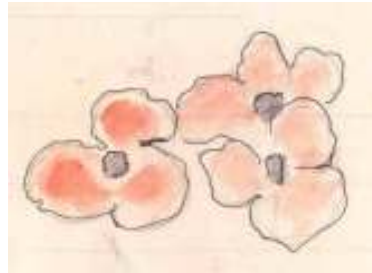
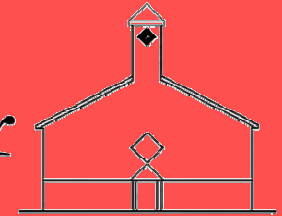




*If undelivered, please return to:  
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Civic Centre,  
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Rochester,  
Kent, ME2 4AU.*



# The Clock Tower



Issue Number 24: November 2011  
£2.00; free to members

## Lest We Forget...



## Chatham Pals

This issue of *The Clock Tower* features the work of the late FOMA member Michael de Caville who died in August 2010. It is with pleasure that we publish in full Michael's story, *Chatham Pals*, and his wonderful illustrations.

### Also inside...

FOMA's Dr. Sandra Dunster talks about her recent appearance on BBC1's *Who Do you Think You Are?* and reveals what it was like working with comedian Alan Carr.

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Illustrations by Michael de Caville for *Chatham Pals*, which can be read on page 21.



The Battlefields



In France, the new year

Illustrations by Michael de Caville for *Chatham Pals*, which can be read on page 21.



Overleaf, poppies by Michael de Caville

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37 Ravenswood Avenue, Frindsbury, ME2 3BY, Kent.  
picketywitch@blueyonder.co.uk

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

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Odette Buchanan:

72 Jersey Road, Rochester, ME2 3PE, Kent.  
odette\_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk

### Membership Secretary

Betty Cole:

25 Elm Avenue, Chatham, 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

## From the Chairman

Tessa Towner, Chairman.



A warm welcome to another packed issue of *The Clock Tower* which I am delighted features the work of the late Michael de Caville. Michael was a good friend of mine and like many of us a passionate advocate for the preservation of our Medway heritage. I am sure you will agree with me that his work, *Chatham Pals*, gives a real insight into the mind of those who signed up to fight in World War One. However, it is Michael's exquisite illustrations which for me make the work particularly special.

FOMA continues to thrive and membership increases at a steady pace. You will see on our *News and Events* pages that we have another full programme of activities arranged for 2012. Our most popular regular event is still the FOMA quiz night and I was pleased to receive the following from our Treasurer, Jean Skilling:

"On behalf of everyone who attended the FOMA quiz in October can I thank Elaine Gardner and Tessa Towner for organising a fantastic night. We took £360 on the door with a further £62 from the raffle and after expenses made a profit of more than £270 for our funds."

Please make a note in your diaries for the Archives of Great Expectations exhibition which will be held at MALSC between 12 January 2012 and 28 February featuring documents and discoveries from our on-going project. Members will recall that in 2009 we were awarded a grant of up to £154,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, making available for research for the first time the contents of 500 boxes of the Rochester City Archives – the so-called *Archives of Great Expectations*. The Rochester City Archives form the biggest archival collection in the Medway area, covering the period 1227 to 1974 and includes maps, photographs, building plans, heraldic and manorial records, records of land use, title deeds, rate books, records of trade and industry, public health, and transport. The latest news on the project can be found on pages 15 to 17 and the exhibition is certainly one not to be missed!

Whilst the central theme of this issue of *The Clock Tower* is World War One and the work of Michael de Caville, this issue will be published in the lead up to the Christmas festivities. We would therefore like to take this opportunity to wish all our FOMA members, contributors and supporters

A Very Merry Christmas  
And a Happy New Year!



Please note, the regular columns, Alison Thomas' *Edwin Harris – Recollections of Rochester* and Cindy O'Halloran's *Little Gems* will return in the next issue of *The Clock Tower*.

## News and Events

Odette Buchanan, Friends' Secretary



This quarter has raced by and here we are nearly up to Christmas. As I write this it is just past the middle of November and I have already received my first Christmas card. It is from a relation in Oz who sent it surface mail expecting it to arrive close to Christmas – wrong!

Anyway, we Heritage Lottery Fund grant volunteers have been busy sorting out some of the mass of interesting things found in the repackaging of the Council files in accordance in the hundreds of boxes containing the Rochester Archives – the so-called Archive of Great Expectations. This is now drawing to a close and it is fitting that it should finish in 2012 as this coincides with the Dickens' Bi-Centenary. Our discoveries will be displayed in an exhibition at the Archives in the new year (see *News and Events*).

The regular FOMA quizzes and our bi-monthly talks continue to grow in popularity. If you haven't yet attended either, do note them in your forward planner and try to get there as both are really good value for money. Talking of money, our thanks to FOMA committee member Bob Radcliffe for designing a really nice tri-fold leaflet to replace the old A5 membership form.

Have a good Christmas and a prosperous and healthy New Year!

### 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**

## Betty's Postcards



*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 postcard illustrated in this issue is not one of *Betty's Postcards*. It belongs to Jean, our FOMA Treasurer who found it amongst papers in a suitcase which had belonged to a great aunt. I have borrowed it to illustrate another category of postcards. If this postcard were mine it would be in my Artist Signed collection. However, it would be equally desirable to collectors of animal, charity/advertising and obviously WWI postcards.

This card was issued and sold to raise money for a charity and I have not been able to find any other vintage postcards in this category. I do own a Dickens themed card which advertises Freeman Hardy & Willis but I have not come across any other fund raising postcards of the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the so-called Golden Age of Postcards.

In 1912 the Blue Cross Society, an animal welfare charity which started in 1897 as Our Dumb Friends League, launched a fund to assist animals affected by war. On the back of the card is printed "Blue Cross Fund. (Reg. under War Charities 1916) 58 Victoria Street, London. This card is sold in aid of the above fund."

This beautiful and moving painting is by Italian artist Fortunino Matania who became a war artist at the outbreak of the First World War, having been a successful illustrator for *The Sphere*, *The Illustrated London News* and many other publications. Originally produced as a poster for the American Red Star, also an animal charity, it recognises the enormous contribution made by horses in the First World War when Britain lost over 484,000 horses out of the 1,183,228 used. Some were killed in action or died from poison gas attacks, disease and exhaustion. The companionship between man and horse is said to have boosted morale but must have had the opposite effect at times with such heavy losses. One horse to every two men is said to have been lost.

The contribution of horses in the First World War has recently come to the fore with the play *War Horse* at The New London Theatre and an exhibition *War Horse - Fact and Fiction* currently on at The National Army Museum in Chelsea. There is an *Animals in War* memorial at Brook Gate, Park Lane on the edge of Hyde Park which bears the legend, 'This monument is dedicated to all animals that served and died alongside British and Allied forces in wars and campaigns throughout time.' Most poignantly, a smaller inscription on the monument states simply, 'They had no choice.'

I visited The National Army Museum at Chelsea in November and found it to be well worth the trip to London. The *War Horse* exhibition, on until August 2012, is worth the visit on its own. A light, airy museum, great displays and a bright cafeteria with reasonable prices. It is just a short bus ride from Victoria Station and admission is free.

*Betty's postcard, entitled, Good Bye, Old Man, can be seen on the back cover.*

not on the flat beach they had been expecting, but rather at the foot of treacherous cliffs. They were easy targets for the Turks and by the end of the day around 2,000 Anzacs had perished. Gallipoli proved to be as fruitless a battle as those which were being played out in the trenches in Northern Europe, and eight months later with the loss of over 11,000 men, the Anzacs were given the order to withdraw. News of the bloodshed only encouraged more young boys back home to enlist and in July 1915 over 36,000 signed up. These men became known as the 'fair dinkums'.

Newly enlisted Anzacs and some Gallipoli veterans were sent to the Western Front where they took part in several notable battles: Fromelles, Pozières (in the Somme), Bullecourt, Dernacourt and Villers-Bretonneux; fighting also continued against the Turks in defence of the Suez Canal at Romani, and at Gaza and Beersheba in Palestine.

Sadly in Australia today, and as amongst many young people, there seems to be a lack of awareness for the sacrifice made by those brave men. Whilst Australians have fought more recently in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, we saw very few Australians wearing poppies during our time there prior to 11 November. The only poppies we saw on sale were at the War Memorial in Canberra, however, we paid our dollar and wore our poppies with pride for we, at least, would never forget those brave Anzacs.

#### Notes

1. 'Don't Forget Me Cobber' *Australia and the First World War*, Anderson, Matt; Anzac Day Commemoration Committee, 2006.

Further information in this article is from the above publication and the *Australian War Memorial Guide*, 2011.

### ***The Clock Tower is now fully indexed!***

There is now a pdf on the FOMA website ([www.foma-lsc.org/newsletter.html](http://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.

## *Calendar of Forthcoming Events and Exhibitions*

### FOMA Events

13<sup>th</sup> March 2012, 7.30 pm  
Donald Maxwell and his Work  
A talk by Bob Ratcliff  
(See also the exhibition at MALSC)

14<sup>th</sup> March 2012, 2.30 pm  
A User's Guide to MALSC  
Norma Crowe, MALSC Local Studies Librarian and Alison Cable, Medway Archivist  
Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre, (MALSC),  
Civic Centre, Strood, Rochester, Kent ME2 4AU  
**£4; FOMA MEMBERS ONLY**  
Further information and booking 01634 332714  
**BOOKING REQUIRED**

**17<sup>th</sup> April, 7.30 pm**  
**FOMA AGM**

Sat 28<sup>th</sup> April, 7.30 pm start  
Quiz Night  
£5 for members and non-members  
**BOOKING REQUIRED**

12<sup>th</sup> June, 7.30 pm  
Dickens' 200<sup>th</sup> birthday  
Theme to be confirmed  
A talk by Thelma Groves

11<sup>th</sup> September, 7.30 pm  
An Historical Look at the Vines  
A talk by Odette Buchanan

13<sup>th</sup> November, 7.30 pm  
Some Mother's Son  
A talk by Peter Ewart

**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](mailto:odette_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk); 01634 718231.**

## MALSC Events

### Exhibitions

20<sup>th</sup> November – 10<sup>th</sup> January 2012

Metal Men of Medway: statues, plaques and street furniture

12<sup>th</sup> January 2012 – 28<sup>th</sup> February

Archives of Great Expectations: documents and discoveries from the Rochester City records

1<sup>st</sup> March – 24<sup>th</sup> April

Medway Artists – the achievements of Dadd, Spencelayh, Wyllie, Maxwell and Dunbar.

26<sup>th</sup> April .04.12 – 3<sup>rd</sup> July

Ship Repairs at Sheerness by Martin Verrier

5<sup>th</sup> July – 4<sup>th</sup> September

Sporting Life (popular clubs and hobbies) - to be confirmed

6<sup>th</sup> September – 3<sup>rd</sup> November

Defence of Kent Project by Keith Gulvin and Mick Smith

19<sup>th</sup> November – 29<sup>th</sup> January 2013

These we have Loved (shops, stores and emporia of Medway)

### 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

22<sup>nd</sup> February 2012, 2.30 pm

The River Medway History and Development

Dr Sandra Dunster and Dr Andrew Hann

16<sup>th</sup> May, 7.30 pm

Dickens at Eastgate House

Speaker to be confirmed

13<sup>th</sup> June, 2.30 pm

Sheerness

Martin Verrier

July

Creative Writing Workshop

Sam Hall

To be confirmed

## 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.*

### The ANZAC Sacrifice

Much is made of the sacrifice of our forebears in the First World War, yet little is known in Britain about that of our cousins, uncles and family members in the Commonwealth. Many of those boys who signed up in the great wars of the Twentieth Century did so because they still felt a strong allegiance to the land of their ancestors, and in many cases, their birth. In pre Common Market days, the ties between the Commonwealth and Britain were far stronger than today and in 1914, Australian men in particular were swift to sign up and 'do their bit'. At the time, future Australian Prime Minister, Andrew Fisher declared, "Australia will stand by to defend (Great Britain) to our last man and our last shilling."<sup>1</sup>

I was fortunate recently to travel to Australia with my daughter: a reward for months of A Level study and a respite before heading off to university. For me it was a necessary voyage and one which I will discuss in more detail in the next issue of *The Clock Tower*. Part of our trip was spent in Australia's capital, Canberra, a well kept secret. Most Australians warn tourists away from this gem in New South Wales, warning that it is 'boring' and 'full of bureaucrats.' The latter is correct, but the first comment could not be further from the truth, particularly as Canberra is the home to one of the best museums in the world, the Australian War Memorial.

The War Memorial is a striking building and displays at its entrance the names of Australia's fallen heroes; it is also the site of Australia's Remembrance Day Service. It is a solemn edifice housing some of the most interesting displays and artefacts on modern warfare I have ever seen, including fascinating dioramas and the stunning aircraft hall with a wrap-around film screen. Dare I say, the place outshines London's Imperial War Museum and I would urge anyone visiting Australia to pay a visit.

The museum was conceived by Charles Bean, a man with some considerable vision, spurred on by the need to commemorate the deaths of over 60,000 Australians killed in WWI. Considering the population of Australia at this time was less than five million, the effect of so many deaths from the 420,000 young men and women who enlisted was considerable. They became known as the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, or ANZACs, and many signed up so that they might see England again. Sadly this was not to be the case as the British training camps were already full and so the Anzacs were sent to Egypt.

In April 1915, the conscripts were sent into battle at Gallipoli to fight against the Turks who were allied with Germany. The troops landed on shore on 25 April (now a public holiday in Australia called Anzac Day) but



## New Members

A warm welcome to new FOMA members:

April Lambourne, Maidstone;  
Nigel BS Wilder, Rochester.

## FOMA Members

### Brian Butler

Readers may recall the articles entitled To Oz and Back about Shadrach Edward Jones written by FOMA member Brian Butler (*The Clock Tower* Issue 15, August 2009 and Issue 18, May 2010). We are delighted to report that these have now been published in a book called *A Viking in the Family and other Family Tree Tales* by Keith Gregson. The book is published by the History Press, ISBN 978-0-7524-5772-7, at £9.99.

## FOMA in London

Amanda Thomas, *Clock Tower* Editor, will be giving a talk:

**Cholera on the Lambeth Waterfront: the outbreak of the 1840s and how cholera could return today.**

Monday 16 January, 6.45 pm for 7.15 pm  
Durning Library, 167 Kennington Lane, London SE11 4HF;  
(a short walk from Kennington Station on the Northern Line).

The evening is hosted by the Friends of Durning Library and will start with a drink and nibbles; the talk will commence at 7.15 pm, will last for up to an hour and will allow time for questions at the end.

## 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.*

## An Appearance on *Who Do You Think You Are?*

The phone call came a couple of weeks before Easter. June Balshaw, a colleague from the University of Greenwich, told me that the production assistant from the BBC's *Who Do You Think You Are?* had rung asking if she would be willing to appear and also did she know a local historian who might be available for filming at the Centre for Kentish Studies on Maundy Thursday? Luckily my name had sprung to mind. At this stage we were given no clues as to who we might be working with or even which local area was the focus of the programme in which we were to be involved.

As you can imagine, we both spent some time speculating about who *our* celebrity might be! A few days later, once we had sworn not to divulge the information to anyone, not even our nearest and dearest, we were told that our subject was comedian Alan Carr and locations and dates were confirmed. June was given some information about her segment of the story, to be revealed in a pie and mash shop in Peckham, and she set off on a flurry of Ancestry activity, but I was still very much in the dark about exactly what I would be required to talk about.

Two days before filming all was revealed. I was sent a script which set out how they envisaged the segment in which I was to be involved would go. Luckily, given the short deadline, much of the family history research had already been done by the production team, but I had 48 hours to research the historical context to Alan's family's time in Crayford.

June did her filming on the day I received this information. Her feedback was reassuring - she had enjoyed the experience and just warned me that it would probably take longer than I might expect. Nevertheless, as I travelled to Maidstone on Maundy Thursday, I was nervous. I received a warm and friendly welcome from the production team and camera crew and was introduced to Alan, who immediately began to ask about what I was going to reveal to him that morning. At that point we were separated - what I hadn't realised was that the celebrities on *WDYTYA?* really do not have any idea what they are going to discover - the reactions captured on camera are genuine and not staged - so it was crucial that I didn't give away any secrets before we started.

Centre for Kentish Studies staff were on hand with maps, electoral registers and additional information at the ready - they too had been working swiftly to help with developing the background to Alan's family history.



## Magnum Opus

Cindy O'Halloran

In this issue, Catharina Clement has handed the Christmas book review baton to Cindy O'Halloran, MALSC's Senior Archive and Local Studies Assistant.

### Haunted Rochester

Neil Arnold and Kevin Payne.

"The antiquated town of Rochester is riddled with tales of phantom monks, secret tunnels, romantic spirits, dark apparitions and eerie history.... Now however, comes a unique volume which proves that Rochester is in fact one of the most haunted places in Britain." The preamble to this ninety five-page volume says it all, for it would seem from this account, that almost every building in the city has a resident spook or spectre. The authors wend their way through the town documenting properties where things go bump in the night. Some of the hauntings are the usual well-documented stories such as the spectre of Lady Blanche at the Castle and the ghost at Restoration House, however many are stories that I was personally unaware of. Most of the public houses seem to have stories of apparitions and restless spirits. If you, dear reader, believe only in the spirits of the optic then you may dismiss these stories as the creaking of old buildings or a damp miasma rising from the cellars that a new damp course would soon remedy. However, for those of us who love a spooky story, there is plenty here to tingle our spines on a dark night. I loved the story of the Old Curiosity Shop, once home to Edwin Harris and surprise, surprise it seems that dear Edwin pops in from time to time to survey his old domain. For those of us who know Edwin, we should not be astonished to find that he returns, ever curious, to see who now inhabits his old haunt.

Many of the stories have been collected as a result of interviews conducted with the residents or employees of the premises. They claim to have personally heard or seen the apparitions. The staff at Rochester Castle apparently keep a book of paranormal activity reported by visitors. Many of the tales are probably best

recorded as *timeslips* where passers by have encountered knights in armour or in another story, the castle appeared hung with banners and flags described as mediaeval. Are too many tourists spending time in the Jolly Knight..? Who can say?

Priced at £9.99 the book would make excellent stocking filler for a friend who likes a paranormal story or two. I read it in an evening and found it entertaining. I shall certainly keep a look out for Edwin in future and stay away from the cellars and vaults of Rochester.

Published by The History Press. ISBN 978 0 7524 5779 6

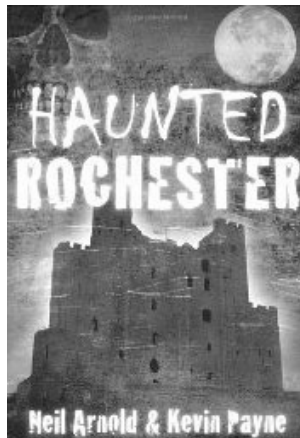


Illustration courtesy of The History Press and Amazon.co.uk

## 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](mailto:amanda@ajthomas.com). FOMA Secretary, Odette Buchanan, often receives queries from members or visitors to the FOMA website, [www.foma-lsc.org/index.html](http://www.foma-lsc.org/index.html). If you have any additional information for the following correspondents, please contact the Editor.

### John Winckworth Bailey

From: Betty  
To: [odette\\_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:odette_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk)  
Sent: Wednesday, 10 August 2011  
Subject: John Winckworth Bailey

To whom it may concern,

I don't know if I writing to the right person but yours is the first address I found which might help me with my research on John Winckworth Bailey.

For some years I have been searching for information on Second Lieutenant John Winckworth Bailey who was killed in W.W.I when his plane crashed into a tree killing him, on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 1916. I wrote to the Royal Air Force Museum in 1999 and was sent some information regarding his death but have since drawn a blank. Lately, I looked on the internet and found more about John Bailey.

My real reason for all this searching is that I hold the W.W.I Pilot's Licence belonging to John Winckworth Bailey. This came into my possession when a dear friend of mine died some years ago, and while I was clearing her house by chance I found the pilot's licence. This friend once lived in Smarden, Kent, but I do not know how she came by the licence.

The real reason I am writing to you is that I would like get in touch with John Bailey's family and pass the licence on to them as I think it is time it went to the rightful owners. I am nearly eighty years old now and I think that now is the time for John's licence to go home to his roots where it belongs.

If you are in doubt of the authenticity of my letter I will send you a copy of the licence.

I hope that you will be able to help me, or if not, perhaps you would be kind enough to pass my letter on to some member of the Bailey family so that I can end my search.

Thanking you in advance of your reply,  
Yours sincerely,

Betty Rothwell

From: Odette Buchanan [mailto:odette\_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk]  
Sent: 13 August 2011

Hullo Betty,

Thank you for your email. I think your best bet would be to try and find his descendants by writing to the local papers around Smarden and by trying to trace them through the Kent Family History Society.

I am the Secretary of the Friends of Medway Archives. Nowadays, Medway is a separate authority from Kent. However, our Chairperson and our Treasurer are also members of the KFHS. I'm sure they will be able to set you off on the right track.

Did you try the Imperial War Museum?

Do hope you are successful - I agree it would be good for his descendants to have his licence.

Good luck, kind regards,

Odette

From: Amanda Thomas [amanda@ajthomas.com]  
Sent: 24 August 2011

Dear Mrs Rothwell,

Thank you for your email which has been forwarded to me by our Secretary, Odette Buchanan.

I will publish your query in the forthcoming edition of our journal, *The Clock Tower*, which will come out in November. In the meantime, I have attached a copy of the article which we included in the November 2008 issue, number 12. I have contacted the author of the article as there may be something in the records of the Old Roffensians which gives a clue to the whereabouts of Bailey's descendants.

I have also had a look on Ancestry to see if I could find some relatives. Looking at the census records for the period in which John Bailey lived, it does not appear that he had any siblings. However, I could be mistaken in assuming this. Also, no one seems to have featured John Winckworth Bailey on their family tree. However, I have discovered that his mother, Penelope Winckworth (b 1853) had a sister called Florence Mary. She married Bassett Charles Edward Fitzgerald GUNN in 1888. Bassett was a surgeon in the Royal Navy and in the 1901 census he is listed as working in Sheerness and with two daughters, Mary M G GUNN, born 1889 in Rochester and Margaret A GUNN, born 1900 in Rochester. Bassett died in 1905 aged 46. It is possible that his two daughters married and had children, although I cannot find a record of either of their marriages. I will copy this email to Tessa Towner, our Chairman, as she may even know of the family in the Medway area.

I do hope this is helpful.

With best wishes,

Amanda Thomas.

10

## Conclusion

The material culture approach is a theory that forms part of a wider theoretical base within archaeology and I hope to have demonstrated to some degree how we can apply it to monuments such as Rochester Castle, and due to the ambiguous definition of objectification. This approach shows how Rochester Castle can be transformed symbolically from a piece of material culture representing new power to a new monument where the power struggle occurred in patches during the medieval period. This rough biography was constructed by employing the idea of *agency* and for this reason I contend that there is memory, identity, sentimentality and symbolism imbued within the walls of Rochester Castle.

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A selection of Michael de Caville's black and white sketches from *Chatham Pals*

the then Bishop of Rochester – Gundulf - perhaps better known as the man who built the White Tower, now part of the Tower of London, in the 1070s

(<http://www.hrp.org.uk/TowerOfLondon/sightsandstories/buildinghistory/normanbeginnings.aspx>). The keep at Rochester Castle was built by the Archbishop of Canterbury, William de Corbeil (Department of the Environment, n.d.). The Castle was later further expanded by Odo (Hasted, 2003: 63). I contend that initially Rochester Castle was a symbolic gesture of power, and I also would argue that the castle, as a piece of material culture, represented Norman rule not just over Kent but also over vast swaths of England. This sense of symbolism is further enhanced in England by the fact that some castles, such as Old Sarum in Wiltshire and Hastings in Sussex (Creighton and Higham, 2002: 15 - 26), built by the Normans, used old defences created by the Romans and were a symbolic reminder of how the Normans were now the new lords of England.

Rochester Castle had two further transformations in its medieval agent biography. Its next major one was in 1088 where it became an important symbol in the struggle for power. This was a pattern echoed across England and is seen in places such as Herefordshire (Creighton and Higham, 2002). Archaeologists would also point to the fact that at this time Rochester Castle was a contested landscape as many different groups of peoples wanted to acquire the castle. They wanted to imbue themselves with its powerful symbolism. So what happened? By 1087, Rochester Castle was inhabited by William the Conqueror's half brother Odo. This was also the year William died and left the Kingdom of England to his son William Rufus – William II. However, a large proportion of the Norman Barons objected to this, including Odo and William's other half brother Robert, Count of Mortain and the Duke of Normandy (Brown, 1969: 6). William, hearing of this challenge, summoned an army and marched on Rochester via Tonbridge and took the castle, although by this time Odo had fled to Robert's castle near Pevensey. The king immediately diverted his army and headed towards Pevensey where he persuaded Odo to relinquish his claim to Rochester Castle as well as his other titles in England (Hasted, 2003: 67). Odo agreed and was subsequently sent back to Rochester with a small division of the royalist army to let the garrison stationed at Rochester know of his decision. The Rochester garrison mistook the presence of the royalist army (Hasted, 2003: 67) and so rather than relinquishing his claim, Odo let the garrison capture and imprison the small division of the royalist army. They then marched with Odo in triumph through the city towards the castle (Brown, 1969: 6). The king, infuriated by this act, now laid siege to the castle. Odo and the leaders of the garrison held out for a month before surrendering to William (Hasted, 2003: 67) and subsequently Odo lost his titles and the castle and returned to Normandy. He died on an expedition to the Holy Land during the First Crusade (Brown, 1969: 6).

Perhaps the most famous transformation for Rochester Castle came in 1215. A number of rebel Barons had seized it in order to block King John's route into London (Brown, 1969: 12). The siege that followed has become famous as the most bloody in history. John and his troops occupied the surrounding landscape and laid siege to the castle for two to three months (Brown, 1969: 12; Hasted, 2003: 70) and destroyed the bridge to London to stop an army from relieving the besieged barons. During the siege John's men managed to occupy the bailey of the castle but the barons retreated to the keep. John was forced to undermine the south-east wall of the castle by burning pig fat (Department of Environment, n.d.). When the king's men eventually took the keep they divided the men inside into two groups: those who could fight and those who could not. The latter group was expelled but the former group's fate was debated at length by the king (Brown, 1969: 14) who wanted to hang every one of them. It was suggested by one of his captains that he should show mercy, but John did not want another rebellion. Instead, he hanged one and imprisoned the rest. Many notable knights including William de Albini, the commander of the rebel forces, and Reginald de Cornhill, the Sheriff of Kent, were imprisoned at other royal castles (Brown, 1969: 15). Thus we see how Rochester Castle transformed symbolically from a piece of material culture representing new power to a new monument demonstrating the power struggle that occurred in patches during the medieval period.

*The following is taken from correspondence from Simon Shreeve, Hon Editor, The Old Roffensian, Old Roffensian Society, Rochester:*

Dear Amanda,

I was very interested to hear that the pilot's licence for John Winckworth Bailey has come to light.

There is a little more on his career in *The Old Roffensian* magazine for December 2009, pages 60 to 62, including photographs of him, his grave and memorial.

We do not have any inside information on his family (nor, I suspect, would Harrow School). He does not appear to have married and did not have any siblings. With the surname of Bailey I would think it unlikely that any close family members would be easily found, if at all.

I heard last year from (the very helpful) Laurie Chester who is keeper (and archivist) at St George's RAF Chapel of Remembrance at Biggin Hill. According to him, John Winckworth Bailey obtained his Aviator's Licence No. 2031 flying a Caudron Biplane at the Ruffey-Baumann School at Hendon. He was killed when his BE2c of 19 RA Squadron crashed at Northolt on the night of 31 March 1916.

Do you think that it is possible that your contact will allow you (i.e. MALSC) to have an image - even just a photocopy - of the licence before it goes to IWM ?

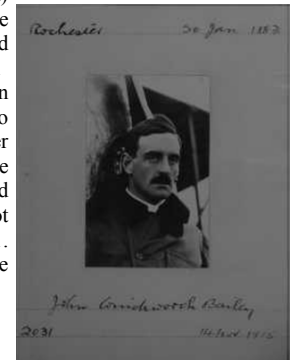
With best wishes,

Simon.

*Readers will be pleased to hear that copies of the pilot's licence, casualty card and additional information were subsequently supplied to Simon Shreeve for the Old Roffensian archive.*

*FOMA Chairman, Tessa Towner, provides the following information on John Winkworth Bailey.*

John Winkworth Bailey (see photograph, courtesy of Mrs Betty Rothwell) came from an interesting local family line with a lot of inter marriage between them, these families were connected to the deeds FOMA purchased at auction last year for MALSC (see *The Clock Tower*, Issue 18, May 2010).. John's father was the Rev John Bailey son of another John (born in Cumberland) and his wife Elizabeth who had five children three sons and two daughters. John was chaplain to St Bartholomew's Hospital in Rochester 1878 -1933. Neither of the daughters married and only two sons married, the oldest son became vicar at Upnor and was there from around 1878 till he died unmarried in 1905. Although John's youngest brother married he does not appear to have any children; he was a surgeon and died in Brazil in 1911. John had one sibling who according to the 1911 census had died; therefore there are no immediate descendants.  
Born 20 January 1883 MQ North Aylesford 2a 549.  
Died 31 March 1916 killed during an air raid at Northolt Aerodrome.  
Buried 5 April 1916 Ruislip Parish church by his father Rev John Bailey.



Probate, Bailey John Winckworth of New Road House Rochester, died 31 Mach 1916 at Hendon MDX. Probate, London 10 June 1922, to Francis Hermitage Day Solicitor; effects £971 9s 3d.

Parents

Rev John Bailey s/o John Receiver of HM Revenue married Penelope Ada Winckworth 14 Feb 1882 All Saints Frindsbury d/o Lawrence Henry Winckworth of Little Hermitage Frindsbury

Rev John Bailey chaplain to St Bartholemew's Hosp 1878 -1933

Penelope was the d/o Lawrence Henry Winckworth and Penelope Jane Hulkes

See FOMA Collection documents purchased at auction

Also see *The Clock Tower*, Issue 12, November 2008, pages 39-40; picture of grave.

## Assisted Emigration

From: A.M.Burns

To: odette\_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk

Sent: Tuesday, 6 September 2011

Subject: Advice on where to look

Hi Odette,

My name is Alison Burns I am just entering my third year of study at the university of Kent, I am working on my dissertation which is going to concentrate on the assisted emigration schemes of the 1800s. I have found quite a lot of information on the schemes as a country wide subject but am falling short of information on assisted emigration in Kent, preferably the Medway towns. If you have any ideas where I could get any information from it would be greatly appreciated.

Many Thanks in advance,

Alison Burns.

## The Rosher Family of Gravesend

From: Caroline Hotchin

Sent: 09 August 2011

To: malsc

Subject: Article re the Rosher Family

I believe there is an inaccuracy in the article [The Rosher Family: From Gravesend to Hollywood, Amanda Thomas, *The Clock Tower*, Issue 9, February 2008] as it states Charles Rosher film pioneer was the son of Percy White and Mary Burns. My investigations show Charles Gladdish Rosher to be the son of Charles Rosher and Emily F Bevan. I believe he was born in Dalston in 1885 and have sent off for his Birth Cert (Hackney 1b 511). Has your researcher obtained Birth Cert??

On 24 Aug 2011, Amanda Thomas wrote:

Dear Ms Hotchin,

Thank you for your query which has been forwarded to me by the team at the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre. I wrote the article on the Rosher family which we featured in our journal, *The Clock Tower* in 2008. I was under the impression that the Rosher who became the well known photographer and cameraman was Charles HERBERT Rosher, born on 17 November 1885 in St Pancras, London, and of Percy

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## Rochester Castle: a theoretical archaeological perspective

Alexander Thomas



*Alex is the son of The Clock Tower Editor, Amanda Thomas, and is in his final year of his undergraduate degree in Archaeology at the University of Bristol. His undergraduate dissertation looks at how the material culture approach could be applied to Anglo-Saxon burial goods and hoards. It asks if we can learn anything more about the people and the socio-political situation of the time by applying this approach to Anglo-Saxon burial goods and hoards. Also, with the current academic debate within material culture studies split, if there is a way to synthesise the two competing ideas (Miller, 1987; 2005; 2010; Ingold, 2007) within the material culture approach to create a single universally accepted mechanism. In the second of a two part series he explores how the material culture approach can be applied to Rochester Castle.*

## Part II: Rochester Castle – a piece of material culture

In the first part of this article, I argued that archaeology is not as simplistic as the media tries to portray. There are still multiple debates within the discipline, moreover, there is a strong theoretical base to archaeology. I contended that the material culture approach was a very post-processual theory and looks at constructing object biographies. In this my second and final part of the series I wish to demonstrate how this approach could be applied to Rochester Castle.

### Rochester Castle – agency and biography

Rochester Castle is an interesting monument. Rochester lies on the River Medway and is approximately 28 miles south east of London. If we take Daniel Miller's definition of objectification we can argue that Rochester Castle is a piece of material culture and we can trace its biography:

'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 – artifacts. 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 artifact.' (Miller, 2005: 5)

But what does biography mean? Within the discipline of archaeology and anthropology there is "agency," perhaps the most obscure and abstract idea we have, and most archaeologists and anthropologists will define it differently – there is not one universally accepted definition. There may be memory, a sense of identity, sentimentality or symbolism imbued and within the material culture approach we trace the "transformations" of the "thing" – in other words, when the agency of something changes. We can construct a biography based on those "transformations" and within this theory I contend that Rochester Castle has memory, identity, sentimentality and symbolism imbued within its walls.

We start with the moment of creation, the point where an irrational idea is transformed into a real, materialistic thing. We know that after William, Duke of Normandy's successful invasion of England in 1066 that the Normans built a castle at Rochester. We know this from the Domesday Book of 1086 (Brown, 1969: 5). The City of Rochester as well as the castle fell under the Earldom of Kent which was eventually given to William's half-brother Odo, the Bishop of Bayeux (Brown, 1969: 6; Hasted, 2003: 50). The initial building work for Rochester Castle began shortly after William's victory at Hastings and was carried out by

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## 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](http://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](mailto:amanda@ajthomas.com).

**The copy deadline for Issue 25 of *The Clock Tower* is Monday 30 January 2012, with publication on Wednesday 22 February 2012.**

### 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](mailto:Ray@Rabbithutchprinters.com)

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### 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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:bettycole@blueyonder.co.uk)

White Rosher and Mary Ellen Catherine Burns. I was aware that Charles Gladdish Rosher was the son of Charles Henry Rosher and Emily Frances Bevan and have an approximate birth date of 1885 in Dalston for him, but I did not think it was he who went into photography. I would be happy to print a notice in *The Clock Tower* pointing out this error to our readers, however, I would need to be absolutely sure that this is correct. Are you certain that it was Charles Gladdish Rosher and not Charles Herbert Rosher who became the cameraman? I would have thought a marriage certificate to Lolita Hayes or Doris Guazoni, his two wives, would confirm matters.

Amanda Thomas.

From: Caroline Hotchin

Sent: 29 August 2011

To: Amanda Thomas

This weekend is a free world wide search weekend on Ancestry.co.uk. I have checked Charles Gladdish Rosher and found arrival date in Canada/USA 26 Nov 1908 - father Charles Henry Rosher of Bolton Lodge, Church Street, Chelsea. I have a birth date of 17 November 1885 which may coincide with the other Charles - his cousin. But it does look like his father disappeared from the scene in his childhood as Mary F Bevan is with him and her parents in the 1891 Census - perhaps he spent a good deal of his time with his uncle and family - (only surmising here , but there are records of business trips for his uncle back and forth the Atlantic). Further records show marriage to Lolita Hayes in 1914. Doris pops up in the records later (her naturalisation application was in 1936 after he has divorced Lolita). In all his crossings of the Atlantic on the ships of the day he is entered as Charles G Rosher - photographic artist, cinema photographer etc etc. One even has his address as Mary Pickford Studios. His application for naturalisation as an American citizen was witnessed by Lolita Hayes 9th November 1917. He applied for a US Passport in 1921. Any Google of Charles Gladdish Rosher brings up his biography. I have applied for his Birth Cert form GRO but still waiting for it.

My great grandmother was Barbara Ellen Rosher and family lore is that Charles is "one of us" - think it is some distance removed sideways if you get my drift but will persist - too many elements of the family story ring truth for there to be nothing in it.

To: Caroline Hotchin

From: Amanda Thomas

Dear Ms Hotchin,

Thank you for the reply. I have checked my records and you are absolutely correct. The confusion arose because Charles Herbert also emigrated to America. I will ensure that a thorough explanation is included in the next issue of our journal, *The Clock Tower*, which will be published in November.

Amanda Thomas.

**From:** John Dodgson

**Sent:** 07 August 2011

**To:** [amanda@ajthomas.com](mailto:amanda@ajthomas.com)

**Subject:** Rosherville

Dear Amanda,

I've just moved back to Kent at Kings Hill near West Malling (though at the rate of new building WM will soon be near KH).

I used to live at Larkfield so was aware of some odd pronunciations like Mereworth and Trottscliffe. When I was a member of Gravesend chess club (1970s) we had a former Northfleet publican (Harold H Cox) there who told me that Rosherville was pronounced something like "Roz-d-ville".

We didn't have the Internet in the '70s but today I am able to look up information from my armchair. I cannot claim to have extensively read about the Rosher family or Rosherville but what little I've covered does not mention any peculiarity of pronunciation. Do you think I may be misremembering? Thanks in anticipation. Kind Regards,

John Dodgson.

## Friends of Great Lines Heritage Park

On 1 September 2011, in conjunction with our reciprocal relationship with the Friends of Great Lines Heritage Park in Chatham, we let members know about their Healthy Walking Team's Walk4Life Day. This was a special group walking event at the Great Lines Heritage Park to be held on Saturday 24th September.

The following reply came back from FOMA member Graham Holmes in New Zealand:

**From:** Graham Holmes

**Sent:** 31 August 2011

Thanks for the invite...a bit far for me. I used to go mushrooming in the mornings on the Lines. Plenty of horse mushrooms in the 50s. And we used to go catching lizards during the summer.

Cheers, Graham.

## Princess Pocahontas

**From:** Linda Moore

**To:** odette\_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk

**Sent:** Wednesday, 12 October 2011

**Subject:** The Clock Tower article, May 2007/Fountain Elwin

Hello Odette

I came across the May 2007 *Clock Tower* article which included mention of Fountain Elwin. He is an ancestor of my husband and Princess Pocahontas is also in our family tree. I had looked up Fountain Elwin as I am going to Norfolk tomorrow and taking a couple of my husband's sisters and we may have time to look up some Elwin graves.

I was amazed to find the picture on Page 26 of the Elwin children - the same picture is currently hanging in our sitting room! I would be really interested in getting in touch with Stuart Cresswell. Do you have a contact point at all?

Many thanks,

Linda Moore

*We were delighted to be able to put Linda Moore and Stuart Cresswell in touch.*



mental impression of this village. Was I part of it, or would I just pass through it? No, by asking Ann out I was sharing and participating in its life.

Ann returned and walked up to the wagon. Jim smiled at Ann, she smiled back at Jim. Then with a discreet look, "It will be all right, Jean will come as well," said Ann in a cheerful way. "That's great! I will see you on Saturday after tea. Can you find out the time of the bus leaving Halstead?" "I will", Ann said. "Will you be still on this duty tomorrow? I may not see you as we are very busy on Fridays getting ready for the weekend," Ann went on to say. "I hope so, I will be here on Saturday with Chris to pick you up."

Jim called out, "Giddy up!" and the horses moved off. I waved at Ann, she waved back. "That's it lad, make the best of it. This war is getting a bit bloody and cruel. I overheard Major Flint tell Sergeant Major Dent this company could lose up to ninety percent of its men in its first action," stated Jim Hawks. Could this war be that bad? I did not want to miss it, or Ann: my life had meaning now. Saturday came at last. I did not get to see Ann or Jean on Friday. The shop had been very busy. Mr. Cornish was working away in the back room and the butcher's boy had led us round to the yard. Our order was ready for us, we loaded it up. The village still looked so calm under the summer sun.

Late Saturday afternoon Chris and I walked into Halstead. It was very warm but not too hot. The tall trees on each side of the main road gave us shelter and shade. Ann and Jean were waiting on the village green to meet us. "Hello Ann, hello Jean, this is Chris Finch. We joined up together and live in the same town, Chatham," I stated. "We came down to the green to meet you because the bus leaves here at five o'clock", Ann said with a smile. The bus trip took about half an hour to get to Colchester. I talked to Ann on the seat beside me. Ann pointed out the small villages as we passed them and the farms. Ann and Jean had gone to many of the farms on their father's meat rounds. Also they had been school friends and played with the sons and daughters of the local people.

Colchester was a sea of lights and a mass of people. Everywhere the locals rushed about doing their late night shopping. Soldiers walked about in groups patronising the shops and looking in shop windows. I saw one soldier come out of a pawnbroker's. "I hope he's not pawned his rifle!" Ann said. "He wouldn't do that," Jean replied.

Chris and I told Jean and Ann about our little group of friends back at the barn. How we had joined up together and all worked in the Dockyard. "Our father has asked you all down to the Red Lion public house next Friday, if you can get away from duties, to play a game of bat and trap," Jean said in a purposeful way. "Also he has been made Second in Command of the Local Defence Force. They have no rifles so far but hope to get some soon." We did not tell Jean or Ann about how long we had to wait for our rifles.

"Look! Look! Up there, it's an air-ship!" cried out a passerby in a loud and excited voice. We all looked up and there in the clear light blue sky we could see the air-ship. It looked so peaceful, high up and slowly crossing the evening sky above Colchester; Ann held on to my arm as she looked up.

I will always remember that night in Colchester. We had our meal and went to the music hall. The hall was packed out. The audience cheered and cheered the acts. Each entertainer had a patriotic number and at last Marie Lloyd appeared. The audience rose to its feet. It was marvellous to be there and be a part of this wild cheering audience. I had a feeling of being part of history in the making.

## Archives Update

Alison Cable, Borough Archivist



### Quarterly Report for the Archives of Great Expectations: July to November 2011



#### RCA Catalogue

Project Archivist, Valerie Rouland (pictured) has now completed the inputting of the new catalogue onto Cityark, so with the exception of any odds and ends that might be found in the next few weeks, the cataloguing is now complete.

#### Conservation

Some of the Quarter Sessions rolls (RCA/J2) have been identified for urgent repair and have been sent to a specialist conservator. The work to repair and clean the damaged parchments is likely to take several months.

#### Volunteers

Since the beginning of September, the FOMA volunteers have been working on the exhibition entitled Archives of Great Expectations: documents and discoveries from Rochester City records. They are currently undertaking research on various aspects of Rochester City Council's work and responsibilities. The exhibition will be on display at Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre from 12 January to 28 February 2012. After that, we will seek to have the exhibition installed in other venues around the Medway Towns.

#### Outreach work

We have met with several representatives of local schools in order to acquire some feedback from history teachers as to how we can use the City Archives to tie in with the History National Curriculum. As a result of our discussions we are currently planning workshops for pupils looking at the Home Front during both World Wars. We have already had one successful workshop on Public Health (Rochester and Strood) with the Robert Napier School. We hope to offer this workshop to other secondary schools and Alison is currently working on a subsequent workshop looking at aspects of the History of Medicine and Health care that she will put together with Robert Napier School's Head of History.

### An Update on MALSC Collections catalogued during 2011

DE1220	Dakers Marriot solicitors Strood: 1785 -1994 deeds of properties in Strood, Rochester and New Brompton
DE1222	Bound maps & plans of Medway c1900-c1907 Towns
DE1224	Rogers family and the Jezreelite 1873-c1962 church; diaries and journals of Jezreelite canvassers

C/ES/153/9/ PM150B	Brompton C of E school (log books) Records of the Strood Extra Parish Meeting	1863-1984 1894-1934
P252B C/ES/153/11	Milton Holy Trinity parish records Robert Napier School: log books, photographs	1845-1966 1905-2004
P270/28/2	Northfleet parish: letter sent by Rev Durham	1818 -
DE1226 PC350	Rochester Probus Club Records of Stoke Parish council	1973-2009 1903-2002

The full catalogues can be viewed via our online catalogue: <http://cityark.medway.gov.uk>

## Update to Education and Outreach report- April to November 2011

Elaine Gardner, FOMA Vice Chairman



The volunteers attended a one-day paleography course on 18 May held at the Studies Centre (MALSC), which was also available to other members of the public, and then began the daunting task of transcribing 17<sup>th</sup> Century coroners' reports. The word *aforsaid* quickly became easy to spot appearing in virtually every line!



*Volunteers at work transcribing coroners' reports*

The volunteers are now involved in the research and selection of material for the various aspects of the collection to be included in the major exhibition which opens at MALSC in early January and runs for six weeks before moving to other venues. Each volunteer is illustrating a different aspect of the archive.

FOMA also took a stand at the first Civic Day held in Rochester on 25<sup>th</sup> June, which gave us a chance to bring MALSC to the public's attention and show some of the material contained in this archive. The event was held at Eastgate House, the former Rochester Museum, so it proved interesting that some of the documents on display referred to the Corporation's purchase of the building to create a museum as its Queen Victoria Diamond Jubilee project.

The talks given to various groups have been successful. I repeated my talk on Rochester High Street in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century at the FOMA June meeting. At this event most of the audience were familiar with MALSC and had visited on numerous occasions, but were still unaware of the vast photo archive that existed or knew what Rochester High Street had been in its past. I also visited Walderslade Girls' School during their activity week to give a talk on aspects of Rochester and its history, as the school had to abandon a plan to take the year group on a tour of Rochester. The repeat visit to talk to Year 8 at Chatham Boys' Grammar School also went ahead at the end of May.

It only took ten minutes to load our wagon. Each time I walked through the shop I looked out for Ann. On the last trip out of the shop I called out, "Goodbye Ann!" She looked up and smiled at me. My throat was dry and I was again going red in the face. "Am I on this detail all week?" I asked Jim.

"You are down on Company's Orders all the week for this job. We go into Colchester tomorrow."

I did not ask Jim right out but worked my way round to it.

"What about Wednesday and the rest of the week?" I asked.

"Wednesday, we are free for Major Flint. He has a day's training lined up for the boys. It's tracer firing late at night," said Jim.

"What's tracer firing?" I asked.

"A tracer bullet. It leaves a trail of coloured smoke by which its course may be observed. It can be seen in the night and daytime. You can point out the enemy's position to the rest of the lads, then direct their rifle fire onto it," Jim said.

"Thursday, what do we do then?"

"We go round the farms for eggs and milk in the morning. Then down to the village in the afternoon to pick up the company's mail at the post office. There's usually about sixteen bags of mail to pick up. The lads are great letter writers. Friday again back to the village for the weekend's meat," Jim said as he looked around at the countryside from his driver's seat. He had seen a young fox run across our path, and it looked up at us as it dived into a hedge of closely planted bushes. Two trips into Halstead village. *Two times to look at Ann*, I thought.

Wednesday's night shoot went well. I saw the tracer rounds fired. At night time the rounds glowed and shined as they went through the night sky. When they hit the target I watched the rounds leap up into the air. The machine guns gave the best entertainment: a free firework show. We returned to camp at three o'clock in the morning. Jim and I watered and fed the two horses before we went into the barn for a few hours sleep.

Thursday came at last. I looked at Mr. Cornish's shop as we passed by. It looked shut. Was this their day off? In the post office I could see Ann and I jumped down from the wagon. I hoped I looked like a real soldier now. I opened the door to the Post Office. The bell over the door rang out.

"Hello Ann is this your day off?" I asked.

"Yes but there's not much to do in the village. I may go up to the village hall and help to roll bandages for the first aid people," Ann said.

"I've heard Marie Lloyd and Vesta Tilley are on at the Grecian Hall in Colchester this weekend," I said.

"I would love to see them," said Ann.

I jumped in with both feet! "Well can I take you. I haven't been outside the area of the barn and this village for months."

"Yes, you can take me. Do you find this village very small?" Ann asked.

I considered my answer as I admired her face.

"No, I love the countryside and this small village, but I wanted to take you out from the first time I saw you. I haven't spent much of my army pay so we can go for a meal first. We have the weekend off. I can walk into the village and we can both catch the bus into town and back from here. Will your father let you go?"

"I will ask him. Could Jean come as well Frank?" asked Ann.

"Yes, I will ask Chris Finch if he wants to make up a foursome. He was a shore man in the Dockyard and worked near me. We are good mates. Will you ask your father then, Ann?"

"Yes, I'll walk up and see Jean first, then ask my father. I think it will be all right, as long as we catch the last bus back."

I loaded the bags of mail onto the service wagon. Jim Hawks looked down on me. He puffed away on his pipe in quick and short blasts of breath. I stepped away from the wagon and looked about me and took in a



The morning sports full of merriment, I knew I had a sports medal to come. After the mid-day meal, the tournament and gathering went on. Allan Bennett knocked Fatty Richardson out the boxing ring with a blow to his jaw in the fourth round. Allan went on to become battalion boxing champ. Chris knocked me off the greasy pole with three hits of his pillow. He in turn was felled by a chap from A Company. Chris told us, "The pole's becoming less slippery. It's unfair, the chap's, bigger than me and stronger." By four o'clock that afternoon the cold and darkness fell over the common. The big elm tree shadow shaded the medal giving.

A week later Allan Bennett was sent a copy of *The Chatham News*. On the inside page was a photo of his mother standing outside her house in Cage Lane with Allan's two sports medals. "Trust my mum to do that," commented Allan. He like the rest of our small circle had grown up and matured over the past months. He knew that Cage Lane was a decayed area of Chatham, a murky and veiled place at night where policemen patrolled in pairs, sailors went into houses of single women after dark. My mother always told me to be home before the pubs closed and then whispered to my father about the goings on. I was pleased when Captain Flint, on our morning parade, praised the medal winners in our company and congratulated Allan Bennett for being boxing champion.

Our training went on. More and more trench digging and night work, patrolling *No Man's Land* on our hands and knees. The company and battalion officers went on a divisional tactical course under General Maxwell himself for two weeks. Sergeant Dent ran the company on his own for this time in a skilful way. Our officers returned more calculated and cleverer in planning movements over ground and the class lessons became more polished and thoughtful in strategy and procedure after an attack.

In May the days became warmer, the countryside had bloomed, the air clear. There was a refreshed and renewed feeling in the company. I was detailed off to go with the Ration Corporal into Halstead Village to pick up our company's meat ration. Corporal Jim Hawks, the *ration man*, handled the pair of horses pulling the service wagon well and they trotted off in unison. "Watch out for the butcher's oldest girl. She will turn your eyes and we'll get short rations if you don't watch when we load up. She's a real good looker," added Jim.

Halstead Village looked attractive and delightful under the spring sun. The horses, aware of where we intended to go, halted outside the butcher's in the High Street. I jumped down from the service wagon. Jim went into the shop first with me following into the large serving area. A young attractive girl looked up from behind the meat counter.

"Hello Ann, where's that sister of yours?" Then with a smooth look, "She could be on the stage with her looks. A real cracker she is," said Hawks.

"I hope dad can't hear you, he's out the back. Jean has her head turned with all you troops eyeing her," replied Ann.

"She is a real dazzer is Jean. That's why I got young Frank here. Give him an eye-ful," said Hawks. I went red in the face.

"What part of Kent do you come from? I have talked to lads from all over Kent since the West Kents came here," Ann said.

I looked at her. There was a look of friendliness in her face, an attractive and captivating girl. "Chatham," I replied in a cordial way. "I work as a dockyard writer. My name's Frank Harper." My face still red and flushed.

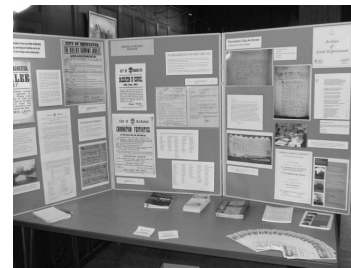
From the rear of the shop in walked Mr. Cornish the butcher and his other daughter Jean. Jean was beautiful and delightful to look at. Mr. Cornish a small man with a commanding manner.

"Ann, Jean, have you the orders for the outlying farms ready?" he said in an overriding way. The girls moved about the shop with excessive haste. All the orders had been tied up with string. Ann and Jean placed the orders into four piles on a tiled slab. "If you come this way, lads, I have your company's order in the work room."

Tessa Towner was invited to speak at a Strood Fellowship meeting in September where she gave an extended version of the talk on our findings so far which she had given to FOMA members in February. Odette Buchanan was invited to give a talk to The Friends of the Vines at the end of October on the history of the Vines park in Rochester, formerly the St Andrews Priory vineyard; this involved delving into many of the archive records. I have been invited to talk to the local Borstara (Borstal Active Retirement) group in January on my experiences of volunteering on this project and some of the material found. Those of us working on this project have also been asked to outline the work at a *Thank You* morning being held in December by the study centre staff for all MALSC volunteers.

The links with schools and education continue. Ms Slater, Head of History at Robert Napier School, brought a group of students studying the History of Medicine at GCSE to look at public health in the Medway area. The documents put together for the students included some from this project archive. Feedback was good and she is bringing in another group soon. Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School (The Math School) has also been on a visit to use this material. Staff from The Hundred of Hoo School made contact in May wanting to be able to research World War One and two casualties from the Hoo Peninsula to make their annual Remembrance Day assembly more meaningful. Brian Joyce, one of the volunteer team, worked with the school to find relevant material. Brian has also given a presentation at Robert Napier recently for Black History Month using archive material and local parish records. The planned invitations to the dozen secondary schools in the area, with which we have yet to have contact, went out too close to the end of the summer term (as a result of work load on the archive staff), so the uptake to meetings held at the beginning of September was lower than hoped for. However St. John Fisher School and Chatham Grammar School for Boys attended and were both keen to use archive material. John Fisher School study Crime and Punishment as part of their GCSE history course and want to see material on police and policing in the area, which will incorporate material from the RCA Watch committee records amongst others. They also were interested in using the public health material. Chatham Grammar School for Boys was interested in the effects of World Wars One and Two on the local area, and a lot of information on this can be found in the RCA Town Clerk files. The archivists have begun putting together facsimiles of relevant documents and will be helped by volunteers once the exhibition research is over. In January we plan to re-contact those schools who did not respond previously.

Odette Buchanan has put together some leaflets designed for schools on different periods of Rochester history which, though not using material from the project archive at this stage, are furthering knowledge of Rochester's heritage and which form the basis for further research at MALSC. The Bishop of Rochester Academy has made contact with MALSC to enable students to visit on work experience.



*The FOMA display at Rochester's first Civic Day*

On the publicity front, The Quarterly Reports of ongoing progress with the project have been published in *The Clock Tower*. We now need to get a progress report and examples of the material on to the websites for FOMA and the Medway Archives for the general public to access. The catalogue of the project material is now on Cityark and we need to start advertising this. I have twice contacted by e-mail the editor of the Medway Council bi-monthly newsletter *Medway Matters*, which is circulated to all Medway households, to ask for the opportunity to contribute an article but have yet to have any response. I will persevere, as an article in the January edition to coincide with the exhibition would be very useful!

## Strood: The Land of Used-To-Be

Odette Buchanan



*Odette is a retired teacher. She is fascinated by local history and is actively involved in many aspects of the subject. She is a City of Rochester Society visitors guide, a Steward at Restoration House, and a volunteer on the England's Past for Everyone Victoria County History Project. In addition, she is, of course, FOMA Secretary.*

*This article has been adapted from the talk Odette Buchanan gave at the FOMA AGM on 3 May 2011.*

Strood has a wealth of history – it took Henry Smetham over 400 pages to cover some of it in 1899 \*and we've had more than another hundred years of action since then. Where's all the evidence gone? Go to Rochester and you can spot the relics, no problem – bits of wall, the castle, the cathedral, etc. etc. But Strood – all gone.

Let's take an imaginary walk down the hill from the Coach and Horses. St. Nicholas C of E school built in 1849 was the first Church of England School in the Medway Towns. There is certainly still evidence of that, but look opposite – can you see any evidence of where the 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century Leper Hospital *used to be*? No, I thought not, and at one time the hill *used to be* called Spittle Hill to acknowledge its existence. Past St. Nicholas school, still on the same side is the Cedars Hotel – this is all that is left of what *used to be* a 19<sup>th</sup> century smock windmill. The mill house, before it became an hotel, was inhabited by the Dunbars. It should have a 'blue plaque' memorial – look up at the eyrie at the top of the building – that's what *used to be* Evelyn Dunbar's studio when she lived there with her parents during the Second World War. She was the only female official War Artist paid by the government. Do you remember her long painting of the queue outside Hill's fish shop in the High Street? If you don't then visit the Imperial War Museum and see it and many more of her war paintings on show. Under the railway bridge and still on the same side we come to the smoked remains of what *used to be* the Crispin and Crispianus, now wrapped like a Christo and Jeanne-Claude art installation with its white plastic cover. Almost next door *used to be* the Bull's Head public house, now not sure whether to fall down or turn into another block of flats. Back in the 1870s, this was the scene of a bizarre theft incident:

Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> November, 1870:

Case reported from the Rochester City Police Reports:

A deaf, dumb and blind young man was accused of stealing a bag from a man who had a performing fish. The defendant could not write or 'speak with his fingers' so they were unable to ascertain his name. The owner of the bag was at Maidstone enlightening the inhabitants with his performing fish, so the defendant was to be detained until the following Monday. He only understood this when someone in the Court made the motions of a treadmill with his legs. 'This the poor fellow understood at once.'

Monday: George Atkinson, owner of the stolen carpet bag said he was an actor. Last Wednesday he and his performing fish were giving an entertainment on the land at the side of the Bulls Head, Strood. He left his bag in the stables of the Bull's Head. He listed the contents. The defendant was seen on the Thursday in Borstal coming from Strood with the bag. Mr. Prall asked if anyone in the Court knew the prisoner. At this, the prisoner turned round to see if he recognised anyone, amid much laughter. 'You do not see anyone you know?' inquired Mr. Prall. The prisoner shook his head, which caused more laughter.

Sentenced to 14 days hard labour. He looked disappointed.'

They don't even have the interesting crimes there *used to be*.

After our evening meal ivy and lanterns were put into the barn and each soldier put up his Christmas cards. One of our bonfires was lit and an officer lead us in singing carols, the blaze sparkling our spirit and from other corners of the valley kindled bonfires ignited. The warmth and drink made me cheery as I looked about me at the gleeful faces of my Pals. I will always remember that night of revelries.

Christmas day dawned and I woke up in the barn. The company cooks had the breakfast on the go and the smell of the cooking bacon had woken me up. The aroma was an inducement for me to get up and after the previous night's indulgence in drink, a hot cup of tea, bacon and eggs went down well. John Fraser and James Mazer, the two painters, sat down beside me.

"Trust you, Frank, to scoff down the nosh first", Singer said.

"Did you drink all the rum last night?" I asked Singer.

"No there's a bit left for the New Year. I think I will lay off the drink till then," John replied.

At nine o'clock the company formed up. We marched down a lane onto a main road. It must have been the same lanes and paths we had marched through when we were assigned our company barn on the first night we came to Essex. The rest of the companies joined us. We marched till we came to a village. The men halted outside the village church. We filed in and found inside the men of the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion the West Kents. As we sat down, we looked at them and they at us. We both had the same cap badges. I spotted many a face I had seen in Chatham before this war.

Back at our company barn we all helped make up a long table out of planks and barrels. Our officers served us Christmas dinner. Each man had three bottles of ale beside his plate as well. Four musicians from the band played well loved music hall songs. We all knew them and tapped our feet as we had our banquet. Major Winch came into our barn after our meal. He called us all round him and then got up on the table.

"Men, as from tomorrow you will be known as D Company in the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion the West Kents. We all will have a sports day on Boxing Day tomorrow. I hope you soon get to know the rest of the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion. I will become the Second in Command."

On Boxing Day morning, we joined the rest of the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion on Halstead Village Common. There was no time lost. Each company warmed up by running up and down the Common. As we ran up to the top of the Common I looked about me. A boxing ring had been set up and ground marked off for races. Sergeant Dent called out "Company halt!" We halted, panting.

Captain Flint, our Company Commander, read out the names for each sporting event and activity. We looked about in amusement, our voices rising in a banter of joking.

"What about football?" called out John Fraser.

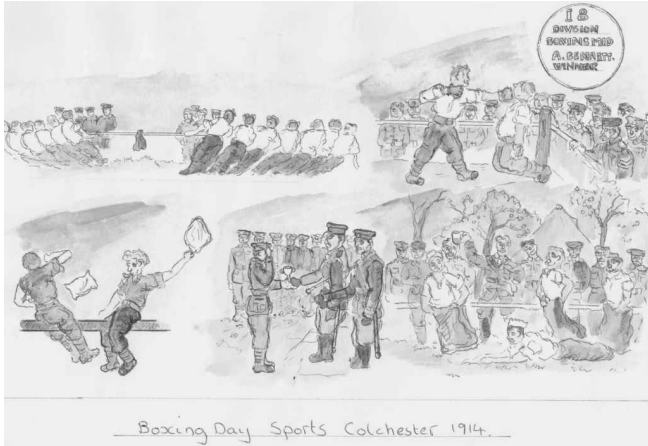
"Yes" said James Mazer a fellow member of the dockyard football team.

"All right, keep calm," said Sergeant Dent.

Captain Flint looked up, "This is a sports day for all the company, a day of happiness, a perfect Christmas for us all. Soon we will face the battlefields."

Before we had our uniforms we had passed the time in sports and football. A PT coach had directed us in exercise. We practised in all sports, running, boxing and tug of war. Captain Flint went on to say, "In the coming weeks we will have a football match between companies."

A big elm tree stood at one corner of the Common. On a hot day it would give a perfect canopy and cover from the summer sun. We piled our jackets under this tree. "If it's a sports day, then I am going to light up my pipe," said Chris Finch. He never parted from his pipe and at the earliest opportunity he lit up. The sports were all part of a knockout competition for teams. The challengers moving on to rival teams from the other companies and the losers joining the audience for the final competition in the contest. Our tent, plus Sergeant Dent, won the tug of war, Fatty Richardson being our anchor man. "Hold, hold, hold then pull!" called Dent in the last pull to victory.



Our train journey took four hours and we must have circuted London on our troop train. We were still boisterous as the train pulled into Colchester Railway Station. We strolled out of the station and were then again directed into our companies. A Staff Officer with red tape on his collar told us, "The rest of the 18<sup>th</sup> Division has been living with householders. As you can appreciate, we have had little notice of your coming. You will be in tents over the Christmas but I hope you will be able to have a good time. Your cooks are laying on a

good fare. There will be sports on Boxing Day and I hope you will meet the rest of the division on the sports field."

As it turned out each company settled down in barns to sleep, as arranged by General Maxwell. Near the barns tents had been set up to be used for an assortment of tuition.



On Christmas Eve, we cut down trees in the nearby wood; we looked like figures from a folktale. John Fraser and James Mazer, both painters and members of the Dockyard football club, had great enjoyment calling out, "Timber!" as a tree fell to the ground. James Mazer, or Singer as we all called him, kept telling us how he was looking forward to the festivities. In his kit, he had a bottle of navy rum his father had given him as a parting gift. The trees were put into three gigantic bonfires to be lit later on.

Turn left and a short walk along Gun Lane brings you to the doctors' surgery. This *used to be* the hospital wing of the Workhouse. The rest of the workhouse *used to be* where the car park, Medical Centre and All Faiths School now is. The original boundary wall can still be seen up Bryant Road and left into Glanville Road. Over the other side of the High Street on the corner of the Cuxton Road where the BP garage now stands there *used to be* the Old Gun public house and one of Strood's three cinemas. Up the other end of the Cuxton Road is the Conservative Club. This *used to be* the house of Charles Roach-Smith, another notable Strood inhabitant who should have a 'blue plaque'; he was a nationally famous antiquarian.

Back in the High Street and there is St. Nicholas Church and what *used to be* the graveyard is now a public garden with a shallow dent in the north-east corner where the original workhouse built by Caleb Parfect in 1723 *used to be*. On the north east corner of the church is the decommissioned town pump. This *used to be* in the High Street just by the end of the churchyard wall. It had such sweet water that people came from out of the parish to use it although they had to pay 30/- per annum if an inn or 7/- if an individual. The quaint little building, now a house, that stands in Gun Lane at the edge of the churchyard *used to be* the Charnel-House. It was built in 1856 to accommodate the dead and upstairs the Parish Trustees' Committee Room when the original workhouse was demolished to make room for more graves in the graveyard. According to Hasted, the charnel-house with vestry above *used to be* in the church on the north side. Next we have Wilkinson's and what is now Asda's – this is what *used to be* Safeway's supermarket and, before that, it *used to be* Budgen's and Biggs Body Building Beverages brewery. Once North Street *used to be* called Cage Lane and there *used to be* a tollgate across it by what *used to be* the Angel Inn – now closed after over 400 years.

We were told that the boarded up area behind the next block of shops was going to be a Lidl store. It *used to be* the site of the Strood Fair – eventually closed after many years of complaints from church and the moral spoil-sport brigade. Previous to that, it is where the Newark Hospital *used to be* in the Middle Ages. It is thought that this is why Lidl's cannot proceed as an archaeological survey is needed. It was the building of the Newark Hospital that resulted in Strood becoming a parish in its own right rather than Frindsbury's Chapel of Ease.

In that block of shops, and what is now the National Westminster Bank, *used to be* another of Strood's cinemas. Round the corner, in Station Road, is where the first Strood Cinema *used to be*. Go up Station Road for a bit and on the railway side *used to be* the entrance to the station – hence the road name. Back under the railway bridge and you have Canal Road. Again, the name is left over from the fact that the entrance to the Strood Canal *used to be* up along just past Batt's Builder's Yard. The remains of the lock gates can still be seen. It is there that the first Strood Station *used to be*, too. Along Canal Road there *used to be* some oil and cake mills and just under Rochester Bridge *used to be* the water mill. The steps for it are still there but blocked off. Set in the grass verge are triangular concrete blocks that *used to be* tank deterrents during the Second World War (in case the Germans invaded); they are called dragon's teeth. Also, stretching out forlornly into the Medway, is what *used to be* Strood Pier.

On the Strood side of Rochester Bridge *used to be* another railway station and of course across the road that vast space of concrete and tarmac *used to be* the Aveling and Porter building, lately the Council Offices. All this area from the river to back up the High Street near the church where the ground starts to rise *used to be* prone to flooding. The name *Strood* means marshy land overgrown with brushwood. In 1939 the Corporation of Rochester, who were the local authority at that time, wanted to knock down Temple Manor to build factories. That was very nearly a *used-to-be* site but Henry Smetham, William Roach-Smith and some other local notables argued against this and it was saved. It was also this protest group that forced the Corporation to build the council estate behind the Cuxton Road on land that *used to be* Roach-Smith's. When he died they drained it and built the estate, the roads of which are named after him. This housed the people that *used to be* flooded with sewage every time there was heavy rainfall in the low-lying cottages along the river bank east and west of the bridge.

And last but not least, from Smetham's *History of Strood* published in 1899, we learn that there *used to be* 31 inns and public houses in Strood. Now I can only think of 7 still open.

Now you see why I call my home town of Strood *The Land Of Used-To-Be*.

### Sources and Bibliography:

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City of Rochester Society *A Walk around Strood*  
Local Newspapers from 1830s onwards  
Ordnance Survey maps 1840s onwards  
And a special thanks to the staff of Medway Local Studies & Archives Centre for all their help.

\*See Odette's articles on Henry Smetham in Issues 14 to 16, May to November 2009, of *The Clock Tower*.

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A black and white illustration by Michael de Caville for Chatham Pals (see next page).

It was Monday morning. We formed up on parade. A Company lined up in front of the goal posts, B Company halted on the right hand side of A Company. C Company, which I was in, marched right round B and A Companies to form a hollow square. The officers looked grim-faced and sombre! Major Winch rode into the hollow square on his chestnut horse.

"Men I have sad news for you all. There will be no Chatham Battalion."

"No Chatham Battalion!" We all looked at each other as we uttered these words.

Major Winch was a solicitor. He had served as a young man as an officer in the West Kents. He would not tell us a lie!

"We will be moving to Colchester, in Essex, to join up with the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion West Kents." He went on to say, "There are many Medway men serving in this Battalion. It's part of the 18<sup>th</sup> Division under General Maxwell. He is an ex Guards officer with a fine record and a great commander. We will join the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion in three weeks time. The last weekend before we leave Chatham you will all have three days leave: Friday to Monday morning. On the Tuesday we will march to Chatham Railway Station, the band and drums of the 5<sup>th</sup> Middlesex Regiment at our head. I hope the people of Chatham will give us a good send off."

The three weeks flew past in trench digging, putting wire barricades up in the dark in front of our trenches, attacking trenches at dawn manned by sailors from the Dockyard. The rest of the day fortifying and building palisades to repulse the enemy. That last long weekend leave was fun. On the Saturday evening my family and Allen Bennett's went to the Chatham Empire. The Bennett family lived about three hundred yards away, across the High Street, in Cage Lane. Allen Bennett was also in my tent. He had brown hair and it was always a mess. He was a rigger in the Dockyard and I had seen him, like a monkey, working on the upper parts of ships.

The show at the Empire opened with a cheer. The curtain revealed a line of girls marching up and down with sailors. There followed a side-splitting, slapstick act, four dogs and a drunk station master and the audience loved this peculiar act; the dogs had looks of pleasure on their faces. The show ended with a good sing-song.

Our party left the theatre; it was only a week away from Christmas. I looked into the shop windows as we walked through the High Street. Each shop had an artificial yuletide theme. It was thrilling and pleasing to look at them; I looked up at the night sky, it was so clear and dark blue.

It was nine o'clock on Tuesday morning; we left the tents with all our equipment. I had a few accessories packed away in my kit, a woolly pullover and mitts from my mum and sister. We assembled on the road outside the camp by companies. The Battalion's heavy and burdensome baggage had been moved a week before in a long line of transport limbers pulled by Cleveland Bay coach horses. The band of the 5<sup>th</sup> Middlesex Regiment struck up the tune, *The Girl I Left Behind Me*, a tune always played as a regiment left a garrison for the last time. It was a good tune to march to on a breezy morning and everyone was in a cheerful and buoyant mood. I could see the newspaper reporter watching our column marching in formation to the railway station. As we passed the Dockyard main gate, a cheer went up, the gateway packed with our old workmates. At the Town Hall the steps were lined with spectators, the Mayor lifting his hat and waving it at us when it came to our turn to march past him.

"Company eyes left!" Major Gordon called out.

We kept our step by the sound of the big bass drum in the band. The Battalion began its march up Railway Street. The street a mass of people, the spectators crowded in a multitude cheering us. The station yard was clear but behind the fence a teeming swarm were singing *Land of Hope and Glory*.

Sydney Bushell 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion The West Kents was killed guarding his trench near Ypres on Sunday last. He joined the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion West Kents known as *Kent's Own* in September. Many local lads are serving in this Battalion. They all walked out to Bearstead Green to join up. Sydney had been to Gordon Road School, then worked in Hubbard's the Bakers, Chatham High Street. Two other brothers serving the King.

I showed the paper to Chris first. I do not know what shocked me the most, the death of Sydney or the fact that the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion had got to the battlefields first. This war was getting nearer and fast becoming a reality.



As the rounds of drink came round and it was my turn to go up to the bar to order the drinks, I thought in an absent minded way, would more men follow us to the battlefields if we got killed? But I estimated there could only be one or two big battles before the war would end next year.

It was Saturday morning, we had the weekend off. I walked across the common ground called The Lines. The name The Lines came from the fact that troops had trained, drilled and camped here from the days of Queen Elizabeth the First. Country yeoman had assembled to watch over the mutinous sailors in the fleet below on the River Medway in King George's time. As a boy I had seen The East Kent Yeomanry muster to go off to fight the Boers. They had charged up and down the lines, dismounting and attacking a small make-believe fortress with its Samson, the crowd cheering when the garrison ran up a white flag.

I had left my front door key with my father the day we all went to live in tents on the lines. I was aware my sister was up and about in the house as I could hear her singing in the hallway. I rapped the knocker on the door. My sister May opened the door and looked at me and smiled. "Mum's in", she said, "We're going shopping. Are you coming with us, we can have a cup of coffee after in the shop at the corner of Military Road."

We did our shopping in the same shops my mother had always shopped in. Many of the young men were missing.

"How's Allan liking the Navy, Mr Brown?" my mother asked the butcher.

"He's on the Battleship Queen Mary, on patrol in the North Sea" replied the butcher. It was the same in all of the rest of the shops we went to. All the young men away on War Service.

That night as I helped my sister do the washing up of the dishes from our evening meal.

"When are you off to the front?" May asked me.

"As far as I know we will be going to Seaford in Sussex first to join up with other battalions to form a Division. A Division has its own cannons and medical troops and lots of other things."

"Oh," she said with a considered look. "We worry and talk all the time about this war, so many people are being killed. When I come home from work I pass the Fort Pitt Hospital. There are lots of soldiers walking about in blue wounded uniforms. There are crippled young men, who will be disabled for the rest of their lives. I smiled at a young lad, he looked at me and in his eyes I could see how exhausted he was."

"I will be all right, we will soon have lots of trained soldiers and push the Huns back to Germany."

## A Clock Tower Special Feature

### Chatham Pals

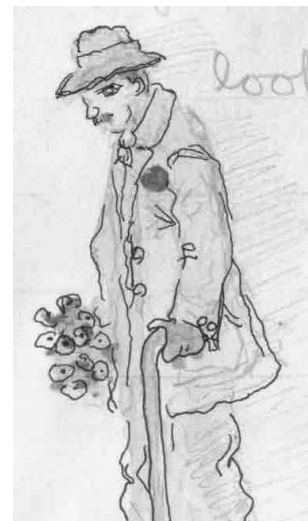
Michael de Caville (1946 – 2010)



*FOMA member Michael de Caville sadly lost his battle with cancer on 7 August 2010. Michael had spent some 25 years researching the stories of the men of the Medway Towns who died in World War One and the results of his research can be found in a collection of folders he placed in the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre. He served in the army with the Middlesex Regiment in Northern Ireland, as well as other places around the world, and on leaving the army he worked for the GPO.*

*In Michael's memory FOMA volunteers are putting together an index and CD covering his research on the Medway men who served in WWI to be produced in time for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the outbreak of WWI in 2014.*

*(Adapted from Michael's obituary, The Clock Tower, Issue 20, November 2010)*



Each year on the Sunday nearest to 11<sup>th</sup> of November, I make my way from Chatham to Maidstone. I will eventually have to ask for a lift by car from a member of The Regimental Association. I step gradually down from the bus, I am very stiff. It took only half an hour for the bus to get to Maidstone. Slowly the feelings come back to my right leg. I make my way to the old barracks of the Royal West Kents.

It's over seventy years ago since the conflict called The Great War came to an end on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1918. I look out for my old comrades and join them. I will be the oldest soldier on the parade this year. Each year there are fewer of us old lads from the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion. I look down at my tie, it's the old regimental pattern, it looks old like me! But I am still proud and stubborn.

On the news of the war with Germany and the rumour going about that Dockyard workers could not join the army in time of war, I had rushed to join up with other lads from the Dockyard. We had left the main gate and made our way to the recruiting office, near Chatham Town Hall. There was already a crowd looking on. The Mayor of Chatham was walking down the line of men, outside the recruiting office, talking to each one in turn. Was it really over seventy years ago?

A cold wind blows across the parade ground, the ghosts are falling in on the left of the line. We will soon march off to lay wreaths on the regimental memorial. My mind goes back to that day outside the recruiting office.

“How long have we been here?” asked Chris Finch.

“About an hour,” I said.

Chris was a store man in number three shed in the Dockyard. He would come across to the writers’ room two times a day to hand in new orders for stores. But for the last few days he had run over each half hour with new orders. The dockyard was alive night and day. Ship captains looked exhausted as they passed our office window, the sailors full of cheerfulness and high spirits. Excitement was in the air. Destroyers left the dockyard to escort battleships to their war stations. Men called up from the Royal Fleet Reserve had no place to sleep and had to be put into the gym. I looked down the line and there was John Fraser and James Mazer, two painters; Mark Richardson a corker; Allan Bennett, a rigger from the Basin. We had all come to enlist in the army: we did not want to miss the war in Germany.



The Doctor looked me over.

“You are A1; see the recruiting officer.”

We were then sworn in and given a soldier’s bible each. I wrote in mine, ‘Pte. Frank Harper 1456, Royal West Kents.’



We marched, or tried to march, to the Drill Hall, behind the Victoria Gardens. The officer in charge of the Drill Hall told us, “Men, in a few weeks time, we are going to form a Chatham Battalion of the West Kents. I hope you all are going to be in it.” Then he went on to say, “We have no room, you will have to go home each night to your own homes and report each morning to this drill hall.”

We reported each day to the Drill Hall to our instructor, Sergeant Dent, who had served in the West Kents for sixteen years. Chris Finch told us on the way home one night, “Sergeant Dent has the medal ribbons for the Sudan and the Boer War”. We drilled with brooms in the morning, marching up and down the hall. After midday tea and corn beef roll, our instructors took us on route marches round the Medway Towns.

The shop girls ran out from the shops and waved to us. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see old school mates looking at me. *If only we had uniforms and real rifles!* No one fell out on our afternoon tours of the Medway Towns. Sergeant Dent said, “You have good route marching discipline and your feet will soon harden up. A good soldier looks after his feet”



November came, the days now cold and damp. We looked forward to our midday meal of hot stew simmered over a log fire outside the cookhouse tent. I sat down on a trestle bench with my plate of stew. Mark Richardson joined me, he had put on more fat around his middle. He had not been known as a fast worker in the Dockyard doing his job of a caulker but he was now the best rifle shot in our company. His mother came up two times a week from Buller Road in Chatham to give him more food and sweets. She always passed the food to Mark then kissed him and turned away crying each time.

“Mark, do you have brothers or sisters at home?” I asked him.

“I have three sisters all younger than me,” Mark replied and went on to add, “They all fuss over me, this is the first time I have got away from them all.”



I was lucky to be in a bell tent, with all my old mates from the Dockyard. Chris Finch was my best companion. A tall lad from the posh Maidstone Road in Chatham, he always paid attention to detail in work and play. Sergeant Dent had put him in for the next Lewis Gun course. Chris had always done well in his Dockyard exams and studies. We read in the papers about the German offensive to take Ypres, the shell shortage, our gunners down to three rounds a day. In the local newspapers were photographs of local men killed in action.

It was the last Friday in November 1914. We all went to The Monarch Public House in Arden Street, Gillingham. I picked up *The Chatham News* and opened the paper’s pages. There was a photo of Sydney Bushell. He had lived three doors down from us in Otway Street, Chatham; he had been killed only last week. We had both gone to Gordon Road School. Now his photo appeared in the Roll of Honour and below the photo a few lines:

I remember one morning, I had been on fire guard all night in our tented camp and my last job was to wake Sergeant Dent at 0600 hours, half an hour before the rest of the sleeping camp. I went into his tent and laying on his chair was a letter. I looked at it quickly; curiosity had got the best of me. "Dear Ted," it started, and ended, "from your loving sister Ann, please take care of yourself." I had peeped into Sergeant Dent's personal life in a small way but I would keep secret the name of his sister, who wished him to take care.

"Sergeant Dent it's 0600 hours!" I called out. He woke up alert and sat upon his cot. "Thank you Harper," he said. He knew my name.



After ten long weeks our uniforms came. That night we left the Drill Hall looking like real soldiers. Before leaving the hall, an officer from the barracks at Maidstone told us, "This Sunday you will all march to a church parade in Dock Road, the service being held in the old Norman church there. This will be the first time the Towns can see you all in your new uniforms."

On Sunday we marched to church with the band of the Second Battalion at our head. The band had returned from France to help recruiting in Kent. They played the tune *The Girl I Left Behind Me*. I had no girl to leave behind me. My world was of adventure books and in this war I hoped to become a gallant and fearless soldier. As we stood outside the church in rows, awaiting our turn to march in, I looked about me. How similar we all looked. How would I face up to the challenge of a battle?





The service went well and the vicar told us, "From the collection today, I will buy a slide lantern to help me teach the young children of this parish about the Holy Bible. Thank you all the men of the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The West Kents, Chatham's Own."

That night, still in uniform, I went along with my five new mates from the Dockyard, to a club set up by the Mayor in Ordnance Street, near the Drill Hall. It was for all the soldiers in the Medway Towns, a place to have a cup of tea and cake. We soon got talking to two wounded soldiers sitting near the book case. Both had been hit in the arm. They looked like wounded heroes. "Have you been at Mons?" I asked.

"No," said the older of the two, "we got wounded at Le Cateau, it's a right game over there. We shot down the Germans as they rushed us. They piled up in heaps of dead in front of our trenches. Then we got up and attacked them, only to be shot down by their machine guns. It's a good thing you lads joined up. When I got wounded we only had about ten fit men in B Company."



*Could the British Army run out of men? Were we to get to the battlefields before the war would end?* I looked at the soldier's cap badge and black buttons. He was from the Rifle Brigade.



In November we all left our homes and reported to Sergeant Dent on the Great Lines above Chatham. Two years before I had watched regular troops camp there. They had looked so efficient and dependable. From our comical attempts and efforts Sergeant Dent was turning us into trained soldiers. He coached us into firing our rifles and hitting the target. Directed and disciplined us in foot drill. He guided and prepared all of us for the big world with his stories.

