ted) F. Lowman, 275 Barnsole Road, Gillingham (1919-2007), employee (PSTO (N)) at HM Dockyard, Chatham, comprising group photographs of casts of various local amateur dramatic productions, members including Ted Lowman. Studio or photographer: George Burningham-Cate, 62 Albert Road, Chatham. c.1950-c.1965. (1 bundle/16 items), RAF Form 2520A service and release book 1939-1946 No.641818 Corporal Lowman, E.F. (1 booklet and enclosure), cutting from Periscope reporting Lowman's taking over of Chatham Dockyard's Non-Industrial Whitley Secretaryship, with photograph of subject. 29 May 1968. 1 item, paper; fragment of diary kept during active service in Holland [cf. Netherlands] and UK, noting family, social, amorous and service activity. Calendar printed in Dutch. c.1944-c.1945. 1 booklet; testimonial of Mr. Lowman's voluntary services at St. Peter's Methodist Church, Trafalgar Street, Gillingham and elsewhere 1935-1999. Compiled c.1999. 1p.; scrapbook containing newscuttings pertaining to and photographs of Miss Lena Gordon, Dulcet Villa 139 Nelson Road, Gillingham, concert artiste and soprano and printed menu cards for social occasions at which she performed, mainly for masonic installation banquets, friendly societies, professional and trades associations and ladies' evenings, concert programmes and cartes de visite of artiste colleagues. 1934-1957. 1 volume and loose enclosures. [Archivist's note. Miss Gordon and Mr. Lowman are believed to have been amorously acquainted]. (DE1183).

In signing off, I wish the Friends every success. I know you will all support my colleagues and successor and I look forward to seeing FOMA members at Essex Record Office in future.

The Great Fires of Chatham

Part Two: The 1820 Fire of Chatham (The Dreadful Fire)

John Witheridge



John Witheridge is the FOMA Vice Chairman and Press Officer. He loves history, and specialises in the period 800 to the 1660s, particularly where his own ancestors crop up! A past lecturer in history and family history, John is Past Chairman of the Quaker Family History Society, Chairman of the Council of Family Societies, Past Chairman of the Cornish Forefathers Society, a member of the Guild of One Name Studies, and Press Officer for the Medway branch of the Kent Family History Society. John also finds time to research for any overseas member of the societies with which he is involved.

The second and final part of John Witheridge's work on the great fires of Chatham looks at the devastation of The Dreadful Fire of 1820 and the effect on the town and its people.

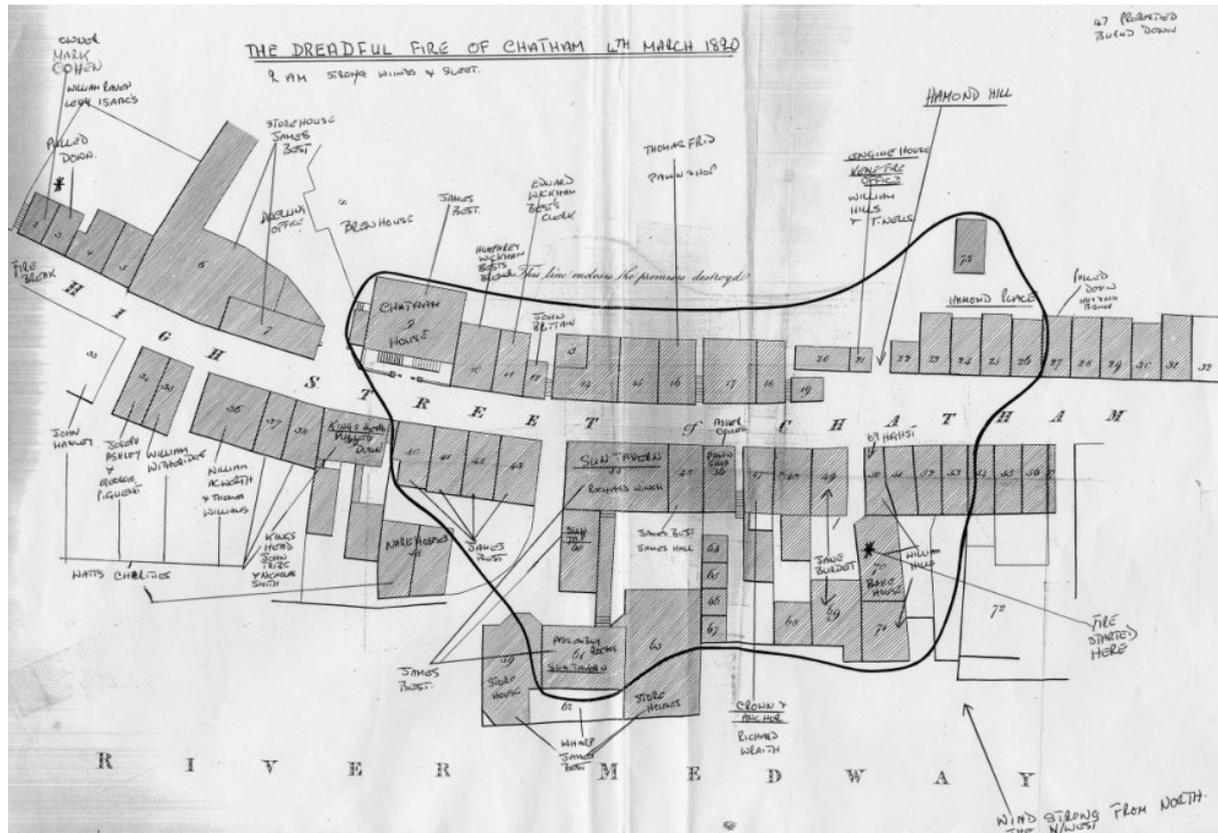
This great catastrophe, wrought upon the town of Chatham, indeed the third of that nature to have decimated the town within 50 years of human memory, occurred on March 4th 1820. It was a very cold and blustery day, the wind mainly from the north but varying at times from the north west carrying showers of sleet and snow on its strong gusts.

At around 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, the sleeping town was thrown into great consternation. At the rear of William Hills' shop, situated on the north side of the High Street, opposite Hammond Place, staff had mixed the dough for the next day and the first throws were being laid into the ovens. The rear of the bakery was reached by proceeding down Hills' alley at the side of Williams' shop. At the next property, a wharf, the Brig (a collier from the north) was discharging coals when suddenly a watchman on board the Brig spotted a red glow behind him. Turning, he observed part of the bakery transformed into a blazing inferno with terrifying flames issuing from the bake house. The watchman eased past the searing flames to raise the alarm, but already the flames, driven on by the gusting winds, had caught their tenacious hold on the fabric of the property, a tallow chandler's works, owned by Mrs Burdett. The contents of this work place certainly added to the inferno, both in colour and incentive, resulting with the dwellings, workshop and bakery being lost in minutes. Constructed of timber and boarding, all were a charred ember in a flash, the colour and toning of the flames altering somewhat as the tallow melted.

At this point the flames bridged the gap across the High Street, the upper floors being terraced out over the main thoroughfare, passing the blaze with ease across the intervening gap. Now taking hold on a small wooden building on the south side of the road, then on to a stable and a corn loft above, this being rapidly consumed while flames raced along both sides of the High Street. Within half an hour it had reached the Sun Tavern.

On the other side, James Best's mansion was raised, the lower walls being brickwork, were the only part left standing. The pawnbroker shop belonging to Mr Thomas Frid and the shop opposite belonging to his competitor in the same trade, a Mr Asher Cohen, were also both lost, but worst still, all the belongings that had been kept in their safe keeping for many weeks were now never to be redeemed. People's only items of any worth, lost and this in many cases their only means of raising funds when times were bad.

The area of Chatham affected by the fire



The encircled area on the map covers the damaged buildings, those that were beyond occupation afterwards. Some of the buildings outside this were badly scorched and further away to a lesser degree. Note the two areas where fire breaks were formed, one at the east end and one at the west end of the devastated areas of the High Street. The plan has been reversed so that western firebreak, number 27, is to the right of the plan. You can see quite plainly that this break was needed and indeed worked to restrain the fire from spreading west ways. Numbers 2 and 3 on the left of the map seem a little distant from the blaze, but the wind was blowing the flames in that direction. But why those two? My theory is that the more obvious choices for demolition were perhaps numbers 6 and 7, owned by James Best, were leased to one of my family. Living there was the man who ran the family business in partnership with William and Henry Witheridge. Across the High Street, William Witheridge ran a boarding house for theatricals, this on the Broad pavement where actors perambulated to accost the play house owners. Both brothers were related to a previous High Constable of Chatham Hundreds, and both still members of council committees. Perhaps these men had more influence than others. Alternatively, the dense smoke and heat blown from the fire in the High Street may have meant that numbers 2 and 3 were the safest option for those ripping down the two houses. By now the flame had destroyed most of the buildings within the

encircled area. There was also some spreading to hay and straw stacks on the south side of The High Street situated in Rome Lane, and sparks carried on the wind also endangered Gibraltar House nearly a quarter of a mile away.

You will notice from the plan that one great factor assisted in the spread of the inferno. The fire shed and the apparatus, such as water pumps, hoses and the water container, were housed at number 21 on Hammond Hill and under the supervision of Mr William Hill the baker and also a Mr T Wells. William Hill had his hands otherwise full.

The saving feature was indeed the formation of two fire breaks, but the eastern site became a crucial factor in the aftermath of the disaster. The insurance company would not cover the cost of the re-building as it had not been gutted by the inferno. So the owner, Mr Mark Cohen, a member of the local Jewish community and son of one of the pawnbrokers, had no option but to find the person responsible for the problem, "The builder who had supervised the demolition of these houses." Surely some order must have been given to Mr Baker the builder. He was from a very prominent local family, a pillar of the community. Naturally Mr Baker claimed to have had authority from the local council, but they disclaimed giving the order so a court case, which excited great interest, was held on 24th March 1821. However, this was not the only court case that caused interest, for whilst the fire had been raging, many members of the public had decided to plunder the empty properties, even though the army had been sent to guard them. This resulted in 20 cases before the Maidstone Assises held on 16th March 1820. The records show that each of the following was guilty and given a prison sentence, but that two death penalties (*) were remitted:

Lamont Wilson (a soldier who had been sent to guard the properties and defended in court by his officers) – stole a razor and looking glass belonging to James Best
Nicholas Ash – stole bottles of wine belonging to Richard Winch
Sarah Brown – stole one steel mug belonging to Francis Dodd
Patrick Bryan
Walter Cleary* – assaulted Isaac Lately and stole from him one silver watch and a gold steal
James Cavenagh
James Buckley* – assaulted on Jack Riddle and stole from him a hat and two coats
Mary Cheetham – stole four yards of lace from John Warren Knot
Richard Clark – stole two tin kettles and one muff from Edward Davis and Allen Mathews
Barnett Connelly – stole silver from unknown persons
Daniel Dowd – stole four pieces of ticking from Thomas Williams
Richard Edwards – stole two tin kettles and one galloon [sic] from Edward David and Thomas Williams
Martha German – stole one pair of breeches from Samuel Harrington
William Goodwin – stole a quantity of leather from William Large
James Griffen – stole an article of earthenware from Humphrey Wickham
Michael Hasan – stole a quantity of leather from Wiliam Large and one pair of boots from E Ingall
Alexander Ring – stiole 16 yards of stuff from Charles Henty
Susan Smith – stole one gown from Asher Cohen
Joseph Winch – a pair of snuffers and a stand from George De La Cour

The fire raged on, gradually burning out and dampened down by the operators of fire engines loaned by the army, the navy, Maidstone and one from London. Those listed with property damaged were as follows: Schenehitie, Hills, Watson, Cohen, Whitehead, Fisher, Stronghill,

Poole, Best, E Wickham, H Wickham, Briton, Matthews, Miller, Fridd, Page, Hawkins, Godfrey, Latchpool and Mistresses Burdett and Etheringham.

A Mr James Hulkes was selected for high praise, his personal exertion and indeed those of his staff in supplying abundant amounts of water from a reservoir on his premises and conveyed by his drays to the fire engines. Imagine the hardship endured by the ostlers and their teams in coaxing the horses through the smoke and flames.

From James Best's brewery, one hundred butts of beer were emptied so that they could be used to convey water to the machines. Where the beer went is left to the reader's imagination, but my own thought is that the fire engines may have had slightly sozzled crews! Fortunately no one was seriously hurt.

A great number of people had pawned their only belongings of any worth with Mssrs Fridd and Cohen. The council set up a committee, just as they had in 1800 [see Part One in Issue 09], to make some recompense to these members of the community. So that the total could be assessed, items that had been pawned were listed and set against any account to be found. Many were rejected as being false claims, and this from customers of both pawnbrokers, but Mr Asher Cohen having a higher number. Both men lost their shops and houses attached so the Cohen family could well have had good reason for taking Mr Baker to court as they may have been near destitute themselves. As a twist to the story, Mssrs Cohen, father and son, were listed on the 1841 census, some 20 years later, living in Liverpool, though when they moved cannot be assessed.

To conclude, I do wonder how the people of Chatham viewed the aftermath of the fire with the great loss of personal items and the court cases which ensued. I also wonder about my own family, the Witheridges and if they had anything to do with the fire break orders. Any leads that come to light, I will follow up, but I am sure that Mr Baker should have been written into history as a hero and not defiled in court as he was.

Dickensian Days

Jean Slater



John Thomas Hawes, Mayor of Chatham was the grandfather of FOMA member Jean Slater. Born in Chatham in 1932, Jean was fortunate in being old enough to share some of the thrills and pageantry that came with her grandfather's role as Mayor from 1938 to 1945. Now living in Felpham, West Sussex, Jean keeps her ties with Chatham through family and the Old Girls' Association of the Chatham Grammar School.

To follow is the second of a series of three articles containing extracts and photographs from the pictorial diaries of J.T. Hawes, affectionately known as Beve, now held at the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre. In the wake of local elections and that of the Mayor of London, Jean Slater gives a view of the political picture in 1930s' Medway.

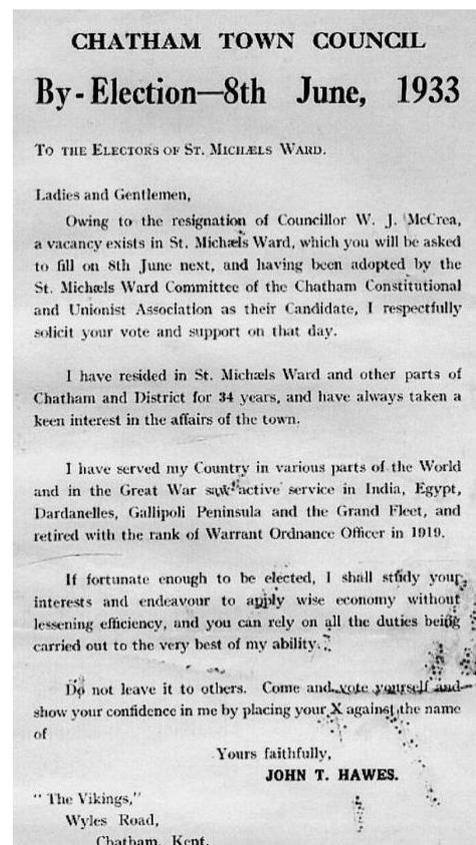
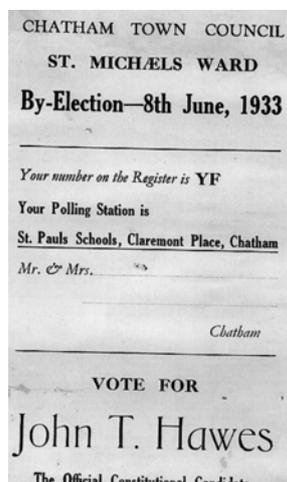
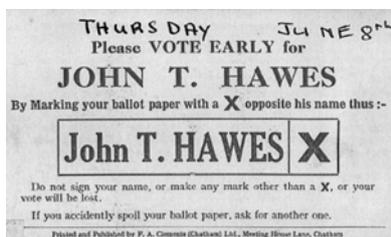
Part Two: The Making of a Sailor Mayor



In the early 1930s, JT Hawes (pictured) was sailing down two rivers. One was the joyful stream of Dickens, bubbling along with acting, fun and friendship, the other was the steady flow of a more sedate river, the one of politics and getting on with life.

In June 1933, *Vote for John T Hawes* could be seen on handbills and posters all over the St Michael's Ward of Chatham Town Council. There were two candidates for this seat, JT Hawes and Mr EF Cash, who was standing for Labour. At this time, Beve's party was known as The Chatham Constitutional and Unionist Association, but this was soon to be re-named the Conservative Party.

Hawes' platform was clearly laid out to the electorate in the copy of the election flyer pictured.



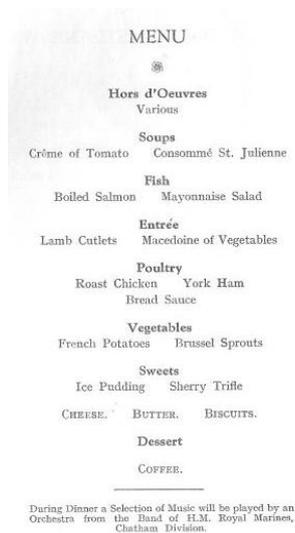
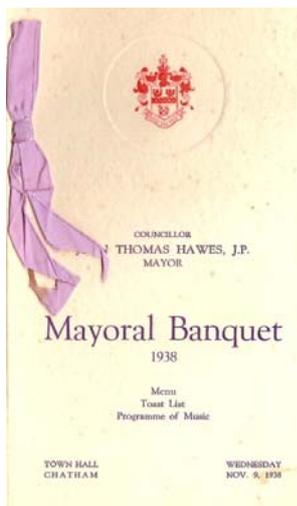
3,500 voters were on the electoral roll but only 30% of them actually voted. Beve polled 602 and Mr Cash 541, a majority of 151 to JT Hawes. When he was welcomed to the Council, Hawes vowed to uphold the Chatham town motto, 'loyal and true' and to do everything in his power for the council and townspeople. As history would reveal, he did this in spades.

For the following five or six years Hawes' days were spent in the humdrum world of council meetings and committees, lightened by attending baby shows, flower shows, school sports days and dressing up as Father Christmas [see Issue 08, November 2007, of *The Clock Tower*].

JT Hawes career, however, was in insurance. With his naval connections and his formidable power of oratory, with a fund of yarns going back in naval history, his working life was spent mostly in the naval barracks. He could relate to the men, drink in their company, and was quite at home with the officers. I well remember being taken with Beve to the offices of Sun Life in Chatham to take out a policy in my own name.

In 1938, Hawes was unanimously invited to become Chatham's Mayor; he was 62 years of age. I was six years old at the time and able to comprehend what was going on. All through his years at the helm in Chatham, my grandfather involved me in any event he could. This is

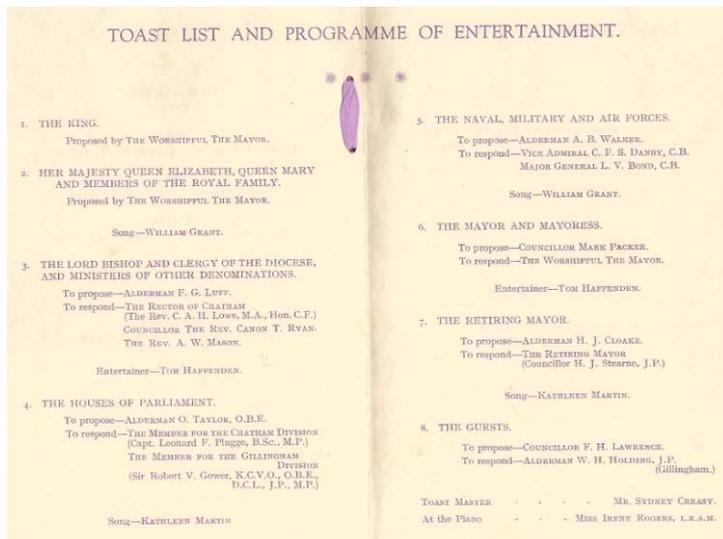
how I am blessed with the vivid memories that are so precious to me today.



The menu from the Mayor's Banquet of 1938 (front cover and inside front cover)

The Mayor's Banquet of 1938 was possibly the last to be held in the large hall of the town hall, as the shadows of war were slowly creeping towards the country. I remember being taken up to a gallery high above the assembled company. Surrounded by potted plants, I was well hidden, but could see everything that was going on down

below. I was thrilled to have my own 'nippy' waiting on me and I clearly remember the pudding, an iced bombe. An aunt was my chaperone and she whisked me off to bed when the speeches commenced.



The menu from the Mayor's Banquet of 1938 (centre pages)

It was at this banquet that one of the aldermen suggested that the Freedom of the borough be given to Admiral Evans, known as 'Evans of the Broke'. This came to pass and must have been one of the memorable and pleasurable events of Hawes' first year as mayor.

PROGRAMME OF MUSIC.



To be played by Orchestra from the Band of H.M. Royal
Marines, Chatham Division. (By kind permission of
Brigadier A. L. Forster, D.S.O., and Officers.)

Director of Music:
LIEUT. THOMAS FRANCIS, L.R.A.M., A.R.C.M., R.M.



1.—MARCH	"The Anchor's Aweigh"	Zimmermann
2.—SELECTION FROM THE FILM	"Firefly"	Friml
3.—(A)	"Berceuse de Jocelyne"	Goldard
(B)	"Serenade No. 1"	Heybens
4.—SELECTION NO. 1 FROM THE POPULAR OPERAS OF SULLIVAN		
5.—WALTZ MUSIC FROM	"The Chocolate Soldier"	O. Strauss
6.—SELECTION OF TRADITIONAL ENGLISH AIRS AND DANCES	"The Rose"	Myddleton
7.—TWO BAGATELLES		Fletcher
8.—A POT-POURRI OF WALDTEUFEL MEMORIES		arr. Finck
9.—THREE DANCES FROM "Nell Gwyn"		German

The Programme of Music from the Mayor's Banquet of 1938 (inside back cover of menu)

There was another election that year and this time Beve polled 1,156 votes. Maybe his personality and willingness to serve had been noted over the previous years and the electorate responded.

In the next and final article of the series, Jean Slater will discuss J T Hawes' (and the country's) most momentous years - Chatham at War: a Mayor's View.

Edwin Harris – Recollections of Rochester

Janet Knight, Local Studies, MALSC



Janet Knight has worked at Medway Archives and Local Studies for over 16 years. She started work as assistant to Pat Salter and later transferred to Local Studies, working with Norma Crowe. Pat Salter's interest in Edwin Harris fired Janet's own enthusiasm and she has become another eager member of the Edwin fan club. Janet is often heard to say, "I wonder what Edwin has to say on the matter..."

In the second of her series, Janet reproduces Edwin Harris' thoughts on Eastgate, from his 1930 work, Recollections of Rochester.

Ye Olde Curiositie Shoppe

No 151, Eastgate, was formerly No.89.

“One of the oldest, if not the oldest of the buildings in the Eastgate area of the High Street is Ye Olde Curiositie Shop, No 151, High Street, which was built about the fifteenth century and still retains many of its ancient characteristics.

The old title deeds show that the house was in the 17th and 18th centuries an inn, these deeds refer to earlier ones which are probably now non-existent. The House was known by the sign of the Golden Lyon and later by that of the Barley Mow.

In the early part of the 19th Century it was used as a butcher's shop. Later it was converted into a baker's shop and bakehouse, and continued so until 1861, when my father took possession of the premises.

At the present time it is the Castle Tea Rooms, although the old sign, Ye Olde Curiositie Shoppe, is still kept up

Judging by certain peculiarities in the buildings, these premises were then much larger than at present time; probably they extended as far as Almon Place and doubtless resembled the Older Queen Charlotte, so that each corner of Almon place was occupied by an inn. The lane formed the entrances to the stable yards in the rear. In my opinion (E.H.) it is more than likely that the very old buildings at the commencement of Almon Place originally formed part of these two inns. What seems likely to confirm this theory as regards the Golden Lyon is that the brick wall on the eastern side is not bonded with the main building, but merely built up against it, which peculiarity is very noticeable at the rear of the house. The house retained all its ancient characteristics down to the year 1887, when extensive repairs became necessary.”

The house consists of an Upper Staircase, Attic, Cellars, Shop, Kitchen, Staircase and Parlour. The descriptions of these rooms can be found in our Local Studies Collection here at Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre. If you are interested please ask staff if you can read *Recollections of Rochester: Article Nos. 16 & 17*. Or alternatively *Old Rochester*, by Edwin Harris, part of the Eastgate series No. 24 which recalls the history of the shop and with a few sketches, giving the reader an interesting insight of the property.

The Restoration of the 1822 Map of Rochester

Amanda Thomas, Editor



The recently discovered 1822 map of Rochester has become one of MALSC's most popular acquisitions, and as was evident at the Open Days in March and April.

Clock Tower Editor, Amanda Thomas, asked Ivor Stone, Bindery Manager at Trowbridge-based restorers, Cedric Chivers and Period Bookbinders (<http://www.chivers-period.co.uk>), exactly how they went about restoring this valuable part of Medway history.

“First of all, our team at Cedric Chivers discussed how to proceed. The restoration of the Rochester map was carried out by Robert Richardson and Victoria Sowerby. Vicky recently joined Cedric Chivers' conservation department as a Paper Conservator having recently completed an MA in the Conservation of Historic Objects at the University of Lincoln.

We decided to unroll the map across a very large table and then tested it to establish if there were any fugitive inks etc. that might disappear if we dampened the map. Any dry cleaning always takes place using draft cleaning pads or chemical sponges, which remove surface dirt. The Rochester map was coated with a varnish and we removed this with a solvent.

Once the cleaning had been completed the map was turned over so that it was face down on the table. We then carefully dampened the linen backing, this moistened the adhesive and allowed us to remove the linen.

The map had originally been produced in several sections and we were able to separate them at this stage. At Cedric Chivers we have a large wall that has been prepared with melamine coated boards on which we are able to reline maps and similar documents. A piece of archival linen larger than the map was then lightly pasted to the wall, and this we pasted over with a fine Japanese handmade paper. This was then pasted again with wheat starch paste ready for the map to be laid into place.

Each section of the map was then lifted into position using a piece of polyester film. The dampened map easily adhered itself to this film and this process enabled us to lift each individual section without causing any further damage. When all the sections were in place on the wall, and thoroughly pressed so there were no air bubbles, we then filled any missing pieces with Japanese paper. After this, the map was left to dry.

When the map was dry we could peel it with its backing from the wall. The map was then trimmed to remove the excess linen and in this case the map was rolled onto a large cardboard tube ready to be transported back to the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre.”



Victoria Sowerby and Robert Richardson of the Cedric Chivers and Period Bookbinders' conservation department

Early Town Books of Faversham

Duncan Harrington and Patricia Hyde

Patricia Hyde studied medieval history at Oxford and then wrote a thesis comparing the Bishop of Winchester's manors in Witney and Adderbury in Oxfordshire 1215-1485. She was delighted to be able to help archaeologists date the foundation of the Bishop of Winchester's palace at Witney. She contributed to both the Tudor volumes of The History of Parliament. Later she was a tutor for the Open University on a pioneering course on the development of small towns 1450-1750. That is how she came to appreciate the quality and quantity of records at Faversham. Recently she has contributed several biographies to The Oxford D. N. B.

Duncan Harrington was at Nottingham University and is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and Licentiate of the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies. He has worked in Kent as a free-lance research historian and archaeologist since 1969 and taught extensively in Adult Education. He has been secretary to the Council for Kentish Archaeology, Chairman of the Association of Genealogists and Record Agents and an Editor at the National Archives. He is currently President of the Kent Family History Society and has recently been made a Fellow of the Society of Genealogists. For the Kent Archaeological Society he has been compiling their Kent Records, New Series.

Faversham has medieval records of a quality and quantity remarkable for a small town. In their latest joint venture, Early Town Books of Faversham, Duncan Harrington and Patricia Hyde have transcribed and translated the early town books, c 1251 to 1581, and other relevant documents from Norman French and Latin into English where necessary to make them more accessible to the general reader.

The first town book, put together about 1382 to 1405, containing documents as early as 1251, is also known as the red book, the common place book and the custumal and is one of eight surviving custumals relating to the Cinque Ports in the period. The second town book commencing about 1436 to 1581 is also known as the wardmote book with information about a new group of inhabitants called tuitioners, but it also contains many chamberlains' accounts, lists of corporate officers, transcripts of wills and records of apprenticeship and much else.

This ancient settlement and important centre in Kent was described as a royal market town but not designated a borough in Domesday Book. Because the manor was held by the crown it was reckoned to be part of ancient demesne, which gave its inhabitants certain privileges, which they never forgot. However, in 1148, not 1147, King Stephen granted the manor to the abbey of Faversham, which he then founded. This meant that the inhabitants, particularly the townsmen, lost those privileges, which they came to resent. Disputes over jurisdiction soon arose and there were about twenty law-suits between the abbot and the townsmen from 1258 till 1413. This is why the townsmen treasured their town book and it may explain why so many documents have survived.

The townsmen could afford these expensive law-suits because by 1300 Faversham was prosperous chiefly as the principal port in Kent carrying grain to London. They had turned earlier to the Cinque Ports for help against the abbot, which also gave them links with Dover and Sandwich. As late as 1293 the abbot refused to accept their chief officer as mayor, describing him instead as alderman. The crunch came about 1300 when they copied Sandwich and first instructed a lawyer and acquired one of only six surviving engrossments of the re-issue of Magna Carta. In 1302 they brought a case against the lord warden of the Cinque Ports, based again on their ancient rights. They lost, as did the abbot a year later, and thereafter accepted that their rights came from being a member of the Cinque Ports.

The second town book gives us a vivid picture of life in the town in the sixteenth century and the many changes that took place. The townsmen were never able to free themselves entirely from the authority of the abbot. Although due to the impecunity of the abbey they were able to come to some agreements with the abbey in relation to various taxes and the halimote court. The town had to present three possible candidates for mayor to the abbot but he made the final choice and, as late as 1533, it is recorded that the chamberlain's accounts were audited in the abbey before the abbot and the mayor. It must therefore have been an immense culture shock to the town when the abbey was dissolved in 1538 and razed to the ground soon after.

The town obtained a brand new charter in 1546 with the help of Thomas Arden, who later became mayor. He was so obsessed with his business ventures and with pleasing his two patrons, Sir Edward North and Sir Thomas Cheyne, that he not only knew about his wife's infidelity but also encouraged it for his own selfish ends. Arden became legendary as the gentleman murdered at home in 1551 by his wife, Alice, her lover and eight other conspirators, two of whom were his servants, after six earlier botched attempts in London and the south-east. The conspirators' treachery was viewed with such horror that it was defined as petty treason and the events were immortalised in an anonymous play, *Arden of Faversham*, first published in 1592 and still in repertory.

The town had also become involved in a forty year law-suit over the will of a childless, rich merchant adventurer called Henry Hatch, who had died in 1533, leaving his fortune to the town after the death of his wife. Her relatives opposed the will, and the townsmen, particularly the town clerk, became involved in many trips to London, carrying their precious town books with them. What no-one expected was that she would survive for forty years, driving the town to despair about how to pay for the costs of the case.

Early Town Books of Faversham by Duncan Harrington and Patricia Hyde (ISBN 978-0-9530998-3-2) was published on 18th April 2008, price £100 plus postage and packing (approximately £9.00 for the UK). A limited edition of 250 copies, the books come in two thick A4 volumes, and can be ordered from Duncan Harrington, L.H.G., F.S.A., F.S.G., Ashton Lodge, Church Road, Lyminge, Folkestone, Kent CT18 8JA; cheques made payable to Duncan Harrington. Further details of this and all Duncan Harrington's publications can be obtained from his website: <http://www.historyresearch.co.uk>

George Bond, Architect and Surveyor, 1853 to 1914

Pat Salter and Bob Ratcliffe



Pat Salter worked at the Guildhall Museum Rochester and at MALSC for over 20 years and is the author of the recently published A Man of Many Parts - Edwin Harris 1859 – 1938; Pat Salter is also a FOMA Vice President.

Bob Ratcliffe is a retired architect. He is President of The City of Rochester Society and a local historian; Bob is also a FOMA committee member.

The last thirty years of the 19th Century were years of considerable expansion in the Medway Towns. Increasing industrial development, particularly in the dockyard and the cement industry, required housing for the workforce, while the needs for senior staff were met by the construction of quality villas. All this development needed its infrastructure in the form of public buildings and shops as well as offices for the burgeoning local authorities and the industries themselves. The designs for much of this work came from the drawing board of George Edward Bond, much of whose architecture may still be found throughout the towns today. His portfolio was extensive and this, together with his particular style would be worthy of greater and deeper study than in this brief note.

Bond was born in July 1853 in Chester where he was later elected a Freeman of the city. By 1874 he was working in Heywood, Lancashire, where he remained for nine years. In 1882, the year before he moved south, Bond met and married Sarah and two years later their daughter Mary was born in their first home at Strood. Mary later married Stanley Skinner the son of the builder, Alderman C. E. Skinner whose house Bond had designed and who was the builder for several of his other projects.

In 1883 he moved to the Medway Towns where he was employed by the architect and surveyor William Callund as a foreman and Clerk of Works on several local projects including Barnard's Palace of Varieties in 1886. The consulting architect for this was James Nash, with whom Bond was later to collaborate on the rebuilding of the Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School at the corner of the High Street and Free School Lane, Rochester in 1894.

1886 also saw the start of his own business as George E. Bond, Architect and Surveyor at Victoria Buildings, 384 High Street, Rochester. His first design is believed to have been for Ingleside, a house in Maidstone Road, Chatham, that was later to be the Medway Registrar's office. By 1904 his expanding business included purpose designed offices at Pier Chambers, High Street, Chatham, now occupied by Radio Kent, and by 1911 he had been joined by Frank T Goring, presumably in partnership.

The style of Bond's early buildings followed the Arts and Crafts style. This is particularly evident in the design of the interior of Chatham Town Hall in 1899, where exposed timber beams and carvings were used for the more important rooms. However, as with many architects of his time, his buildings reflected various styles from architectural history. Gothic, Elizabethan, Jacobean Georgian and Classical details, frequently several styles in one building, make a general description difficult to pin down. For example his design for the Medway Conservancy Board in 1909 (now part of the Guildhall Museum) was described as

having 'a jolly Jacobean style' and by Ronald Marsh, in his history of the Medway Conservancy, as 'a miniature specimen of Renaissance splendour'. In contrast, the Baptist Church in Crow Lane, Rochester, and the Ebenezer Congregational Church, Chatham, were described as being in what was probably considered appropriate for ecclesiastical buildings, an 'Early English Transitional' style, albeit in brick.

Bond embellished the exterior of many buildings with reference to their function. Classical sculptures on Chatham Town Hall represent Justice, Britannia, Agriculture and Music, and the open loggia denotes the *piano nobile* or most important space, connecting the more private decision-making chamber inside to an open public address space. A loggia can also be seen on the front elevation of the Theatre Royal, still (just) to be found at the bottom of Manor Road. Nautical iconography was used for both the exterior and the interior of the Conservancy building. Neptune, dolphins, shells and barges on the exterior and on the inside carved wooden panels of river scenes, fishes in both stone and wood and the Board seal on the bespoke door furniture.

A more restrained Classical style was used to provide the appropriate *gravitas* and solidity for the buildings of the London and Provincial Banking Company in Rochester and Gillingham High Streets, though the expressions of the keystones, happy and sad depending on the state of their account, reflect a touch of humour. The same style was used to denote the boardroom part of the new offices for the Medway Union at Magpie Hall Road, Chatham where the elevation showed a marked difference between the larger and much grander classical windows for the boardroom and the smaller plain ones of the offices for the clerk and junior staff, to be seen again at the Medway Conservancy office.

Bond was particularly fond of towers, turrets and cupolas, some functional, some not. The tower on the Conservancy building he designed to provide a view of the river traffic. It now houses a CCTV unit that can be used by visitors for the same purpose. Smaller ones on schools such as St. Peter's, New Road, Rochester, and Pagitt Street, Chatham, housed bells but the only function of most of those on houses was decoration only. He also used a pink concrete for corbelling, window sills, and other decorative work which can be found on the Aveling and Porter building on Strood Esplanade and on his own house, St Ronan's, King Edward Road, Rochester (now part of King's School), where he incorporated his initials.



Bond's design for the offices of Messrs Aveling and Porter has been a feature of Strood Esplanade for over a century. After the departure of Avelings in 1932, they became the offices of Messrs Winget, coincrete mixer manufacturers, and have recently been a part of the local authority's Civic Centre. The main entrance (to the left) shows some of Bond's specialities such as the bay window set in an enclosing arch and the use of turrets and gables. Hidden inside the building at this point is a superb staircase and stained glass window.

Window jambs feature the use of coloured concrete at the reveals together with rusticated stone courses and dentil strings of brick. Bond delighted in beautifying his buildings whatever their purpose might have been. Photographs: Bob Ratcliffe



Shops in Rochester High Street were commissioned by the Dean and Chapter about 1910 to replace a range of elderly properties, something that would not be condoned today.

As well as Ingleside, a number of the grand villas on Maidstone Road, Chatham, were designed by Bond for the great and the good, or *nouveau riche*, of Chatham, such as Aldermen W. D. Driver, W.R. Randall and C. E. Skinner, all of whom were Mayors. One house with medieval windows, chimneys and turrets looked as if it came out of a Pre-Raphaelite painting.

Bond also used decorative embellishment for the more utilitarian buildings as well as those for the elite. His design for the Medway Cottage Homes and Schools for the children from the Union workhouse included decorative bricks and motifs and were described in a local paper as having the 'picturesque' as well as utility.

Architect for so many important new local buildings, he was also official architect and surveyor to both the Medway and Strood Boards of Guardians and St. Bartholomew's Hospital as well as surveyor to the Rochester Lodge of Oddfellows where he was an Honorary Member. He was involved in laying out much of the development in the Rock Avenue area of Upper Gillingham.

Liberal in politics he was, from 1904 Chairman of the Rochester Liberal Club, whose new building on Castle Hill he had designed in 1889. In later years this was Rochester's police station before its demolition in 1975. He was also a Freemason, being Chairman of the Chatham Masonic Book Society for whom he designed a new and distinctly classical building at Manor Road, Chatham in 1904.

Among his other local interests he was a Trustee for the Chatham Savings Bank and he was appointed a Justice of the Peace in August 1908. In his profession he was a member of the Society of Architects being at one time its President. His four years presidency was commemorated by the Society in 1913, when he was presented with the Society's Gold Medal.

Among the last of Bond's buildings was All Saints' Church, Magpie Hall Road, Chatham. It was consecrated by the Bishop of Rochester in April 1914. Bond was too ill to attend the ceremony but received a letter from the Bishop expressing:

'grateful acknowledgement to you for the care and attention which you have devoted to the fabric and for the highly satisfactory character of the design, and the details of the work...your skill in dealing with the conditions of the site, and the whole proportions of the structure, both internally and externally, deeply impressed me. You have not only designed a church which is an ornament to Chatham but is one which is a noble and worthy building for the sacred purpose for which it is intended...'

George Bond died at St. Ronan's on Wednesday, 20th May, 1914 and was buried in St. Margaret's Cemetery, Rochester.



St Ronans, built in 1909, a listed Grade II building, it is today a part of the King's School and much of the tiling and other internal detail is hidden or encased.

He was described, in an obituary in the Chatham, Rochester and Gillingham News, as the 'most expert architect that this part of Kent has known'. Certainly he left quite a legacy of buildings to the Medway Towns, both private and public; from

additions and minor alterations to entire estates of houses, from large detached private villas to public houses, from offices, schools, churches and banks to places of entertainment and to what was possibly his most prestigious project, Chatham's Town Hall.

To follow is an important postscript from Bob Ratcliffe, whose contact details may be found in the list of Committee Members):

“Over the years many of Bond's buildings have been lost to us, the latest one at risk is his office block for Aveling & Porter which until May, 2008 housed part of our local authority's administration. It would be the height of folly if it were to be demolished without consideration first being given for an alternative use.”

Sir Cloudesley Shovell and the 1707 Loss of The Association

Norma Crowe, Local Studies Librarian



In the first part of three, Norma Crowe, Local Studies Librarian at the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre looks at Sir Cloudesley Shovell's background and how he came to have a lasting place in the history of Rochester.

Part One: The Early life of Sir Cloudesley Shovell

Sir Cloudesley Shovell, the admiral who made his home at Crayford and became MP for Rochester, is associated locally with Rochester's Corn Exchange and Guildhall Chamber.

It is a sad fact that to the wider world Sir Cloudesley Shovell is remembered, if he is known at all, as the naval officer responsible for one of the greatest losses of men and ships in peacetime in our maritime history. In October 1707 he was Admiral of the Fleet returning to England from the summer campaign in the Mediterranean, and mistook his bearings. This resulted in the loss of four ships and over 1600 men on the fearsome granite reefs around the Isles of Scilly.

He has been largely forgotten in the story of our proud naval history. But in his day, a time of political turmoil and change, Sir Cloudesley Shovell was as famous as Nelson was to be in his. He died at the height of his career, when he was recognised as a skilful naval tactician, a safe pair of hands, and a commander who looked out for the welfare of his men. In short he was a man whose judgement could be trusted. But he lost his life through misadventure and error rather than battle wounds, and consequently posterity has not been kind to him. His contribution to naval campaigns has been played down, and he is all but forgotten. I am sure that it is time to redress the balance.

His life ashore and his life at sea were of course interlinked. Each year he would have spent some time on board and some at home, but for the purposes of this article I shall look first at his early years and life as a family man, and then turn to his life as a naval officer and the events leading to his death.

Sir Cloudesley Shovell was born in Cockthorpe, North Norfolk in 1650. His father, John Shovell, was of Dutch or Flemish origin, and was a farmer. His mother, Anne Jenkenson of Cley, was a granddaughter of Thomas Cloudesley, a gentleman landowner in the area. It was from him that the name Cloudesley derives. The date of his parent's marriage is unknown, but it must have been around 1645 during the turmoil of the English Civil War.

Nothing is known of Shovell's childhood, apart from the fact that when he was just four years old his father died. There have been suggestions that his birthplace and home town was actually Hastings, and an ancient cottage in All Saints Street is known as Shovell's cottage. It is more likely that Cloudesley's mother moved there after the death of her husband, and that Cloudesley was an occasional visitor when ashore. His baptism is recorded in the register of Cockthorpe near Cley-next-the-Sea in Norfolk. The entry is somewhat unusual, clearly an addition, but one made at an early date. It reads: *Cloudesley Shovel vicesimo quinto novembris 1650.*

Cockthorpe Church stands on a hill with views out to sea. Amazingly this small hamlet has connections with two other famous naval officers of the era, who were largely responsible for Shovell's advancement through the ranks: Sir Christopher Myngs and Sir John Narborough. Shovell first went to sea under the patronage of Christopher Myngs, who may have been a distant relation. The precise date and the ship upon which he first served are not known for sure, but he probably had an early taste of naval life on campaign in the West Indies: Sir Christopher Myngs led a successful attack on St. Iago in Cuba in October 1662. Shovell was soon to become associated with Sir John Narborough, who was to be not only a patron, but also a friend in years to come.



Young Cloudesley Shovell
Reproduced with the kind permission of The Guildhall Museum, Rochester

From somewhat humble beginnings, Cloudesley Shovell was able to make progress through the naval ranks and to reach the pinnacle by dint of his own qualities, but equally because he enjoyed the patronage of Myngs and Narborough. Both men must have recognised his potential and without their support he would not have been able to make his way as he did. Sir John was a wealthy landowner, his seat was Knowlton, near Deal. He became a mentor and friend, and therefore it is likely that Shovell knew Sir John's wife Elizabeth and their three young children, Elizabeth, John and James. In 1688, when his wife was just 27, Sir John died whilst overseas in the West Indies, and three years later in March 1691 Sir Cloudesley Shovell married Elizabeth. Theirs is thought to have been a happy union, and he embraced the three Narborough children as his own.

By the age of 40 Shovell was a rear admiral. He had been knighted for service at the Battle of Bantry Bay in 1689 and he was married; he was also a wealthy man. In November 1692 Elizabeth gave birth to the first of their two daughters. They named her Elizabeth, and she was baptised at St. Mary's Whitechapel. Their second daughter Anne was born in 1696, but there was to be no male heir.

In 1694 Shovell purchased May Place, a country house near Crayford, which was to be the Shovell family home. Elizabeth continued to live at May Place after the death of her husband in 1707, and was buried in St. Paulinus in 1732; their daughter Elizabeth is also buried in the family vault at Crayford. Today, the cellar of the house is the only part of the original house which still exists as the basement of the clubhouse of Barnehurst Golf Club.



May Place, near Crayford
From Excursions in the County of Kent 1822

It was after taking up residence in Crayford that Sir Cloudesley Shovell became one of the two Members of Parliament for Rochester. At this time, MPs were usually local landowners or officers of the navy or army. In 1695 Shovell was invited to stand for the Rochester seat as the military representative. Sir Joseph Williamson, another famous local benefactor, was elected as the other member. Cloudesley Shovell held his seat until 1701, was re-elected in 1705, and held the seat at the time of his death in 1707. It cannot be said that he was a very active Member of Parliament for his constituents, but he has left lasting reminders of his involvement and interest in Rochester in the shape of two of the High Street's most important buildings. He gave a substantial sum for the re-plastering of the Guildhall ceiling, possibly soon after his election to Parliament. The quality of the plasterwork is very fine, and may be the work of master plasterer John Grove II. The central wreath of fruit and flowers is typical of high quality work of the time. The motif is repeated above the Mayoral chair, with the coats of arms of the monarch, Sir Joseph Williamson and Sir Cloudesley himself (see photographs).



Reproduced with the kind permission of The Guildhall Museum, Rochester



The Guildhall chamber also boasts an impressive portrait of Sir Cloudesley (see photograph), which is unsigned, but almost identical to the National Maritime Museum's portrait by Michael Dahl. He is shown dressed in armour, leaning against a canon, with his admiral's baton in his hand, his flag ship in the background.

According to FF Smith in *History of Rochester*, the city records state that the Corporation entertained Sir Cloudesley Shovell to a sumptuous dinner in his honour in 1701. The fare is recorded in full, though sadly I have not found verification of this in the city archives.

Visit to Rochester September 1701

Banquet given by the Mayor

The bill to Mr. Mayor when Sir Cloudesley Sheveyl dined

<i>Bread and beir</i>	15 4
<i>Wine</i>	9 11 8
<i>6 fowls with beacon and sprouts</i>	13 0
<i>A rump of beef</i>	7 6
<i>2 geese with apple sauce</i>	8 0
<i>2 piggs</i>	8 0
<i>A pedgione pye</i>	8 0
<i>A legge of mutton and turnipps</i>	4 0
<i>A dish of wilde fowle</i>	10 0
<i>A shoulder of mutton and pickles</i>	3 6
<i>A large apple pye and cheese</i>	4 0
<i>2 dishes of mince pyes</i>	10 0
<i>Fire</i>	10 0
<i>Tobacco</i>	9 0
<i>TOTAL</i>	15 2 0

The menu from the banquet held in honour of Sir Cloudesley Shovell in 1701

From FF Smith's History of Rochester

In 1706 Sir Cloudesley paid for the upkeep of the then butcher's market (now the Corn Exchange), and for its large impressive clock which juts out on a bracket over the High Street. The clock originally had a square face, but this was replaced with the round face quite early in its life. However, Sir Cloudesley Shovell's generosity was not restricted to Rochester, as in 1700 he paid for repairs to St. Paulinus, the parish church at Crayford.

The Victoria County History at MALSC

Dr Sandra Dunster



Dr Sandra Dunster was appointed by the University of Greenwich as Kent Team Leader for the Victoria County History's England's Past for Everyone (EPE) in October 2007. With the help of volunteers, she is researching and writing a history of the Medway Towns, to be completed by February 2010. She previously taught local and regional history at the University of Kent. Sandra was born and raised in Whitstable and, after 25 years absence, returned to live there in 1999.

The England's Past for Everyone (EPE) Website

Get involved!



The EPE project has a comprehensive, and fast growing website (www.englishpastforeveryone.org.uk) which offers everyone the opportunity to explore the material that has been uncovered by EPE projects in ten counties throughout England.

Each county has its own particular section on the website. The first port of call for *Clock Tower* readers will probably be the Kent site so I will offer you the appropriate links to this site and a brief outline of what you can expect to find there, to encourage you to have a look for yourself. Once you've had a look at what's on offer for Kent, I suggest you browse other counties – there is a great deal of fascinating material available.



If you go to www.englishpastforeveryone.org.uk you will arrive at the home page for the whole EPE project. On the left hand side of the page you will see a list of counties. Click on Kent and you will enter our part of the site. Once again you will see a list of options on the left-hand side of the page each leading to information about EPE in Kent. I recommend browsing all options but of particular interest is the section 'Explore Kent's Past'. Click on this and you will access some of the resources that have been collected by volunteers during the first phase of the project, *Life and Work in the Lower Medway Valley 1750-1900*. This includes images, photographs and transcription of wills. For example, you can read extracts from the will of James Hulkes, look at a photo of Snodland cinema in 1912 or see a portrait of Samuel Hook.

As the Medway Towns project gathers momentum we will add material and images relating to the history of Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham and Strood. The website offers the potential for much of the new material that we are going to collect to be made available to a wider audience than would be reached by the books alone.

However this will not be achieved without a lot of work. First we have to find the material. I suspect this will not be a problem, knowing there are around thirty willing and very able

volunteers ready to help with this part of the project. What I haven't done yet is identify volunteers who would like to be involved in the process of adding suitable material to the website. However, this seems like a good opportunity to ask for help. Please respond to the advert below if you are interested in 'Getting Involved' with this part of the project.

Get Involved!

Volunteering opportunities on the England's Past for Everyone (EPE) Kent website

Would you be interested in helping to build and maintain the EPE Kent website? I am looking for volunteers to help me to make the EPE Kent website an excellent resource for those interested in local history. You could already be involved in the project or you might be interested in joining us now.

If you have basic computing skills, and are willing to learn more, you do not need to have experience of working with websites (although we would of course welcome those with more advanced skills). If you decide to join us in this task you will be given the training and support that you need.

Hours to suit, but never more than you feel you can manage.

If you are interested in this exciting and challenging opportunity, please contact me at s.a.dunster@gre.ac.uk

Editor's Footnotes



Amanda Thomas is a freelance writer and public relations consultant. Born in Chatham, but now based in Hertfordshire, she belongs to several historical organisations, including the Kent Family History Society, the North West Kent Family History Society, and The Council for British Archaeology; she has a degree in Italian from the University of Kent and is a member of their alumni association. Amanda is delighted to have recently been made a full member of the Society of Women Writers and Journalists.

A Stroke of Luck

At the recent AGM I was struck by our good fortune. We are extremely lucky to have the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre, not just because of the wealth of information available, but because it is a community, and sadly it is only when members of that community leave that one realises this. Yet all communities are transitory and it is a necessary, if uncomfortable fact of life. What is unique about MALSC is how our community extends beyond the Medway Towns. At the AGM apologies had been sent from far afield, and as our discussion of the future of the Friends unfolded we all became aware of how important the Archives are to everyone, and now, thanks to the internet, whether we live in Strood or Sydney, Chatham or Calgary.

I enjoy being part of a community and am all for upholding local traditions, whether this be visiting a school fete or helping preserve a Tudor wall in Rochester. I don't take change easily, but there are some innovations which are to be embraced, and the internet is most definitely one of these. Without the internet most *Clock Tower* readers would not be able to read these words, or participate in the new Victoria County History project (see Dr Sandra Dunster's article). Without the internet our extended MALSC community simply would not exist. To be able to access the Medway parish records online from anywhere in the world is a revelation. To view Couchman's fabulous pictorial collection at my desk in Hertfordshire is a joy, and for Jean Slater in West Sussex to see the film of her grandfather JT Hawes (see Jean Slater's article) in his role as Charles Dickens in the 1831 Rochester Historical Pageant is just like stepping back in time.

(http://cityark.medway.gov.uk/query/results/?Mode=Search&SearchMode=explorer&SearchWords=Z4c_MovieBase_22&DateList=&.submit=Submit+Query&Exact=Yes&Boolean=AND&Results=25&PathList=%2FZ4c_Medway_MovieBase%2F&.cgifields=Verbose&.cgifields=Exact)

The ability for researchers to access records from anywhere in the world is most definitely an incentive for all of us to preserve material which has the potential to be scanned and viewed on the net rather than stay hidden in a box for years. Digital imagery also helps to preserve documents and artefacts which over the passage of time may disintegrate or are too fragile to display. Recently I became acutely aware of the importance of documenting and preserving historical material. I had been trying to track down some records, any records, from the early 1800s for the treatment of cholera patients at St Thomas' Hospital in London. I had been convinced that the records must have been thrown away by an over-zealous librarian (a crime committed at our local library a few years ago), or that they had perhaps been deliberately destroyed at the time in an attempt to uphold the myth of the government of the day's commitment to social reform (still a possibility for some of the manuscripts). The truth is

that many of the documents I was seeking had been destroyed in the Blitz and only a single box remained. A forward-thinking archivist back in the 1940s had been sensible enough to scoop up the remaining bundles of papers knowing that one day these letters from 1831 would be useful and important for someone. Once again I was very lucky, because that someone was me.

Witheridge's Witterings...

In the first of a new series, FOMA Vice Chairman, John Witheridge, has the last word...

"One of the variants of the name Witheridge is Whitheridge or even Whitteridge. Its Saxon name Wiriga. i.e. Domesday Book 1068 and also the Exeter Book 1086. Its British name is as in Old Briton, Widdyrydg, the dd being the early form of th, and as noted in the Welsh language. In fact, and to great interest the world over, we Witheridges rival Heinz for 57 varieties!! This could account for the reason why I am always in the soup, though being originally from Devon I presume this to be swede and turnip."

MALSC Open Day 2008



The day has dawned, with clear opening hue,
many things to see and deeds to do.
The local congestion set all perverse,
all transport to a stop, then all reverse.



The doors now open in perfect time,
with harassed humours, then all sublime.
Make way with intent and enlightened repose,
to seek that Map and Jezreels' proud prose.



The Map most perfect, the best out today,
with discourse where found and how it lay:
within a roof, not attic nor loft,
found by builders, ne'er again to be scoffed.



Amanda's arrival and with son most complete,
arrivals perhaps not completely discreet.
A kiss for our Tessa, only a hug for me,
Some holding of hands I am sure I did see!!



The day went well, with loads to see.
All visitors acknowledge that entrance was free,
but later agreed that escape would need,
the clinking of coins to set them afree'd.



We thank you all, from the depth of our hearts
for cash you gave, so in good nature depart.
Please call again - in perhaps one year?
Or at least in December, when full of good cheer.



My daughter, her time getting ever so near
to run her Marathon and compete with great cheer.
She'll not come first, of this we are sure,
though deep in her heart, her intentions are pure.



But sincerely folks, our thanks to you all,
both workers and visitors for heeding the call.
The money that was taken and goodwill that it raised,
but without you all !!??**? (Oh heavens be praised).

My thanks to everyone who took part.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.