

Bygone Kent

Read Kent's fascinating history magazine

Fully illustrated, unique articles on Kent - Britain's most historic county.

Did you know that the Medieval town of Faversham was once the capital of England?

To find out more fascinating facts and interesting articles about your county
- you need to read Bygone Kent!

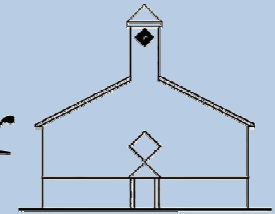
**SUBSCRIBE NOW ON OUR WEBSITE
ONLY £26 FOR 6 ISSUES
www.bygonekent.org.uk**

E: subscriptions@bygonekent.org.uk T: 01227 469060
Bygone Kent, 27 Castle Street, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2PX



*If undelivered, please return to:
Medway Archives office,
Civic Centre,
Strood,
Rochester,
Kent, ME2 4AU.*

The Clock Tower



Issue Number 23: August 2011
£2.00; free to members

FOMA Members Honoured!



FOMA member Anne Wade was awarded the MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours for services to the community in Rochester.

In June, Anne received a bouquet of congratulations from Sue Haydock, FOMA Vice President and Medway Council Representative.

More inside...

Ray Maisey, *Clock Tower* printer became Deputy Mayor of Medway in May. Ray is pictured here with his wife, Buffy, Deputy Mayoress and FOMA member.

More inside...



The FOMA AGM



FOMA members await the start of the AGM on 3 May 2011 at Frindsbury.

Betty Cole, FOMA Membership Secretary, signed members in at the AGM and took payment for the FOMA annual subscription. Pictured with Betty is Bob Ratcliffe FOMA Committee member and President of the City of Rochester Society.



April Lambourne's Retirement



Celebrating April Lambourne's retirement from MALSC at the Malta Inn, Allington. April is pictured top right.



"Move some of the other fellows—they've been here longer than me!"

The Clock Tower is now fully indexed!

There is now a pdf on the FOMA website (www.foma-lsc.org/newsletter.html) which lists the contents of all the issues since Number 1 in April 2006. In addition, each of the past issues now includes a list of contents; these are highlighted with an asterisk (*).

If you have missed any of the previous issues and some of the articles published, they are all available to read on the website. Read them again - *A Stroll through Strood* by Barbara Marchant (issue 4); *In Search of Thomas Fletcher Waghorn (1800-1850)* by Dr Andrew Ashbee (issue 6); *The Other Rochester and the Other Pocahontas* by Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck (issue 6); *Jottings in the Churchyard of All Saints Frindsbury* by Tessa Towner (issue 8), *The Skills of the Historian* by Dr Kate Bradley (issue 9); *The Rosher Family: From Gravesend to Hollywood* by Amanda Thomas (issue 9); *George Bond, Architect and Surveyor, 1853 to 1914* by Pat Salter and Bob Ratcliffe (issue 10) plus all the regular features on the Victoria County History by Dr. Sandra Dunster and Dr. Andrew Hann, Edwin Harris by Janet Knight and Alison Thomas, not to mention regular contributors such as Betty Cole, Brian Joyce, JL Keys, Peter Burstow, Odette Buchanan and Catharina Clement.

Betty's Postcards

Betty Cole



FOMA Membership Secretary, Betty Cole, has collected postcards for about 25 years, and to date she has hundreds in her collection, including at least 50 on a Dickens theme.

The comic postcard was popular from the 1900s right through to the 1950s when they were part and parcel of a day out at the seaside. Groups of people, women in their Kiss Me Quick bonnets, men in their everyday jackets (no casual clothes for men then), crowded around the racks outside bucket and spade and gift shops at Margate and other coastal towns to have a laugh at these brightly coloured cards with their saucy captions. It seems strange to us now that people on a daytrip found it necessary to send their friends or neighbours a postcard: "Wish you were here!"

Because of the long period of their popularity there are a huge number and variety of these postcards still around and for this reason collectors restrict themselves to a particular theme. My cards all feature policemen. So, like the card illustrated here, they are often to do with drunks coming into contact with The Law! Mostly bought from an internet auction site, I usually have to pay around £5 for each card, although some go for much more. A card I have tried to buy on two occasions has gradually risen to £10 before I have had to give up.

Not all postcards under the heading *Comic* were of the saucy seaside variety. There were political sketches, some from *Punch*, for the more sophisticated customers. During the First World War there were the comic sketches of Bruce Bairnsfather which were published on postcards and are much sought after. However it is the earlier category that I am illustrating in this issue. Crudely drawn, they were the postcard version of a *Carry On* film, full of double entendres and farcical situations. Large ladies with small henpecked husbands, honeymooners, drunks, miserly landladies and well endowed young women abounded. Some of the artists, such as Donald McGill, who is said to have designed more than three thousand cards, made a lot of money. Among other well known postcard artists were Phil May, Tom Browne and Dudley Hardy.

In a recent edition of *I'm Sorry I haven't a Clue* on Radio 4, the comedian Jack Dee spoke about a museum of seaside postcards and remarked that he didn't know why anyone would want to waste an hour looking at a collection of, "unamusing relics from the 1950s." I do find them amusing, in fact, that's my rule: if they don't make me smile, at least, I don't buy them. Our taste in humour in the '40s and '50s was not as sophisticated as it is now. Remember programmes such as *The Clitheroe Kid* and *Educating Archie* which were regular Sunday afternoon listening. I don't think they would entertain many people today.

There is a family anecdote concerning seaside postcards. My father and his brother were great jokers and some time in the 1940s my family was visiting Margate and was walking past the shops along the front where they came upon a crowd of people having a great time laughing at the saucy postcards on display. You may remember that in those days men often wore detached collars and my uncle, standing behind this group of people, turned his collar round showing only a white band above his shirt. He then made a few little coughs and as the people in front turned round, thinking they had been caught out in some indecent activity by a man of the cloth, hastily moved off. My cousin tells me he has never seen a crowd disperse so quickly!

From the Chairman

Tessa Towner, Chairman.



It was with great pleasure that the news broke on 11 June that one of our FOMA members, Anne Wade, had been awarded the MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours for services to the community in Rochester. Anne was born and brought up in Frindsbury and has a long association with the area, but she won't forgive me if I say how long! Anne has spent a lifetime of service to the community in many ways. She was my Guide Captain in the 1950s at 3rd Strood (All Saints Frindsbury) Guides, she was Churchwarden at All Saints with my father on more than one occasion, and a parish councillor for Frindsbury Extra Parish Council for many years. Anne was also a founding member of the Frindsbury and Wainscott Community Association which has campaigned tirelessly to preserve and conserve our local area from unsightly and unnecessary development. At our meeting on the 14th June FOMA Vice President Sue Haydock presented a bouquet of flowers to Anne to celebrate her award.

In July April Lambourne retired from MALSC, and I was invited along with staff old and new to an informal get together at the Malta Inn in Allington to celebrate the occasion. Although the weather wasn't warm enough for us to sit out by the river, we all had a good time, as you can see in the photographs opposite. On behalf of FOMA a gift of garden vouchers was presented to her and April and husband Mike are now taking a long summer break touring France. We wish her well in her retirement, but April will be back at MALSC as a casual employee in the future.

On 3 May 2011 we held our fifth AGM at Frindsbury. We could hardly believe it was five years ago that we held the inaugural FOMA meeting on 6 April 2006. Since then FOMA has gone from strength to strength with highlights such as the grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and MALSC being voted Archive of the Year this February by readers of *Your Family History* magazine. The AGM was well attended and concluded with Odette Buchanan's amusing talk on how life *Used-to-Be* in Strood: *Strood – The Land of Used-to-Be*. Odette's talk will be published in the next issue of *The Clock Tower*.

FOMA members are a busy lot and this issue of *The Clock Tower* is full of news of what we have all been doing. However, last but not least, you will have seen that our *Clock Tower* printer and FOMA member, Ray Maisey, has been made Deputy Mayor of Medway. The residents of Cuxton and Halling gave Ray an increased majority in the local elections in May. When he is not printing *The Clock Tower* for FOMA, Ray sits on Medway Council's Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee. More information is available on the council's website at www.medway.gov.uk.

The FOMA Collection



FOMA Committee member, Bob Ratcliffe, was contacted in May by Fieldstaff's antique shop in Rochester High Street about a document they had recently acquired and was for sale. FOMA has now purchased this document, the sales particulars for a house and shop at 1 King St and corner of Union Street, Troytown, Rochester, dated 1893. Tessa Towner, FOMA Chairman, was delighted to present the

document to Borough Archivist Alison Cable, for inclusion at MALSC in the FOMA Collection.

CityArk News

We are delighted to announce that the first Parish Register for Snodland, P342/1/1, has now been digitised and uploaded to Medway Ancestors. This comprises the composite register of baptisms 1559–1739, marriages 1559–1737 and burials 1559–1681; it also includes Charitable Briefs

News and Events

Odette Buchanan, Friends' Secretary



Hullo everyone! Thanks to all of you who attended the AGM and voted the Committee back on. The officers have agreed to keep our present positions, so another year of me as your Secretary. At every Committee Meeting the first part is a game of 'spot the deliberate mistake.' I refer to the rest of the Committee scrutinizing my minutes of the previous meeting, and I can't remember a meeting where there hasn't been at least one error - and still they want me to continue!

Since my last report, we have attended the Civic Day at Eastgate House, and my thanks to Jean Skilling, FOMA Treasurer, and Elaine Gardner, FOMA Vice Chairman, for mounting the display and helping to man it. This was a very successful coming together of many voluntary societies and friends' groups in the Rochester area. We were able to promote FOMA to the myriad of visitors that came through the door and make contact with other groups. We were also given details of a website

The Committee

Patron

Position vacant

President

Russell John Race, JP, DL



Vice Presidents

Sue Haydock (Medway Council Representative), Pat Salter, Brian Kingsley Smith, Bruce Aubry, Professor Sir Robert Worcester KBE DL

Chairman

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

Vice Chairman

Elaine Gardner: 102 Valley View Road, Rochester, ME1 3NX
emgardner@fsmail.net

Treasurer

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

Secretary

Odette Buchanan: 72 Jersey Road, Rochester, ME2 3PE, Kent.
odette_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk

Membership Secretary

Betty Cole: 25 Elm Avenue, Chatham, Kent ME4 6ER, Kent.
bettycole@blueyonder.co.uk

Members

Dr Sandra Dunster: S.A.Dunster@gre.ac.uk
Bob Ratcliffe: 12 King Edward Road, Rochester, ME1 1UB, Kent.
Kevin Russell: 11 St Catherine's Almshouses, Star Hill,
Rochester, ME1 2AA, Kent.

The Clock Tower Editor and Publicist

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

New features this year have also included *Little Gems* by Cindy O'Halloran and *Magnus Opus*, a review of the latest Medway books by Catharina Clement (interesting Medway book reviews from others are also welcome). I must also add that Catharina's series on the Quakers in Rochester has been fascinating. Our Borough Archivist, Alison Cable, has provided us in each issue with an update of what is happening in the Archives of Great Expectations project, made possible by the grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and her articles give us an insight into the work of Valerie Rouland and her volunteers. My thanks also go to Alison Thomas for continuing the Edwin Harris articles following Janet Knight's retirement. Regular contributors also include Betty Cole, Brian Joyce, John Keys and Peter Burstow; my apologies if I have forgotten to mention anyone.

Odetta Buchanan has already mentioned our reciprocal arrangement with *Bygone Kent* to advertise in each other's publications, and this will hopefully help to increase membership. In addition, new members and non-members continue to provide inspiration for *The Clock Tower*. At the recent talk on the work conducted at MALSC for the Victoria County History I had an opportunity to meet people from other historical organisations in the Medway area and I am always swift to rope them into writing something about their work and persuading them to become members. The fruits of these meetings will be seen in the issue which is out later this month [see Issue 22, May 2011] with articles from Chatham World Heritage and the Friends of Great Lines Heritage Park.

The highlight of the year was, of course, the presentation made to MALSC by *Your Family History* magazine at the *Who Do You Think You Are? Live* exhibition at Olympia. Archive of the Year is a tremendous honour and I don't know how Tessa kept the secret from me, though I did think it rather strange that she insisted I should be there on the Saturday and was so particular about what time I wanted to go for lunch! Thanks to this award, the support of the local press and other local organisations, the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre and FOMA are well and truly on the historical research map. In my role handling FOMA publicity such an accolade is a very handy, and it has certainly helped to boost our standing both locally and nationally.

To conclude, I am proud to be a FOMA member and to see *The Clock Tower* playing such an important role in the preservation of Medway's heritage. However none of this would be possible without the support of the staff of the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre, the FOMA committee and our dedicated members. My thanks to you all."

Readers may also be interested to hear that my book, *The Lambeth Cholera Outbreak of 1848 to 1849*, published by McFarland, has been selling well, and has caused a bit of a stir at Lambeth Council in London! Following an article on my work in *Lambeth Life*, I was contacted by the Council to work with their planning department on a heritage plaque for



Lambeth's South Bank. In June the plaque was erected on one of the pillars of the newly refurbished White Hart Dock, at the junction of the Albert Embankment and Black Prince Road. It is a splendid memorial to the people of Lambeth who died of cholera, many of whom were Kentish migrants.

Amanda Thomas at White Hart Dock; photograph by Alexander Thomas.

called Rochester People. This provides links to various societies' websites. We will give you further details later when the system is up and running. We have also established contact with the Friends of the Great Lines (see Nina Robinson's article in *The Clock Tower*, Issue 22, May 2011) and will hopefully be giving you details of walks across the Great Lines next spring. We are now busy organizing next year's calendar of talks and quiz dates.

Tessa, our Chairman, continues to collect information on armed forces personnel with Medway connections during the First World War. Please don't forget to let her know of any memorial lists you know of as quickly as possible.

We also continue to help with the Archives of Great Expectations made possible by our grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. At the moment we are 'translating' coroners' reports from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. Fascinating but hard work, despite the course we were given on understanding the writing and abbreviations common in those times.

I think Tessa has mentioned Anne Wade's MBE for services to the community but I would like to add my congratulations, too. Her services have continued over many years and are of great importance to Frindsbury in particular and Medway in general. For example, some years ago, it was she who stopped them carving out the chalk from the cliffs at Frindsbury and thus saved Frindsbury church from falling in the Medway. Go back many years and investigate many local issues – there's often Anne's name heading up the protesters. We all owe her a great debt for caring for our community.

Also, congratulations to April on her retirement – she will be missed at MALSC and we all wish her a long and restful change of life. We would also like to thank her for all the help she has given us over the years when researching tricky things. Good luck, April.

Don't forget the talks and the quiz coming up soon, the details of which are listed following this report. However, don't forget, if you cannot attend because of transport problems, please contact me and I will be able to put you in touch with another member who can give you a lift. So, hoping to see hoards of you swarming through the door of the Parish hall at Frindsbury for Bob's talk on 150 years of the Railway on Tuesday, 13th September at 7.00 pm. Remember, it's only £4 for FOMA members and £5 for others.

Calendar of Forthcoming Events and Exhibitions

FOMA Events

13th September, 7.30 pm
150th Anniversary of the London, Chatham and Dover Railway
A talk by Bob Ratcliffe

Sat 1st October
Quiz Night
£5 for members and non-members.
BOOKING REQUIRED.

Tues 8th November
Mills and Broom
A talk by Odette Buchanan about the mills of Strood, including the water mills

Please note, booking for FOMA talks is no longer necessary!
All events - and until further notice - are at Frindsbury Parish Hall
Talks are £2 for members £4 non-members.
Booking for Quiz Nights and enquiries through the FOMA Secretary:
Odette Buchanan, 72 Jersey Rd, Strood, ME2 3PE;
odette_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk; 01634 718231.

MALSC Events

Exhibitions

14th July – 30th August
150 years of the London to Dover railway

2nd September – 5th November
Rainham history

**PLEASE NOTE: MALSC WILL BE CLOSED FOR STOCKTAKING
FROM 7TH TO 20TH NOVEMBER 2011.**

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 was made a full member of the Society of Women Writers and Journalists in 2008.

As FOMA grows, an increasing number of our members come from outside the Medway area, including overseas, and are unable to attend events. I count myself in this number and am therefore conscious of the need to provide all members with as much information as possible about FOMA's work. To follow is a transcript of my address to this year's AGM which I hope will be of benefit to absent FOMA members, and even to those who were present who did not catch every word.

"This year *The Clock Tower* has truly gone from strength to strength, which I think everyone can see with the quality of the articles and the presentation: my sincere thanks to Ray Maisey at Rabbit Hutch printers for his work producing each issue. We also receive many enquiries and comments on articles sometimes long after they are printed. These often come from people who are not members and who have surfed on to the website. It is useful that *The Clock Tower's* content is fully Googleable and this means it is used and quoted by others, though not always, sadly, with our permission. However, the exposure this gives FOMA is important and as we become better known this will also attract new members.

It is also useful to be able to publish *The Clock Tower* on the website in full colour and to include more illustrations than we can in the printed version. My thanks to my son, Alex Thomas, for his continued work in maintaining the website and keeping it up to date. Recent additions to the website include the Medway Photo Gallery which is linked to the Kent Photo Archive; and my thanks to Roger Smoothy for making this possible. The website attracts around a thousand hits per month, and a full breakdown is as follows:

April 2010 – 1070 visits	November 2010 – 995 visits
May 2010 – 1106 visits	December 2010 – 998 visits
June 2010 – 886 visits	January 2011 – 1027 visits
July 2010 – 1062 visits	February 2011 – 1111 visits
August 2010 – 994 visits	March 2011 – 1161 visits
September 2010 – 957 visits	April 2011 – 1129 visits
October 2010 – 935 visits	May (to 2 May) 2011 – 41 visits

The website is important for maintaining FOMA's high profile and for giving access to *The Clock Tower* to members and non-members, though we still ensure that the latest two issues are encrypted for members only.

I always welcome articles from members and the series we published to commemorate the Battle of Britain was a wonderful showcase for their work and memories. My thanks to Odette Buchanan and the Friends of Broomhill for sharing their research and the wonderful illustrations and information they provided.

**THE BROMPTON AND GILLINGHAM
BATHING ESTABLISHMENT,**
*Consists of an elegant and convenient Floating Machine, with Warm
Baths on shore.*

THE Water here has been ascertained, by correct analysis, to possess the same properties at High Water as that at the Nore, and to be at all times equally pure and clear, a circumstance of material importance to all who Bathe, whether it be for the improvement of their health, or in the pursuit of pleasure.

This newly Established Watering Place is situated on the Banks of the Medway, about two miles from Rochester, and nine from Gravesend, from whence coaches, vans, and other carriages, run almost every half hour during the day, while steam-boats, and other vessels, are continually passing and repassing the Bathing Establishment, and it is in contemplation to run vans, or other vehicles, to and from Rochester, Chatham, &c., and the Baths. The Inns and Lodging Houses in the vicinity, afford ample and reasonable accommodations to the visitor and lover of pleasure; while the beautiful walks and drives amid the enchanting and pleasing scenery of the neighbourhood, the continually varying scenes of amusement and interest to be found in the military evolutions of the extensive and well disciplined Garrison of Chatham, and the great variety of public works too numerous and too important to be mentioned here, combined with the well known salubrity of the air, and the superior efficacy of the water, so admirably adapted to the Valetudinarian, and Delicate Children requiring Sea Bathing, enable the Directors of the above establishment to anticipate, with confidence, an increased share of the public patronage.

The following is the Scale of Charges:—

	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Warm Bath	2	0	each or 1	0	0	per doz.
Superior Plunging Bath, for Ladies..	1	0	..	0	10	0
Plunging or Swimming Bath....	0	6	..	0	5	0
Ditto for Children under ten years of age	0	4	..	0	3	0

N.B.—A Waterman will be in constant attendance to convey the company to and from the Bath.—Proper attendance on board for Ladies.

Directions of individuals having apartments to let, may be had at the principal Inns at Brompton and Gillingham, and likewise of any of the Directors, or at the Office of the establishment.

Brompton, 1838.

20th November – 10th January 2012
Metal Men of Medway: statues, plaques and street furniture

12 January 2012 – 28th February 2012
Archives of Great Expectations: documents and discoveries from the Rochester City records

1st March 2012 – 24th April 2012
Medway Artists – the achievements of Dadd, Spencelayh, Wyllie, Maxwell and Dunbar.

MALSC OPENING HOURS

**Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9.00 am to 5.00 pm; Saturday
9.00 am to 4.00 pm. Wednesday and Sunday closed.**

Talks and Events

14th September, 2.30 pm
Estella's Legacy
A one act play inspired by Dickens' *Great Expectations*. Written by Clare Graydon-James, performed by Anne Graydon and Clare Graydon-James.

Eastgate House
£6; no concessions

28th September (fully booked)
5th October (fully booked)
12th October (at the time of going to press still some spaces)
2.00 pm – 4 pm
Please ring MALSC for further information on 01634 332714
Kent Family History Society
Introduction to Family History
FREE

25th October, 7.30 pm
Mystery Animals
Neil Arnold
Eastgate House

Unless otherwise indicated, all the above are held at the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre, (MALSC) Civic Centre, Strood, Rochester, Kent ME2 4AU. Unless otherwise indicated, talks and events are £5, or £4 for FOMA members. Further information is available from MALSC; please telephone 01634 332714 to book. TICKETS MUST BE BOOKED IN ADVANCE.

Please note: You may be aware that Medway Council has been 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.

Exhibitions at Eastgate House

September 8th – 11th

Heritage Open Days (content of exhibition still to be decided)

October 5th – 19th

150 years of London - Dover Railway.

Some MALSC talks and events also take place at Eastgate House – see above under *MALSC Talks and Events*.

Request for Material

The Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre would like to expand its biography base to include more variety and diversity. Any information or material on local *celebrities*, past or present, with connections to the Medway area by birth, residence or close links would be much appreciated. This can include families as well as business partnerships. Particularly welcome would be material on Medway's *ethnic* families or persons and Rainham individuals, which are at present under represented in our collection.

Please contact Catharina Clement at MALSC on 01634 332714

Both venues offered land-based baths and floating basins, within which more experienced swimmers were able to enjoy the benefits of the Medway's tidal waters. At Rochester the main building of Kentish ragstone was designed by London architect Sidney Smirke¹ and clients were also offered 'a splendid saloon' in which to relax with 'extensive views up and down the river Medway unequalled for beauty and variety by any scene in the county of Kent' and newspapers and magazines provided. Ladies at Gillingham were assured that 'proper attendance' would be available at all time as they were transported to the floating basin by a Waterman.

Unfortunately neither venture was a resounding success. Within six months of opening the Rochester establishment was struggling to survive. An advert appeared in the local press in December 1838 seeking an additional investment of £1200. However, despite continuing financial difficulties the enterprise continued to operate for some years and was referred to in *Bagshaw's Directory* of 1847 as a medical establishment. It fell into disuse in the middle of the century and was revived in the 1880s when it was turned into public baths. According to *Wright's Topography*, the Gillingham venture was a little more successful, at least in the short term. In its first year it offered shareholders a healthy dividend of 10%, and plans were afoot for expansion. What happened next is something of a mystery as no further mention of these baths has yet been found in the records.

It is unlikely that either bathing establishment would have survived as tourist attractions into the second half of the nineteenth century as industry began to mar the health-giving properties of the River Medway and destroy some of the beauty of the surrounding countryside. Cement and brick manufacture and the Aveling and Porter engineering works at Strood would have made a holiday on the Medway a less healthy and relaxing affair than could have been anticipated by those who originally conceived the plans for spa resorts in this location.

My thanks to Peter Lyons who researched this topic for the Victoria County History's *England's Past for Everyone* Project. Without his help many details would not have been uncovered.

1. More information about the Smirkes and their connection to the Medway Towns can be found in Michael Baker's article, *Which Mr Baker? or By Nine Votes to Eight*, in *The Clock Tower* Issue 12, November 2008. Amanda Thomas also looks at their work in London in her book *The Lambeth Cholera Outbreak of 1848-1849*, ISBN 978-0786439898

The Victoria County History

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. 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.

In this issue, Sandra gives an insight into how the summer holidays used to be, or perhaps might have been...

Spa resorts in the Medway Towns

Earlier this year I saw an item on BBC South East Today celebrating the revival of a sandy beach at All Hallows near Rochester and was reminded of attempts in the 1830s to market Rochester and Brompton as spa resorts.

Although today this might not seem an obvious use for the Medway, at the time there were several good reasons why the enterprise would have appealed to local entrepreneurs. Visits to the seaside and salt water bathing were increasing popular for reasons of health and pleasure and according to an advertisement in the *Rochester Chatham and Strood Gazette* of 14 June 1836 the River Medway at Rochester was able to offer water of which it could be said that 'The strength and saltness thereof will approximate as nearly as possible to the open sea.'

Those promoting the area for its health benefits were keen to stress the convenience of the Medway area for visitors from London, and the attractions of the surrounding countryside. The entry in *Wrights Topography* for 1838 (see illustration) for the Gillingham and Brompton Bathing Establishment, located near Gillingham Fort, extolled the virtues of 'the beautiful walks and drives amid the enchanting and pleasing scenery of the neighbourhood'. The Medway Bathing Establishment at Rochester was said to benefit from the 'salutricity of the air' and its situation close to such 'local charms' as the castle, cathedral and chapter house.

New Members

A warm welcome to new FOMA members:

Mrs Norma Crowe, Hartley;
Mr Alan Moss, Frindsbury;
Mrs Rita Gregory, Chatham;
Mr Mark Reckless, M.P., Rochester.

Readers may recognise some of these names. Norma Crowe is Local History Librarian at MALSC and has contributed some wonderful work over the years to *The Clock Tower*, including articles on Shorts Brothers (Issue 2, June 2006), Strood Heritage Society (Issue 3, August 2006), and Sir Cloudesley Shovell (see Issue 10, May 2008, Issue.11, August 2008, Issue 12, November 2008).

Alan Moss is Membership Secretary of the City of Rochester Society and can be contacted at Alan.Moss1@btinternet.com.

We are also delighted to welcome Mark Reckless (pictured), Member of Parliament for Rochester and Strood. Mark has played a prominent role in the evidence sessions conducted by the Home Affairs Committee into the unauthorised hacking of mobile telephones by News International. He is also backing the campaign in Medway against 100-hour a week pharmacies. Further information can be found at <http://markreckless.com/>



Photograph provided with the kind permission of Mark Reckless M.P.

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. FOMA Secretary, Odette Buchanan, often receives queries from members or visitors to the FOMA website, www.foma-lsc.org/index.html. If you have any additional information for the following correspondents, please contact the Editor.

We have received a request for back issues of *The Clock Tower*. Unfortunately FOMA holds very few printed back copies, however, every issue of *The Clock Tower* can be read on the FOMA website www.foma-lsc.org/newsletter.html and only issues 1 to 8 are not available as fully printable in the current A5 form. There is also now a pdf on the FOMA website which lists the contents of all the issues since Number 1 in April 2006 and each of the past issues now includes a list of contents; these are highlighted with an asterisk (*).

From: Greg Dexter
To: Odette Buchanan; odette_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk
Sent: Wed, 29 June, 2011
Subject: Swanley Homes for Boys 1883-1955

Dear Odette,

I've found your email on the FOMA website of which I am a member. A few years ago I came to look through the archives and was helped in that by Cindy O'Halloran. That was when I started writing the history of the "Swanley Homes for Little Boys." I did offer an article about this for *The Clock Tower* many moons ago [see *The Clock Tower*, Issue 11, August 2008] and I hope to complete the book later this year. As you may know the Homes became a naval orphanage after 1909 and boys came from Portsmouth, Hartlepool, and other naval places around the country including the Medway district. Cindy showed me some books with details of admissions of boys, I think, mainly in the 1940s and I was able to take useful info from those. I have received from the Portsmouth Record Office some lists of orphans who went to Swanley from Pembroke House including brief details of their fathers' service in the navy until they died before and during WW1/2, including a few old boys who served in the navy. I just wonder if there is a similar list anywhere in the Medway Archives of boys, for example from, was it "NORE?" or elsewhere. Perhaps some went to HLB without links with the navy. If so, and any photocopying is possible, obviously I will to pay for that.

Regards,
Greg Dexter, Torquay.

From: Peter Thompson
To: odette_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk
Sent: Wed, 6 July, 2011
Subject: FOMA
Dear Ms Buchanan

Forgive me for troubling you but whilst researching a relative I found FOMA and your address and I was intrigued by an article written by Brian Butler who it appears is greatly interested in this particular relative -

10

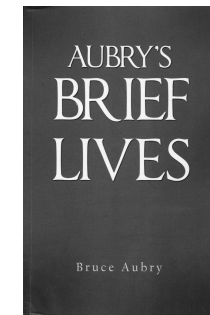
Magnum Opus

Catharina Clement

A review of the latest Medway titles.



This issue's review covers two authors, who have both produced entertaining biographical sketches of local people.



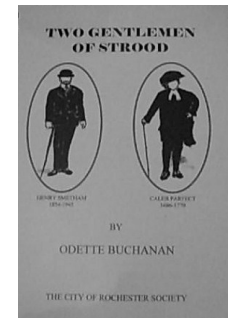
Aubry's Brief Lives by Bruce Aubry
ISBN 0-9545785-3-8

Bruce Aubry's latest book touches on the lives of 50 local, ordinary people of the Victorian era. The book is divided up into nine chapters covering diverse people with Medway connections. It covers those with an interest in politics, philanthropy and religion as well as people who just had interesting jobs or careers. Others included are those that 'quit' Medway life either to seek better opportunities abroad or some who had had enough of life and so opted to take their own. There are a few women included, but it is a shame that not enough material was available for a few more to be added. Each section is introduced by

Bruce in his own humorous and unique style. The book has been produced as a series of brief sketches and is something that can be dipped into or browsed through on a wet, nostalgic afternoon. Readers who like biographical works may find this an attractive alternative and most of the sketches are based on local newspaper accounts. This book is well researched and written in a captivating style. The only negative in this age of recycling, where less packaging is the aim, why the plastic cover? At £8.99 a snip to get a snippet of people's lives.

Two Gentlemen of Strood by Odette Buchanan

This booklet, published by the City of Rochester Society, contains biographies of two Strood men separated by a century. In Odette Buchanan's words both men were 'dedicated to improving Strood's citizens.' Henry Smetham, an unassuming local historian, wrote the *History of Strood*. He also had a hand in many local affairs and societies. Caleb Perfect, an eccentric minister, tried to put the world to rights as well as helping the poor.



Odette's book is amusingly written, well sourced and illustrated. Anyone with an interest in local history or Strood will find some fascinating facts about these two well-known Strood gentlemen in this publication. A bargain at a mere £5.00. Available to purchase from the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre or the City of Rochester Society (please contact Alan Moss on 01634 721886 or at Alan.Moss1@btinternet.com).



one Shadrach Edward Robert Jones who just happens to be my great great grandfather. [See *The Clock Tower*, Issue 15, August 2009 and Issue 18, May 2010]. Shadrach, as Mr. Butler is aware, originated in Gravesend but in the 1851 census was living in Wellington Shropshire with his wife Louisa (nee Onions) with their first two daughters Alice the eldest and Laura Emma.

My family and I have reams of stuff appertaining to Shadrach's life but I am principally interested in what happened to the daughter Laura after she married George Alexander Thompson in ? (I have the date but have mislaid it). This is where my branch of the family originated. Out of interest I should tell you that I have found and photographed Shadrach's grave in a Pioneer cemetery close to the town of Raymond Terrace in NSW where he died aged 73 in 1895 three years after returning from NZ. There is also much archival material on him in the library of Bendigo Victoria where he first settled and worked as an auctioneer for some reason although he was a qualified medical practitioner.

I would greatly value any help you could give me in introducing me to Mr. Butler as it would seem we have a shared interest.

Yours sincerely,
Peter Thompson, West Oxfordshire

From: Odette Buchanan [odette_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk]
Sent: 17 July 2011
To: Peter Thompson
Subject: Re: FOMA

Dear Mr. Thompson,

Thank you for your enquiry - it all sounds extremely interesting and I have forwarded your email on to Mr. Butler who is a FOMA member. No doubt he will be in touch in the near future.
Good luck with your research.
Odette Buchanan

From: Barry Morgan
To: odette_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk
Sent: Sun, 10 July, 2011
Subject: Family tree research.

Dear Ms Buchanan

I am writing in the hope that you can put me in touch with someone who can tell me if there is a headstone for the burial of Ann Wood, nee Beacham. Ann is my 3x great grandmother and I have had trouble locating her death record. The attached records are the closest to place and date but the certificate shows her as 'spinster'. I have been in touch with Alison Cable, to ask if the Chatham Workhouse Records could help but to no avail. Staff at the workhouse may not have known Ann's full circumstances when informing of her death. Given that she died in the Workhouse the chances of a descriptive headstone that will help me is unlikely. Her husband's name was Jesse Wood and he died 4 April 1844 at Gillingham. If you do know of a local researcher I would love to contact them.

Regards,
Barry Morgan, Australia

The Medway Queen Paddle Steamer

As *The Clock Tower* was going to press, we received some exciting news from Les Crowder of the Medway Queen Preservation Society:

You may well know that this year is a momentous year in the history of the paddle steamer the Medway Queen. A new riveted hull is being built at the Albion Dockyard in Bristol, and at the end of the year we hope she will be completed and towed back to the Medway, when a two year fitting out programme will begin. We are looking to promote our project in as many ways as we can, and to inform as many people in Kent about the restoration of our ship.

In a nutshell the history of the ship is as follows :-

The paddle steamer 'Medway Queen' is the last estuary pleasure steamer surviving in the United Kingdom. She was built in 1924 on the River Clyde in Scotland but sailed in the estuary waters of the River Thames and River Medway. In WWII she was requisitioned and converted to a minesweeper. Initially she operated out of Dover and later in the war was based in Scotland as a training vessel. Her finest moment came in 1940 when she made seven crossings to the beaches of Dunkirk rescuing 7000 men. Her bravery and that of her gallant crew lead to the title 'Heroine of Dunkirk' being bestowed. After the war the Medway Queen returned to pleasure steaming on the River Medway and Thames, under her original owners, until withdrawal in 1963. From 1966 the ship served as a marina club house and night club at Island Harbour on the Isle of Wight. She became a well known and popular entertainment venue and her reputation there lasts to this day. In due course she was replaced by a larger vessel, Ryde Queen, and fell into disuse. In 1984 the Medway Queen was salvaged from the river Medina and towed on a salvage barge back to her home river in Chatham.

The Medway Queen Preservation Society was formed in 1985 to try and save her. After many years of trying, a £1.8 million grant from the Heritage Lottery fund has enabled the rebuild to take place. A further grant from European Regional Development Fund will enable the refurbishment to be carried out, and has promoted our links with two European projects. 'The Jean Bart' in Gravelines in France, and the 'New Belgica' in Boom in Belgium, as part of the 'Heroes 2 C' project.

Our society has an educational group, who are pleased to visit societies and schools, to give talks about the history of the Medway Queen; and we have a wealth of promotional material, that can be used to publicise the project. Please see our web site www.medwayqueen.co.uk for more details.

I should take the opportunity to publicise a DVD we have made about the history of the ship, and the society. Please see www.medwayqueen.co.uk/sales for further details.

If you are able to publicise our project in anyway, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Best regards,

Les Crowder.

Cindy's Little Gems

Cindy O'Halloran



Cindy is Senior Archive and Local Studies Assistant at MALSC, responsible for the daily management of the searchroom and non professional staff. She has worked at MALSC for six years following 12 years in branch libraries and as a teaching assistant at a local primary school. Cindy's interests include reading, gardening and anything to do with history, her main passion being the 17th century and the English Civil Wars.

Grant of Dukedom to James Duke of Lennox, 1641 (U0565_F052)

This edition of *Little Gems* looks at probably one of the most beautiful documents held here at MALSC. The Grant of Dukedom to James Duke of Lennox, 1641 is illustrated with a full colour portrait of Charles I and decorated with gold leaf. The top panel shows delicate carnations and honeysuckle reminiscent of seventeenth century stumpwork needlepoint. The portrait was painted at a time when the personal rule of Charles was under attack and the King was engaged in a war with the Scots. Charles was a great patron of the arts and sat for many great artists such as Mytens, Hilliard and Van Dyke. Anthony Van Dyke painted a triple view of the King which was sent to the sculptor Bernini so that he could sculpt his bust, Bernini on receipt of the canvas declared that it was the portrait "of a doomed man." With hindsight, of course, we know that his prophecy was correct. Within the next year the country had descended into civil war. Charles lost his throne and his head, his art collection, which included some of the finest works in Europe, was broken up and many pieces sold.

The document is included in the Darnley family archive. Cobham Hall was a Crown property until James I granted Cobham Hall to his relative Lodovic Stuart, 2nd Duke of Lennox. It remained in his family for nearly 70 years until the time of Charles Stuart 6th Duke of Lennox and Duke of Richmond. John Bligh married Theodosia Hyde in the early 18th century. She was the sole heir of Edward Earl of Clarendon and of Catherine O'Brien, only daughter and heir of Lady Catherine Stuart who was the sister of Charles, Duke of Lennox. It was through this marriage that the Blighs inherited Cobham Hall and became large landowners in both Kent and Ireland.

It is surprising that Thomas de Grey should have created a property which is so unashamedly French at the end of the Napoleonic wars, however, the family was greatly influenced by European culture and the family – as many at the time - was clearly influenced by the trend to admire and recreate the classical past. This is particularly evident in the gardens whose walkways are punctuated with classical statues, Grecian columns and even a fake pagan altar with a rather dodgy (i.e. inaccurate) inscription! The garden dates from the 1670s and has been gradually added to over the years. English Heritage has set up an apprenticeship scheme for gardeners and is currently employing three young people within the scheme.

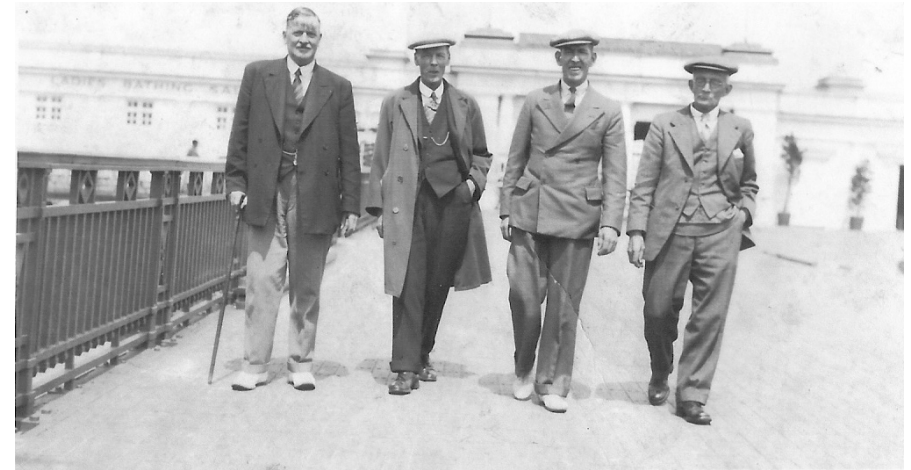
Andrew's work at Wrest is almost at an end, but his work with English Heritage will continue on the Isle of Wight. His next project will be the restoration of the beach at Osborne House in anticipation of its opening it to the public. He is looking forward to this next project and relishes the opportunity to help raise public awareness in our heritage. However, one slight problem with the beach at Osborne House will be the rare plants which are growing in the shingle, for as much as Andrew has faith in the general public's respect for heritage and the environment, he realises this part of the beach will need to be cordoned off. Visitors to Wrest will be pleased to hear that nothing in the garden is roped off, there are no warnings to 'keep off the grass' and neither are there any signposts. Wrest is well worth a visit, but beware, the garden is huge, and some of its paths so long and meandering, with the absence of any signage, it is very easy to get lost!



The amphitheatre (left), bowling green and bowling green house (right). These were part of the early garden and associated with the original main house. The bowling green house was built circa 1720/1 and the facade, designed by Batty Langley (1696-1751), was added in around 1735. To the rear is the great woodland garden where Andrew Hann warns it is all too easy to get lost!

Do You Know...?

Does anyone recognise the people in this photograph or can you identify the location where it was taken? Please contact the Editor, Amanda Thomas.



Medway Museums and Library Service

Medway Museums and Library service has held a series of successful exhibitions, usually lasting about ten days, at Eastgate House, Rochester with the aim of both getting visitors into the house and highlighting the exhibitions put together by MALSC.

However, success depends on volunteers manning Eastgate House when exhibitions are on display, and we are keen to find more volunteers to avoid the stalwart few having to cover two or even three half days.

If you think could offer a two and a half hour morning or afternoon slot at future events please contact Elaine Gardner on 01634 408595 or e-mail emgardner@fsmail.net so that we can add you to the list and contact you before the next exhibition. Thank you!

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), www.foma-lsc.org/index.html.

Editorial deadlines

Please note, the deadline is the **last** Monday (or Tuesday when a Bank Holiday occurs) of January, April, July and October. 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.

Issue 24 of The Clock Tower will be delayed. The copy deadline for Issue 24 is Monday 14 November 2011, with publication on Wednesday 7 December 2011.

Publication date

The fourth Wednesday following the editorial deadline.

The Clock Tower is printed by Ray Maisey, Rabbit Hutch Printers, 106 Charles Drive, Cuxton, Kent, ME2 1DU; telephone: 01634 294655; fax: 01634 723510; email: Ray@Rabbithutchprinters.com

Copyright

The copyright of the contents of *The Clock Tower* belongs to the Friends of Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre and the authors and owners of any articles and photographs printed. The contents of *The Clock Tower* may not be reproduced without permission of the Editor and/or the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre.

Front Cover Accreditations and Website Information

The logo for *The Clock Tower* was designed by Bob Ratcliffe.

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

The Clock Tower is also available at www.foma-lsc.org/newsletter.html

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, Odette Buchanan: 72 Jersey Road, Rochester, ME2 3PE. Telephone: 01634 718231; email: odette_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk

Membership enquiries should be directed to the Membership Secretary, Betty Cole, 25 Elm Avenue, Chatham, Kent ME4 6ER. Telephone: 01634 316509; email: bettycole@blueyonder.co.uk



The large water feature with the new house in the distance.

The house Thomas built was in the French style and shared many features with Versailles, and on which some of the formal garden is also based. Not only that, but many internal fixtures, such as the marble fireplaces, were also imported from France. However, Thomas ensured that the best fixtures

and fittings from the old house were kept and re-used, and one of the most magnificent examples of this is the Chinese wallpaper dating from 1792 in one of the many bedrooms. The house has been added to over the years and the walls of the grand Staircase Hall and one of the visitor rooms, are lined with the portraits of those responsible. The paintings in the visitors' area are not original as most of Wrest's furnishings were sold in 1917, however, Andrew managed to track down some of the original family portraits and has had them reproduced for public display.

Work at Wrest will continue at a frantic pace to make the house ready for the public opening. Parking will be available in the walled garden and visitors will approach the house on foot via a rear entrance where there is also disabled access. Visitors will be able to see some of the refurbished rooms in the house, but there are some areas which will continue to be restored and others where the interior is too delicate for continual public display. Three rooms have been acquired on the ground floor as an exhibition area, and each room is dedicated to a different aspect of the project: the house, the people who have been employed on the project, and the garden; there is also a timeline to explain to visitors how the house changed in response to world events.



The magnificent orangery in the gardens at Wrest.

Wrest's reception area shows that the earliest member of the family to have an association with the estate was Henry de Gray of Thurrock who lived in the 1200s.



The rear terrace at Wrest

Wrest was the seat of the Duke of Kent, though this line of aristocrats had nothing to do with the current holders of that title, and, Andrew believes, absolutely nothing to do with the county itself. Indeed the de Grey family and their circle of friends appear to have been deeply rooted in the history of Bedfordshire and the surrounding area, and owned a considerable collection of land and property, including Brocket Hall in Hertfordshire, Wimpole Hall in Cambridgeshire, Ruthin Castle, and no. 4 St James Square in London.

The present house was built in the 1830s by Thomas Philip de Grey (1781-1859). He had the original house demolished and a new house built in line with the old but in a more elevated position. This not only gave a better view of the parkland but it was also further from the enormous lakes and ponds which had become an ideal breeding ground for gnats.



The rear of Wrest Park – a very French facade

Archives Update

Alison Cable, Borough Archivist



Project Archivist, Valerie Rouland (pictured) has made excellent progress on the Heritage Lottery Fund project this last quarter with her team of volunteers. Valerie has prepared the following report.

Quarterly Report for the Archives of Great Expectations: April to June 2011

Cataloguing

1. Sir Joseph Williamson mathematical school

The catalogue has been completed and is now available on CityArk. All documents have been repackaged.

2. Rochester City archives

We have now catalogued the records of the Rochester Oyster and Floating Fishery and the Admiralty Court. Both institutions still exist and it was decided to include documents of the successors' authorities to Rochester City Council.

The records have been arranged as follows:

RCA/J3	Admiralty Court	1565-2003
RCA/J3/1	Registers	1565-1928
RCA/J3/2	Minute books	1754-1928
RCA/J3/3	Jurymen	1865-2000
RCA/J3/4	Presentments	1619-1903
RCA/J3/5	Summons and warrants	1626-1826
RCA/J3/6	Registrar's files	1955-2003
RCA/J3/7	Rules and orders	1729-1906
RCA/J3/8	Printed material	19C – 1997

RCA/Y Rochester Oyster and Floating Fishery	1628-2005
RCA/Y1 Minute books	1816-1860
RCA/Y2 Enrolment registers	1743-2005
RCA/Y3 Acts of Parliament	1727-1867
RCA/Y4 Legal documents	1628-1965
RCA/Y5 Registrar's files	1880-1975
RCA/Y6 Finance records	1777-1994
RCA/Y7 Title	1869-1960
RCA/Y8 Miscellaneous documents	1823-1841

The next stage will be to place Rochester City Council catalogue on CityArk. Training will be provided to the project archivist for this task.

Volunteers

The volunteers have completed the repackaging and renumbering of finance documents as well as transcribing a selection of 17th century coroner inquests. The next stage, starting in July, will involve the renumbering and repackaging of 40 boxes, including the records of the Rochester Oyster and Floating Fishery and Admiralty court.

An additional note from Alison Cable:

Cityark

At the start of July 2011, Valerie will start to input the new version of the RCA catalogue onto Cityark (cityark.medway.gov.uk/). During this time, we will need to delete and alter parts of the catalogue that already appear on Cityark. Researchers who require access to the Rochester City Archives can use the paper catalogue in the MALSC search room. If you have any queries about document reference numbers please check with Valerie or Alison.

Education/Outreach

In July 2011, we will be sending out letters to Medway secondary schools to invite them to a presentation at MALSC in September at which we will introduce them to the work we do, and our HLF project. We hope that this will result in partnership work with the schools, enabling students to utilise the Rochester City Archives as part of their history studies.

FOMA Members at Work *— and at Wrest!*

Amanda Thomas, Editor



Since leaving the Victoria County History *England's Past for Everyone* project, FOMA member Dr Andrew Hann has been working for English Heritage, and for the past two years as Properties Historian at Wrest Park in Bedfordshire. English Heritage acquired the property in 2006 and with a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the project to restore and maintain the house and gardens will probably continue for the next 20 years. Andrew has been working with a team of around a hundred others on the restoration of this magnificent house and gardens at Silsoe. He has been responsible for the historical content of the new exhibition centre and for providing historical information about the house and gardens for a team of some 70 stewards who will show visitors round when Wrest opens on 1 August 2011 to the public. He has also written the guide book.



Dr Andrew Hann in the new exhibition centre at Wrest Park.

The house is not the first to have been built on the site at Silsoe, as there was a house here in medieval times which had been extended and improved over the years, and which included, so it is believed, a frontage designed by Inigo Jones (1573-1652). The estate was owned by the de Grey family and an impressive framed family tree in

Bibliography

- Appadurai, A. 1986. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- British Museum. *Rosetta Stone*. Date consulted: 01/07/11. Available at: www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/aes/t/the_rosetta_stone.aspx
- Çatalhöyük Research Project. *Çatalhöyük: Excavations of a Neolithic Anatolian Höyük*. Date consulted: 01/07/11. Available at: www.catalhoyuk.com
- Green, R.E. *et al.* 2010. A Draft Sequence of the Neandertal Genome. *Science* 328 (710). 710 – 722.
- Miller, D. 1985. *Artefacts as Categories*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Miller, D. 1987. *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Miller, D. 2005. Materiality: an introduction. In D. Miller (ed.) *Materiality*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Renfrew, C. 1987. *Archaeology and Language: the puzzle of Indo-European origins*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Trigger, B.G. 1996. *A History of Archaeological Thought* (2nd ed.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Further reading

- Bradley, R. (2007) *The Prehistory of Britain and Ireland*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Greene, K. (2009) *Archaeology: an introduction*. (4th ed.) Oxford: Routledge.
- Gamble, C. (2008) *Archaeology: the basics*. (2nd ed.) London: Routledge.
- Johnson, M. (2010) *Archaeological Theory: an introduction*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Miller, D. (ed.) *Materiality*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Renfrew, C. & Bahn, P. (2008) *Archaeology: theories, methods and practice* (5th ed.) London: Thames and Hudson.

Edwin Harris – Recollections of Rochester

Alison Thomas, Archive and Local Studies Assistant,
The Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre



After completing a degree in medieval and modern history at the University of Birmingham, Alison Thomas trained as a teacher and worked in primary education for several years. Whilst bringing up her family she had various part time jobs within education ranging from playgroup assistant to special needs teacher. Alison left work to become a full time carer for four years, and joined MALSC as Archive and Local Studies Assistant at the end of February 2010. In this issue Alison has reproduced Edwin's thoughts on Rochester's coffee house.

Recollections of Rochester: No 63

The City Coffee House



The City Coffee House had a dignified appearance, with central doorway leading into a wide hall. The entrance was up a couple of wide steps, and the bar was on one side and rooms on the other. At the end of the hall was a gaslight with a glass reflector of various colours which gave a kind of rainbow effect. At the sale of the fittings of the interior it was purchased by Mr Daniel Barnard and fixed at the main entrance to Barnard's music hall, where it remained until the hall was burnt down. I have never seen another reflector like it. The house was a second rate hotel.

Its sign 'The City Coffee House' for a fully licensed house may seem a strange one to present-day readers, therefore it may not be out of place if I digress and give the origin of coffee houses.

COFFEE HOUSES IN ENGLAND

The use of coffee in England was first known in 1657. Mr Edwards a Turkey merchant brought from Smyrna to London one Pasqua Rosee a Ragusan youth who prepared this drink for him every morning. But the novelty thereof drawing too much company to him, he allowed his said servant, with another of his son-in-law, to sell the coffee publicly, and they set up the first coffee house in London, in St Michael's-alley in Cornhill...One of Rosee's original shop or hand-bills, the only mode of advertising in those days read as follows:-

The Vertue of the Coffee Drink.

First made and publickly sold in England by Pasqua Rosee

...The quality of this drink is cold and dry; and though it be drier, yet it neither heats nor inflames more than hot posset. It so incloseth the orifice of stomach, and fortifies the heat within, that it is very good to help the digestion; and therefore of great use to be taken about three or four o' clock afternoon, as well as in the morning. It much quickens the spirits and makes the heart lightsome; it is good against sore eyes, and the better if you hold your head over it and take in the steam that way. It suppresseth fumes exceedingly, and therefore is good against the headache, and will very much stop any defluxion of the rheums, that distil from the head upon the stomach, and so prevent and help consumptions and the cough of the lungs.

It is excellent to prevent and cure the dropsy, gout and scurvy. It is known by experience to be better than any other drying drink for people in years, or children that have running humours upon them, as the king's evil, etc. It is most excellent remedy against the spleen, and also prevents drowsiness and make one fit for business, therefore you are not to drink it after supper, unless you intend to be watchful, for it will hinder sleep for three or four hours.

Immediately after their first establishment, coffee houses became the resort of quidnuncs [gossips] and the great marts for news of all kinds, true and false. They were sometimes called 'The Newsmongers Hall.'

This new approach has wide ranging implications for archaeologists. The old view of simply recording objects is now simply not good enough and archaeologists today need to consider how the original creator or owner of a particular object may have handled it, and the practices which were associated with it. For example, the Rosetta Stone is commonly associated with the decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphics by Jean-François Champollion in 1822 (Renfrew, 1987: 44). However, according to the British Museum it was originally a:

'...decree passed by a council of priests. It is one of a series that affirm[ed] the royal cult of the 13-year-old Ptolemy V on the first anniversary of his coronation.'

(www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/aes/t/the_rosetta_stone.aspx)

The exact definition of the word *materiality* is vague. Thus, according to Miller (2005: 5):

'It ... encompass[es] both [the] colloquial and philosophical uses of this term ... the most obvious and most mundane expression of what the term material might convey – artefacts. But this soon breaks down as we move on to consider the large compass of materiality, the ephemeral, the imaginary, the biological and the theoretical; all that which would have been external to the simple definition of an artefact.'

In other words, materiality encompasses most things. Theoretically, Ground Zero in New York is an example of the materiality of immateriality. A material culture study could be done on the Houses of Parliament or even Government itself. Multiple material culture reports have focussed on the materiality of rubbish and there is even a possibility to look at the materiality of the landscape and/ or space. On a more practical level, the anthropologist Alfred Gell applied this new material culture approach to tattoos on the skin. His work with Polynesian tribes produced many volumes arguing that their tattooed skin was a form of identity and possessed a form of agency. He went further than Appadurai and Miller and proposed that material culture interacts with people.

In the next issue of *The Clock Tower* I shall look at how the new material culture approach can be applied to Rochester Castle...

At this time Processualism was becoming far too general and as such archaeology as a discipline was trapped. The new development allowed archaeology to become further inter-disciplinary and allowed it to consider more philosophical and anthropological arguments.

The anthropologist Edmund Leech (1910–1989) had predicted the rise of post-processualism within archaeology (Trigger, 1996: 444). It was the archaeologist Ian Hodder of Stanford University who was eventually the main architect of this new movement. Hodder is famous for his ongoing work at the Turkish site of Çatalhöyük which dates to the Neolithic (www.catalhoyuk.com). Hodder had been preparing a model for post-processualism throughout the 1970s and 1980s and published a great deal of material including articles examining anthropological arguments. This allowed Hodder to consider the life histories of tribes such as the Baringos in Northern Kenya. He also developed new interests in the distribution of material culture particularly around Africa (Trigger, 1996: 453). This included studies into economic stress and competition. Hodder slowly realised he could unbound pottery designs and reflect upon open societies and used material culture to demonstrate how it could reflect “social differentiation.”(Trigger, 1996: 453). He also found that he could incorporate groups into extensive social networks.

Post-Processualism has also paved the way for new approaches such as the material culture discussion. For the first time the idea of materiality could be contemplated and linked to the idea of object biographies. The approach concerns itself with the sensuality of objects and it was conceived in the 1980s by the sociologist Arjan Appadurai in his book, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (1986); his work was furthered by in the Anthropology Department at University College, London (UCL). The main advocator was Professor Daniel Miller who had studied at Cambridge and had undertaken extensive fieldwork in Africa. Miller followed Hodder’s lead and published a book entitled *Artefacts as Categories* (1985). The work outlined the way in which material culture helps to explain the society it is produced in.

The new approach, known as The Material Culture Approach, emphasises the importance of intellectualising objects rather than simply classifying, dating and weighing the objects, and finally recording them in table in a published volume. The approach emphasises the importance that once a piece of material culture has been made and has been released, people will decide on its function and which may not be the original one imagined by the designer.

Quaker Education and Schooling 1775-1840

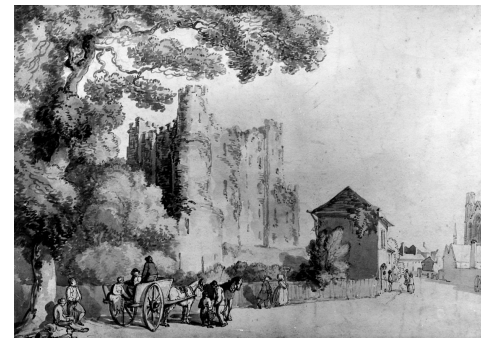
Catharina Clement



In 2005, Catharina completed a BA in history at Canterbury Christchurch University, and then began a part-time PhD in local history entitled Reactions in the Medway Towns 1640-1660. She has been involved in various local history groups and projects such as FOMA, CDHS, and the Victoria County History EPE projects. She won the 2009 Friends Historical Society Award resulting in a paper on Medway Quakerism 1655-1918 delivered at the Institute for Historical Research and later this year at the Friends Library in London. Currently Catharina works for MALSC.

Boley Hill School

With reference to the first article on Boley Hill School, in Issue 20 of *The Clock Tower*, November 2010, it has been possible to finally pinpoint the location of the original Quaker School. The 1841 tithe map for St Nicholas does not show the Quaker Houses which were so beautifully portrayed by William Hughes in *A Week’s Tramp in Dickens-Land*: ‘to the right of Boley Hill...is the “paved Quaker settlement”, a sedate row of about a dozen houses “up in a shady corner.”’¹ A contemporary illustration of this Quaker quarter is shown below.

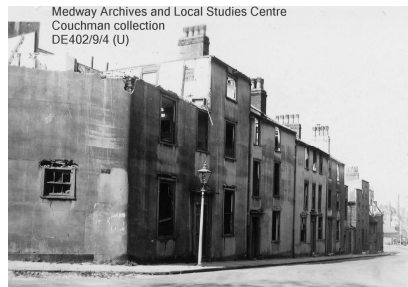


From the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre Couchman collection, DE0402/9/7U-print by Thomas Rowlandson c1800-Quaker settlement and justice tree.

From earlier maps it is obvious that the Castle Ditch had a number of houses built in it from as early as the turn of the eighteenth century. This information also ties in with Edward

Alexander’s title deeds of 1846, held at MALSC, detailing the previous owners of the school property. In this the school is described as being ‘upon or near part of the ancient Ditch of Rochester commonly called the Castle Ditch.’² Following the order of the 1841 census for Boley Hill, as well as St Nicholas’ highway accounts for the same period, it can be established that the various schools operated from numbers 8 and 9.

With reasonable confidence the Quaker schools can now be confirmed as the substantial buildings in the picture below (the two houses in the centre of the foreground).



From the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre, Quaker Houses from Rochester Surveyors, 1961.

Another view depicting the school extension at the rear of the buildings also helps to clarify matters.³

From the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre, aerial rear view of Quaker Houses, circa 1933



Ironically, now that this school has been positively identified it is clear that Richard Weston obtained new premises around 1823 and had them converted. Edward Pease's diary for June 1824 noted that 'the premises and house are well adapted to the establishment...the cost of house and garden was £2,500, and I think the £800 more [was spent] in the erection of an excellent, school room etc.' With reference to the article in Issue 20 of The Clock Tower, it is now clear Pease was referring to Richard Weston's recent acquisition rather than Rickman's conversion in the 1890s. Several factors point to this discovery.⁴

First, ten-year old schoolboy Samuel May Junior's letter to his sister Priscilla in October 1823 referred to the impending move: 'We have not yet removed to the new house, and it is uncertain when we shall, but they are getting on with the alterations.' Second, the overseers' and highway accounts for St Nicholas indicate that Richard Weston took over the property from Robert Styles in the summer of 1820. By late 1823 the property was marked as empty and the following year the premises are again in the occupation of Robert Styles. Third, Charles Tylor, in his account of his schooldays, made no reference to a move. He started at the school in the autumn of 1824 suggesting that the move took place prior to that date and Pease's visit in June

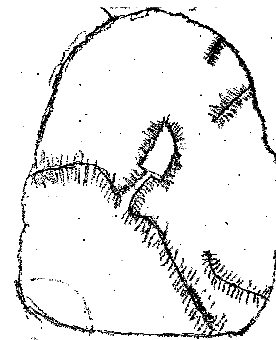


Figure 1: Mousterian handaxe typically associated with Neanderthals. (Source: drawn by author)

Interpretation is vital to archaeology. However it is the emphasis on interpretation which also provides its greatest limitation – archaeology can not provide a clear cut answer to everything. Prehistory is a prime example of where there are more questions than answers. It is important to point out the current archaeological evidence provides, at best, a fragmented picture of prehistory. It is fair to say that archaeologists are agreed that prehistory was a period of change over 2.5 million years. Equally we are prepared to say that we are making significant leaps

forward in some areas such as evolutionary anthropology – although even here the picture can be extremely hazy. We now know, for example, that our evolutionary cousins, the Neanderthals, were not a dead end of evolution as was classically thought. In fact

Neanderthals were arguably more successful than *Homo sapiens sapiens* (modern humans) and this can be seen through their material culture such as the beautiful flat-bottomed Mousterian handaxes they left behind (see Figure 1). A recent paper in the journal *Science* (Green *et al.*, 2009: 710 – 732) has shown, through the Neanderthal Genome Project, that we share 1 – 4% of our DNA with our learned cousins.

Although we can start to agree on some points there are still many areas within prehistory which are debated. The site of Star Carr, dating to the Mesolithic, in the Vale of Pickering in West Yorkshire was originally excavated by the University of Cambridge's Grahame Clark in the 1930s. Clark argued that the site was a base camp for hunter-gatherers. Although it has been 70 years since Clark's interpretation it is still being questioned. Thus far Star Carr is the only *base camp* found dating to the Mesolithic in Britain. Yet Clark's interpretation of Star Carr does not seem to make sense as reason would argue that there should be more than one; archaeologists still have not found any evidence of more base camps around Britain.

Archaeology also has a strong theoretical base which has not been publicised by the media. The way archaeologists have thought and are currently thinking is shaped by overarching theoretical approaches – Processual and Post-Processual Archaeology. The idea of Processualism in archaeology was born in the 1960s and focussed on the scientific. However, it was quickly replaced in the 1980s due to the emergence of a new archaeology – Post-Processualism. Post-Processualism was a direct reaction to Processualism, its aim simply to ascertain where people were.

arguments. Both views seem sensible, however considering where the discipline of archaeology is going, it is perhaps wise, and also for the purposes of this article, to align archaeology with anthropology. This allows the discipline to produce new ways of interpreting past and present cultures.

The discipline of archaeology has two ways of collecting data. The first is through non-intrusive means. This has become increasingly popular over the last 30 years since the creation of Landscape Archaeology. It was arguably Professor Mick Aston of *Time Team* fame and the University of Bristol, who first coined the term *Landscape Archaeology*. Landscape Archaeologists, such as Aston, tend to argue against employing any type of intrusive means of survey - for example excavation. Landscape Archaeologists argue that we can generate the same information from non-intrusive techniques, as we do from intrusive ones. Landscape Archaeologists make a plausible point here for today in archaeology we are fortunate to be able to apply non-intrusive geographical fieldwork techniques such as earthwork survey and aerial photography. We can also use a variety of geophysical techniques such as magnetometry and ground penetrating radar, also known as GPR. The discipline can also employ surface collection or field-walking as a means of collecting information. Whether non-intrusive means of survey can produce as much data as intrusive means is still widely debated.

The second way of data collecting is through intrusive means such as excavation. Excavation, whilst portrayed by television programmes such as *Time Team* as the primary method of survey, is actually the very last technique archaeologists employ. This is purely because it is a destructive one. Yet it is also the technique which gives us, as archaeologists, the most amounts of data and provides invaluable information on the sequence of events, as excavation provides stratigraphic evidence. The destructive nature of excavation is widely known to archaeologists and there is much debate on how much we should dig and how much we should preserve for future generations.

The destructive element of archaeology has led many archaeologists to argue that the subject is more a social science. This is in contrast to what the media present archaeology as - they present it as a pure science such as biology, chemistry or physics. This is fundamentally wrong because once a site is dug the published results cannot be physically repeated. The repetition of results provides a key backbone to any pure scientific subject and is a requirement which cannot be fulfilled by the technique of excavation. For this reason, I conclude archaeology is a social science and not a science.

1824. His description of the view across the River Medway to Cobham Park would not have been possible from the premises on Boley Hill. Fourth, John Grubb wrote to his brother about his visits to both of Weston's premises. He stayed with William Rickman at 8 Boley Hill in October 1820 and paid a visit to Weston's school next door in October 1820, possibly to decide whether to send his son Jonathan there. In his letter of 1826 he describes that 'the school is in [a] much more airy, commodious situation now than it was when Jonathan was there.' Tantalisingly the master, John Ford, who served across this period and kept a diary, made no mention of a move, which, with in excess of 50 boarders would have been a tremendous upheaval and memorable occasion.⁵

Writing in 1921, Robert Wilfred Dale gave two options for the location of the school, one of which was *St Margaret's House* and the other *The Gleanings*. He was replying to a request for information by Charles Tylor's grandson, who was putting together an article about his grandfather's schooldays and wished to know the location of the school. Tylor's reminiscences placed the school in St Margaret's and about half a mile from the Quaker Meeting House in Northgate (then Pump Lane). Dale's first suggestion is not possible, as the house is on the wrong side of St Margaret's Street to command views of the river. Whilst *The Gleanings* is a substantial property it does not fit the description left behind by Tylor. In his letter Dale stated that he had no knowledge of a property called *East Gleanings*. This would suggest that Tylor's grandson was aware of the name of the property, but that by the 1920s it was no longer known by that name. The overseers' accounts for St Margaret's could hold the answer, but unfortunately their poor condition makes them unfit for production at present.⁶

Notes

1. Hughes R W, *A Week's Tramp in Dickens-Land*, (Fairford) pp. 63, 93.
2. MALSC, DE0996, Title Deeds of Messuage in Boley Hill, Rochester 1784-1846.
3. 1841 Census; MALSC, P306/20/4, St Nicholas Highway A/cs; P306/11/36, St Nicholas Overseers A/cs - order of residents are Frederic Wheeler, Robert Coates (leased from A & E Rickman) and Robert Styles. From directories and Quaker adverts it is known Wheeler lived at no 7 Boley Hill. The numbering according to Kelly's directory starts from Castle Hill through to Baker's Walk. William Hall is listed at no 3 in some directories and the first occupying what is called the 'Quaker Houses.' Using his house as the starting point in the 1841 highway account their numbers continue through to 13 Boley Hill. The Rochester surveyors' pictures of 1961 clearly show the end house (Baker's Walk end) as No 13 on the door.
4. Pease E, *Diary of Edward Pease* (1824) electronic version on Bermac Books website.
5. Bedfordshire & Luton Archives, N699/16, Letter Samuel May to Priscilla May 20/10/1823; MALSC, P306/11/20, St Nicholas Overseers A/cs; P306/20/2, St Nicholas Highway A/cs; Tylor C, 'Schooldays in the Twenties', *JFHS*, Vol 17 No 1 (1920); Letter John Grubb to Joseph Grubb cited in note of Tylor's account. P.18.
6. LSF, LSF; Portfolio B156 No 2, Letter R Wilfred Dale 1921 f. Tylor, *Schooldays in the Twenties*.

The Delce, Rochester

Pauline Weeds



In 2005 FOMA member Pauline Weeds was awarded the Higher Certificate in Genealogy by The Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies. She was a researcher for the England's Past for Everyone projects and has also transcribed for a Kent Archaeological Society project. Pauline is a volunteer at MALSC, and a volunteer custodian at Eastgate House. Recently she has started training to be a City of Rochester Society guide; she is also a member of the Users' Forum at the Centre for Kentish Studies at Maidstone.

After many years researching my family history, I have recently turned my attention to the local history of the Delce area in Rochester, where I have lived for the last forty years. The 1864 Ordnance Survey Map shows Delce Lane, as Delce Road was then designated. At the Star Hill end there were already some properties on the west side. St Peter's Church had been built in King Street just a few years earlier and consecrated on 27 October 1859¹ and the Rising Sun public house was on the corner of King Street. Then there were a number of cottages and the yard and stable of George Wells, carriage proprietor. No.9 Delce Lane was the home of one William Bartholomew, a builder and undertaker, who built Bartholomew's Free Chapel in Cross Street. Between Mr Bartholomew's house and what is now Ross Street were some more old buildings, two of which were used as shops, and an alley known as Burrell's Cottages. Then there was the entrance to the Potato Garden where, as well as potatoes, corn and even hops were sometimes grown. Beside the Potato Garden was Garden Row, where the tiny front gardens of the houses were always well kept and bright with flowers. No.33 Delce Lane was the birthplace of Edwin Harris, the well-known local historian. Edwin spent his early years in this house and was fascinated by the working sawpit which operated on the other side of the fence at the rear of his garden. Next door but one to the Harris's house was another public house, The Evening Star. A passage ran down beside the latter which formed the entrance to Roffway's Court where there were five houses. There were then four more houses before arriving at Willis's-Row, which contained five very ancient cottages of varying styles of architecture. The next two dwellings were used as shops and then there was Welch's-court which consisted of six small cottages.

After this was Thomas Littlewood's rhubarb and sage garden which extended from Delce Lane to the Maidstone Road; the west side of Rochester Avenue was later built on this land. On the other side of what is now Rochester Avenue were a quickset hedge and some farm buildings reaching as far as the small brick cottage of John

Rochester Castle: a theoretical archaeological perspective

Alexander Thomas



Alex is the son of The Clock Tower Editor, Amanda Thomas. He is about to enter his final year of his undergraduate degree in Archaeology at the University of Bristol. In the first of a two part series he explores the developments of archaeological theory and tries to dispel myths created by the media. The second part will explore how the material culture approach can be applied to Rochester Castle.

The media today tend to present the discipline of archaeology as a sensationalist, rather *black and white* science. It also tends to present archaeological evidence as it would historical evidence. The typical example of this is Neil Oliver's recent BBC television series, *A History of Ancient Britain* and *A History of Celtic Britain*. This image of archaeology is fundamentally wrong and here I wish to expose the true nature of current archaeology and try to dispel some of the myths about the subject. I shall do this by presenting some of the contemporary theoretical approaches in archaeology and then how one of these can be applied to Rochester Castle. However, in order to understand this fully we must explore the basics. The first part of this article will briefly explore the ideas surrounding data collection and whether archaeology is an art or science. Moreover, it will also concisely investigate ideas surrounding interpretation and how contemporary theory helps shape our views within archaeology.

N.B.: For the purposes of this article BP after a date denotes the term Before Present. This is typically measured from the year 1950. The Mesolithic in Britain typically dates to around 10,000BP – c.4,500BC, it is important to emphasis as a cautionary note that a maximum of ± 1000 years should be applied to any prehistoric dates to allow for any transitions.

Part I: An Introduction to Archaeology and Contemporary Theory

Archaeology is a unique discipline which bridges the gap between the arts, humanities and sciences. It acts almost like a hub, or forum, where new ideas from different subject areas can be discussed and synthesised. In the UK we tend to associate archaeology as being the sister subject of history whereas in the US it is seen more as a sister to anthropology and as a way to generate new data for anthropological

The Stedman family, who later occupied Delce Farmhouse and were prominent members of the local community, claimed descent back to the time of Richard I and the Crusaders. Edward Filley, a prominent building contractor in the Medway Towns, built many of the houses in the Delce area around the turn of the 20th century. He died in 1928 after apparently committing suicide. John Glover who ran Delce Mill for nearly 42 years was described in his obituary as “a well-known and highly respected citizen of Rochester.” The mill itself would also be interesting to research further, as would Delce Fort. The old St Peter’s Church, the Mission Room in Longley Road, the Free Church in Cross Street and St Andrew’s Chapel in Cossack Street were all significant buildings in the area in their time, although only the latter remains. St Peter’s School in Holcombe Road, the Cooperative Stores in Delce Road and the Workmen’s Club building in Castle Avenue are all survivors from the end of the Victorian era and must have a story to tell. There is clearly much here to keep me occupied for quite some time to come.



Accident to a Corporation roller in Cossack Street; 28 March 1908.

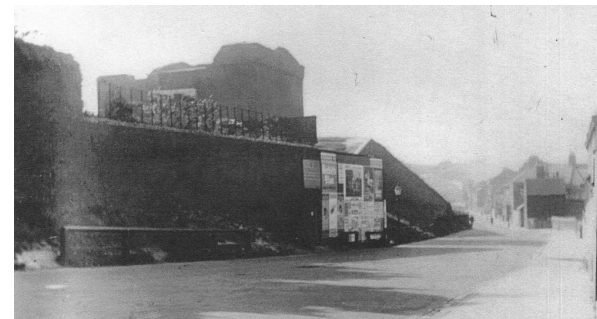
Notes

1. *Rochester Gazette*, p.2, 1 Nov. 1859.
2. *Recollections of Rochester*, Edwin Harris.
3. *Watermills and Windmills*, William Coles Finch; Arthur Cassell, 1933.
4. *The Medway Forts*, K R Gulvin.
5. TNA Ref IR58/70984.
6. TNA Ref IR58/70984.
7. *Recollections of Rochester*, Edwin Harris.
8. TNA Ref IR58/70976.
9. TNA Ref IR58/70972.

All the photographs in this article are reproduced with the kind permission of the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre.

Barnard, the milkman. There were then a further six cottages which stood well back from the road and had long front gardens. At the rear of these cottages were the strawberry gardens, which were also a kind of pleasure garden where, on payment of a charge, one could pick and eat as many strawberries as one liked – a Victorian version of Pick Your Own! Beyond the strawberry gardens was a row of houses known as Wellington Place and then Princes Street, which in those days was the first road turning off the Delce after King Street.²

After Princes Street there were Burritt Street, Cossack Street and Miles Place, already built up with houses. In those days Princes Street and Burritt Street were turnings off the Delce, where St Peter’s Church and the Health Centre now stand. Cross Street, which was little more than an alleyway, joined Burritt Street and Princes Street. According to Edwin Harris, when the ground for building in this area was sold, a clause was inserted that no public house was to be allowed in either Princes Street or Burritt Street, but as Cossack Street belonged to different owners there was no such prohibition, which is why all the public houses were to be found in that street. There were originally four: The Don Cossack; The Windmill; The Carpenters’ Arms; and The Bell. The rest of the area between Delce Lane and the Rochester Maidstone Road was mostly fields, including Great Delce Farm. The farmhouse and the great barn were at the bottom of what is now Cecil Road. Delce Mill at the top of Cossack Street was built in about 1853 by Henry Payne and Sons and worked for many years by the Glover family.³ Delce Tower on the east side of Delce Lane, opposite what is now Fort Street, was part of the system of Napoleonic forts built around the Medway towns about 1812.⁴



Looking south along Delce Road pre 1926; Delce Fort is in the foreground.

Using street directories and the building plan registers at the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre it is possible to follow the build up of the area between about 1876 and 1910 when several new streets were made and hundreds of small terrace houses were built with the working classes clearly in mind. From 1876 some cottages were already being built in Thomas Street, Rose Street and Richard Street.

By the end of 1883 Longley Road and Jenner Road were proposed new roads and by the following year cottages and a corner shop were being built there. In November 1885 planning permission was sought for a Mission Chapel in Longley Road. The chapel, which was built of iron on brick foundations, comprised a nave and porch and was owned by St Margaret's Church.⁵ The next proposed new road was Rochester Avenue in 1887. Houses and the Greyhound public house were built the following year. The Greyhound, which was at No.68 Rochester Avenue, is no longer there, having been converted into two houses. In 1889 planning permission was sought for St Andrew's Mission Church in Cossack Street. The church, which was owned by St Peter's Church, was built of brick with a slate roof and was described as a "plain structure with a poorly appointed interior".⁶ It is now the Sikh Gurudawara, and at the time of writing this was up for sale by auction on 15 July 2011.

In 1889 twenty-one new houses were built in Thomas Street by the South Eastern Railway (SER). When the SER were in opposition to the London, Chatham and Dover Railway, they made a new line from Strood Station to Rochester Central Station under St. Margaret's Banks. In doing this they had to pull down a number of small houses on the Common and by agreement had to build new ones to replace them. Some were built on Furrell's Wharf and called Bardell Terrace and the others in Thomas Street.⁷ At the time of the 1910 Valuation Office Survey these were still owned by the SER and were let to SER employees for 5s.0d. (25p) per week and non-SER employees for 5s.6d. (27½p) per week.⁸



Cecil Road 1988. The corner shop was a general store and latterly a sub post office. It has now closed and is a private house. In the early days there was a small shop on the corner of many of the streets.

Early in the 1890s Clive Road and Cecil Road made their appearance, followed in 1895 by Wickham Street and Catherine Street, in 1897 by Church Street and Peter Street and in

1898 by Castle Avenue. In 1898 permission was given for a gymnasium and reading room, alongside St Margaret's Mission Church in Longley Road. This building, which was of brick, was known as the Young Men's Institute. The following year permission was also given for a Workmen's Club in Castle Avenue. In 1900 the Cooperative Stores, which is still there, was built in Delce Road, described in the

1910 Valuation Office Survey as a "well built brick and slated corner premises." The ground floor comprised a large shop with a butcher's shop at the back and fronting on to Castle Avenue. On the first floor was a large room which could be used as a store or showroom; there was also a cellar and yard.⁹ In the early years of the new century houses began to appear in Holcombe Road and May Road. St Peter's School in Holcombe Road was built in 1901 with accommodation for 160 children. Cavendish Road was next, followed by Foord Street and Ross Street and by 1910 the whole area was built up much as it is today. The next main building phase did not happen until the 1930s when the bungalows were built in Delce Road when Wickham Street, Cavendish Road, May Road and Holcombe Road were all extended.



Terrace houses in the Delce area, built around the turn of the 20th century, showing the windmill at the top of Cossack Street.

Some interesting characters lived in the Delce during the early times discussed above. Local carpenter and builder, William Bartholomew, made his own coffin and kept it in his sitting room for about thirty years until his death. He was described as a man of "high character and probity" who took an active part in local life. Thomas Littlewood acquired two small pieces of land on the Delce in 1838 and appears to have built up a successful market garden business. He was still described as a market gardener in 1891 at the age of 88; he died two years later aged 90. Edward Wickham was clerk to Mr James Best at his brewery in Chatham. In a codicil to his will in 1827, James Best said he had lately purchased Delce Farm for the "express purpose" of giving it to Edward Wickham. When the will was proved the following year there were also bequests of money totalling more than £10,000 to Edward Wickham.