

## *The Old Spytall*

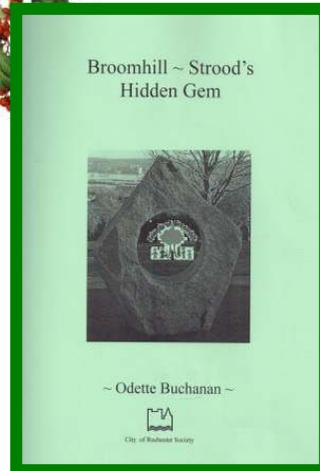


The old hospital of St Catherine, Rochester, painted circa 1848. The story of *The Old Spytall* can be read on page 32 in *Cindy's Little Gems*.

## *The Perfect Stocking Filler...*

*Broomhill – Strood's Hidden Gem*  
by Odette Buchanan.

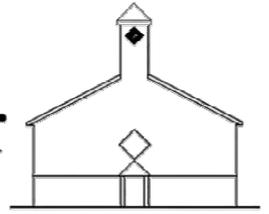
Odette Buchanan examines the history of one of Rochester's highest landmarks. From the time of the Ancient Britons to the modern day Friends of Broomhill, this book charts the area's place in history including an in depth look at its strategic importance and the famous Messerschmitt 109 crash that took place on Broomhill in September, 1940, (City of Rochester Society). Published by the City of Rochester Society, price £6, available at:  
[www.city-of-rochester.org.uk/shop/broomhill-stroods-hidden-gem/](http://www.city-of-rochester.org.uk/shop/broomhill-stroods-hidden-gem/)  
Also available from MALSC, Baggins Book Bazaar, and Rochester Visitors' Centre.



**A Very Merry Christmas  
And a Happy New Year!**

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

# The Clock Tower



Issue Number 32: November 2013  
**Christmas Number**  
£2.00; free to members

## **A Rocking Medway Christmas!**



**The Rolling Stones at the Invicta, Chatham, March 1964, *Chatham News*; with thanks to Northcliffe Media.**

**In this issue - Brian Joyce and Rob Flood on how the Rolling Stones and the Beatles swept into the Medway Towns and changed music history forever.**

**Also - Steve Cross reviews Sandra Dunster's latest book, *The Medway Towns: River, Docks and Urban Life*.**

## Lest We Forget...

Normally in the November issue of *The Clock Tower* we focus on the World Wars. As next year there will be a lot going on to remember the outbreak of the hostilities, this issue is focussing on lighter matters. However, FOMA Chairman Tessa Towner, and FOMA Member Carol Harris, have been investigating a most interesting story about The Great War.



*The cap badge, front and rear views*



*Isaiah McInnes*



*Colin Harris handing over the badge to William McInnes*

## FOMA Members

Amanda Thomas

The *Value of Touch* bronze tactile interpretation of Sergei Fyodorov's Baptismal Fresco was unveiled at Rochester Cathedral on 6 November 2013. Artist Wendy Daws (pictured with partner, FOMA Committee Member, Rob Flood) has worked for many years on ways art and heritage can be made accessible to the visually impaired. The plaque is the result of a three year partnership between Wendy, the Kent Association for the Blind Medway Art Group, and Rochester Cathedral. The project was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Kent Area NADFAS (The National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies).



Wendy spent over 1,000 hours creating the plaque - the first carving into clay began in October 2012. The clay master can be seen to the left in the photograph below and it was this which was delivered in May this year to Meltdowns Foundry in Ramsgate who cast the final bronze. The plaque will remain on permanent display, and at the reception on 6 November, ideas for future projects were already being discussed to help the visually impaired discover Rochester Cathedral.

*Wendy and Rob in front of the bronze tactile interpretation of the baptismal fresco, which can be seen behind.*



*The moulds.*

## *The Committee*

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The Very Reverend Dr. Mark Beach  
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## *From the Chairman*

Tessa Towner, Chairman.



## *The Mystery of the Cap Badge*

Whilst on my annual visit last year to my friend Carol Harris (a FOMA member), who lives in Hingham Norfolk, a local metal detecting enthusiast, Bruce Maltby, found an army cap badge on one of the Greens in the town, which he brought to Carol who is Chair of the Hingham History Centre. We recognised it as a Royal Artillery cap badge, and it had a number on the back (see photographs). This was usually a sign of a First World War soldier, so we searched on the Net for WWI soldiers' records, but no luck. We then tried the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and found by using just Royal Artillery and the number, that it belonged to Isaiah McInnes, a young man from Glasgow, who was killed during the Battle of Slim River in Malaya 22 January 1942, aged 22. He was serving with the 80 Anti-tank Regiment Royal Artillery attached to the 11<sup>th</sup> Indian Division when he died.

How on earth did his cap badge come to be found in a small Norfolk town? Asking members of the Hingham History Centre produced the answer. During 1941 a Royal Artillery Company was stationed in Hingham for training. They kept their guns in the yard of one of the many pubs in the town and practised on the two greens.

Colin Harris (Carol's husband) contacted the Royal Artillery Museum who were very helpful, but unable to give any details about Isaiah. As none of us had access to *Scotland's People* (the National Archives of Scotland) we thought the trail had gone cold. However then Colin rang one of the Scottish newspapers and spoke to one of their reporters Craig McDonald; luckily Craig is fascinated by local history and took up the case.

This spring, Craig was back in contact, having found Isaiah's family. Isaiah had six siblings all of whom are now deceased, but there were nephews and nieces. The History Centre felt it was appropriate to return the cap badge to his family, so on the last weekend of July Colin drove to Glasgow to a meeting arranged by Craig with one of Isaiah's nephews, William McInnes. The badge was handed to William on the banks of the Clyde. William had no photographs of Isaiah, but a flurry of emails to a cousin in South Africa produced not only a photograph, but also a letter in which Isaiah (serving in the 216<sup>th</sup> Battery 54<sup>th</sup> Anti-tank Regiment Royal Artillery at the time) said that his next posting was to Hingham Norfolk, so finally all the pieces of the jigsaw had come together. The story was published in the *Scottish Sunday Mail* on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2013, and as follows:

## Cap Badge Craig McDonald

The family of a fallen Scots war hero have been reunited with his cap badge more than 70 years after it was lost in a field. Isaiah McInnes, a gunner with the Royal Artillery, was billeted in Norfolk in 1941 as he and his comrades prepared to go to war. The young Scot set off on a troop ship from Glasgow for Singapore in August that year as the conflict in the Far East escalated. Sadly, he was killed just five months later, aged just 22. Details of what happened are sparse but show he died in action at an unknown location in Malay on or shortly after January 22, 1942.

His family had no trace of him since then - until his cap badge was unearthed earlier this year on a patch of land near where he stayed before leaving for the Far East. Unusually, Isaiah had stamped his service number 1545416 on the back of the brass badge, allowing local history enthusiasts to trace his name via war records.

They contacted the Sunday Mail who traced his surviving relatives - and the badge was reunited with the family during a poignant meeting this week. The memento, bearing the Royal Artillery motto *Quo Fas et Gloria Ducunt*, meaning *Where Duty And Glory Lead*, is a long-lost link back to the fallen hero. The badge is believed to have fallen from his hat as Isaiah trained on land known as the Fairland in the small Norfolk town of Hingham in 1941. It was found buried about six inches below the surface by local man Bruce Maltby whilst he was using a metal detector on the green. His friend Colin Harris, who brought the badge to Scotland to be reunited with Isaiah's family, said: "Bruce found the badge and brought it to the Hingham History Centre. We recognised it as Royal Artillery and noticed it had the soldier's ID number stamped on the back. We looked through various Army records but could find no trace at first. "We then tried the Commonwealth War Graves Commission site and found he was Isaiah McInnes who died in January 1942. We all thought it would be right for the cap badge to be given to the family."

Colin said: "We spoke with many locals who were around at that time, and who said the RA were in Hingham in 1941. They were billeted in one of the large houses requisitioned by the Ministry of War, such as Quorn House, St Andrew's Lodge or Hingham Hall. The guns were kept in the back yard of a local pub, the Cock Inn. Practices and maintenance were carried out on the Fairland and on the Market Place green. Locals who lived in the area at the time can remember them doing this on Sunday mornings as they could block the main road which runs through the middle of each green."

Isaiah's family this week uncovered a photograph of the fallen hero - wearing what is believed to be the long-lost cap badge. They also have a letter sent by the gunner to his sister in 1940 which confirms he was in the Norfolk town at the time, serving with the 216th Battery 54th Anti tank Regiment Royal Artillery. Isaiah's nephew, William McInnes, of Coatbridge, thanked Colin for reuniting the family with the precious memento when the two men met in Glasgow this week. William, 62, whose father Daniel was Isaiah's elder brother, said: "As a family, we don't really have many details about Isaiah's life or death. The

## 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.*

In August 2003, an article appeared in *The Daily Telegraph* concerning the sale of Cobtree Manor at Sandling near Aylesford. The house had had a difficult recent history and much of it had been vandalised or destroyed. The park in which it was once situated had been converted into a golf club, but as far as I can tell, Cobtree is now in private hands and prior to the sale advertised in 2003 had undergone some considerable restoration to bring its back to its former glory.

This is probably the house which Charles Dickens named Dingley Dell in *The Pickwick Papers* (1836). The fictitious occupants of the house were the Wardles, and they were based on the Spongs of Cobtree Manor. The head of the household, William Spong, is probably the same Spong born in Aylesford in 1790, the son of John Spong and Rosamond Walter. *The Daily Telegraph* repeats the well-known story:

"One winter, while skating on a pond in his beloved North Downs, Charles Dickens fell through the ice and crashed into the freezing water. He sought help from the owner of a nearby manor house, Cobtree Manor, who turned out to be a charming, hospitable man by the name of Mr. William Spong."

The Spongs ran the paper mill at Snodland and were involved in many other associated businesses in the Maidstone area and at Southwark in London. Most surprising of all, according to *Verborgen Verleden*, the Dutch version of *Who Do You Think You Are?* Rosamond Walter was descended from an illegitimate liaison between King Charles II and Frances Teresa Stuart. If this is the case, then perhaps this is why the Spongs seemed to know how to throw a party - especially at Christmas:

"The best sitting-room at Manor Farm was a good, long, dark-panelled room with a high chimney-piece, and a capacious chimney, up which you could have driven one of the new patent cabs, wheels and all. At the upper end of the room, seated in a shady bower of holly and evergreens were the two best fiddlers, and the only harp, in all Muggleton. In all sorts of recesses, and on all kinds of brackets, stood massive old silver candlesticks with four branches each. The carpet was up, the candles burned bright, the fire blazed and crackled on the hearth, and merry voices and light-hearted laughter rang through the room. If any of the old English yeomen had turned into fairies when they died, it was just the place in which they would have held their revels." *The Pickwick Papers* (1836).

## A Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

ITV's answer to the BBC's *Juke Box Jury*. *Thank Your Lucky Stars* was a hugely popular programme at the time, and it was a major coup for The Beatles to be appearing. Their presence was secured by Dick James, the former singer turned impresario, who went on to make a huge fortune after becoming the Beatles' publisher.

By the end of 1963, the Beatles were the biggest band in the UK with *Record Retailer* magazine reporting that the British had spent £6,250,000 on Beatles records that year. 1964 was the year they broke in America and - just like the Rolling Stones - we were never to see the band perform in Medway again.

There is, however, an interesting footnote to the story. On Christmas Eve 1969 John Lennon and Yoko Ono visited Rochester Cathedral accompanied by comedian Dick Gregory. They came in John's white Rolls Royce, and this is how the episode is described in the *Beatles Bible* (<http://www.beatlesbible.com/>): "John and Yoko arrived back in England ... from Canada, where they had launched their global peace campaign. Part of the campaign was to have been a Christmas Eve antiwar demonstration due to take place in various countries, for which the couple had tape-recorded a greeting to be played. Upon their arrival back in the UK, they were driven to Rochester Cathedral in Kent, where they intended to join a fast and sit-in calling for peace and to highlight world poverty. They arrived, accompanied by comedian Dick Gregory, in a white Rolls-Royce. They were due to take part in a 24-hour sleepover with the homeless of Kent. However, a crowd was already present when they arrived, and it was felt likely that their continued presence would have caused a commotion. Lennon, Ono and Gregory posed for press photographers, but otherwise remained in their limousine for three hours to avoid being mobbed. They later attended midnight mass in the cathedral before returning to Tittenhurst Park in Ascot, Berkshire."



Photograph and image below from Rob Flood.

## Jimi Hendrix

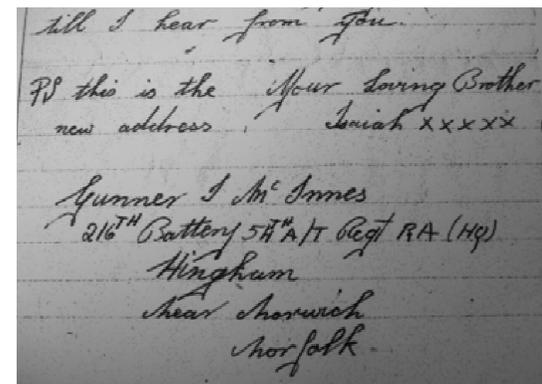
Not many legendary musical characters came specifically to Rochester. There's a great story about Jimi Hendrix (or *Jimmi* Hendrix as the Council printed on the tickets!) en route to the Central Hall in 1967 stopping at the Math School in Rochester High Street. His driver heard orchestral sounds coming from the school and thought that was where they were playing. They soon realised their error and continued their journey to Chatham. Must have been great to actually see him wander into the school. That day was quite important for another reason as it saw the release of Jimi's second LP, *Axis Bold As Love*. He was playing at the Central with Pink Floyd, The Move, The Nice, and Amen Corner – what a line-up!



discovery of his cap badge has left me quite intrigued and we will try to carry out some research to find out what information we can. It is a very nice gesture from all involved to bring the badge to the family after finding it and we as a family are very grateful to them."



Singapore War Memorial © CWGC



The letter from South Africa

## The Live Bait Squadron

On the morning of 22 September 1914 some 130 men from the Medway Towns drowned when *HMS Cressy*, *Hogue* and *Aboukir* were torpedoed and sank off the Dutch coast. The men were known as The Live Bait Squadron and The Friends of Medway Archives (FOMA) in conjunction with the Kent Family History Society (KFHS) are looking for their descendants. How did the families cope? What happened to them? Was there help available and what was the effect on the tight-knit communities of the Medway Towns? Was a member of your family on one of these ships? If so we would like to hear your stories!

The project is the result of research done by Dutchman, Henk van der Linden, following his discovery of the graves of some of these men in a cemetery in The Hague. In Issue 28 of *The Clock Tower* (November 2012), FOMA Chairman, Tessa Towner wrote of her involvement with Henk van der Linden and the quest to trace the descendants of the men on board the ships and the impact on their families. In September 2012 he published a book, *The Live Bait Squadron*, and a service was held at Rochester Cathedral for those who died. Many relatives attended and later met at the St. George's Centre, Chatham, where they were able to share their stories. Plans are now in hand for a similar event to commemorate the 100 years anniversary.

More information is available on the website: [www.livebaitsqn-soc.info](http://www.livebaitsqn-soc.info)

Send your stories to:  
Tessa Towner FOMA Chairman and KFHS Secretary  
Email: [picketywitch@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:picketywitch@blueyonder.co.uk)

## News and Events

Odette Buchanan, Friends' Secretary



How are we all now that summer is just a distant memory and the shops are full of Christmas tat? Being even more *previous*, I actually saw hot cross buns in Morrison's the other day!

I was very excited at our recent purchase for MALSC – the Henry Smetham book. As you all know, I'm a great fan of *Strood's local historian* and, as he was known in the Elocution Classes, *The Bard of Strood*. An amazing man born at the outbreak of the Crimean War (1854) and died just six weeks before the end of the Second World War in April, 1945. The book we purchased was written by him the previous October. This was before the full horror of what the Nazis had done and yet he was perceptive enough to berate them. (If you really aren't familiar with Henry, I wrote a short biography of him which is available at MALSC. It's called *Two Gentlemen of Strood* and also contains a short biography of another Strood character, the Rev. Caleb Parfect who was vicar of St. Nicholas at Strood during the Eighteenth Century and instigated the first workhouse in the South East of England (as distinct from a Poor House).

Talking of books, the City of Rochester has just published another book of mine – *Broomhill – Strood's Hidden Gem*. (see the back page). This is a fairly comprehensive history of the hill, including the key role it played in the Battle of Britain etc. This, too, is available from MALSC and both are also available at the Visitors' Centre and Baggins book shop in Rochester or by post from the City of Rochester Society.

Everyone is busy, busy, busy arranging things to commemorate the outbreak of the First World War next year but did you realise there are many other things with significant anniversaries next year, too? The English burnt down the White House in Washington in 1814, 25 years ago the Berlin Wall came down and ten years ago I had my hip replacement. So there!

Before the next edition of *The Clock Tower*, let me know of any significant anniversaries regarding 2014 of which you know and we will start a list.

## Henry Smetham

We are delighted to announce that in September, FOMA was able to purchase for the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre the Henry Smetham book, *The German Octopus*. This is one of only two copies in existence, the other being in the British Library.

stage name he adopted at Storm's insistence. However, while Ringo was a big enough local star that his own name or initials belonged on the front of his drum with other bands, now the Beatles' name took centre stage. So the Ringo Starr head made its last appearance on 12<sup>th</sup> January, 1963 at the Invicta Ballroom in Chatham, Kent. The next night (and indeed for the next month) Ringo played a blank bass drum. Just before starting a new tour, the blank head was embellished with a Beatles' logo hand drawn by Liverpool artist Terry 'Tex' O'Hara on a piece of loose cloth that was tucked under the bass drums hoops. It is interesting to note that Ringo traded in this entire drum kit in May 1963 and part of the Beatles' vast musical legacy disappeared, never to be seen or photographed again.

So what of the Beatles performance at the Invicta Ballroom that night? Many people have recollections of the evening but I have only been able to find one eyewitness who can recall anything of their set. Alan Cackett remembers:

"At the time we weren't into groups—except for the Shadows. Apart from school concerts, I'd never seen a live pop music show and had no idea what to expect. To be brutally honest, the sound that night was awful. It was muddy and far removed from the clear-cut sound of the pop records of the time. But from the opening strains of *I Saw Her Standing There*, I was mesmerised."

The Beatles interspersed what I now know to be covers of Carl Perkins, Little Richard, Chuck Berry and Arthur Alexander songs with some originals and a few country-styled songs. The most notable of these were *Don't Ever Change* by the Crickets, Dorsey Burnette's *Lonesome Tears In My Eyes*, The Everly Brothers' *So How Come (No One Loves Me)* and Elvis Presley's *I Forgot To Remember To Forget*. I think it is also fairly safe to assume they would have played *Please Please Me* and *Love Me Do*.

As we know, the local Medway press didn't cover the gig although there is a picture of the Beatles on stage at the Invicta credited to Southeastern Newspapers Ltd.. There also exists one set of autographs from the night collected by fan Val Wilson. She writes:



"I went to see them with some friends who used to live in Liverpool. One of them knew the Beatles fairly well since he had worked as a bouncer at the Cavern Club. He introduced me to them after the performance and arranged for us to go backstage. They were all friendly. Amazingly I remember they were drinking milk and Coca-Cola! I spent quite a while chatting with them all but mainly George who said he was fascinated by my 'posh' accent!"

*The Beatles at the Invicta, Chatham; Southeastern Newspapers Ltd.*

The following day, Sunday 13 January, the Beatles made their most important television appearance to date, with a place on the bill for the popular show *Thank Your Lucky Stars* -

**Help is always needed with events.  
If you think you could help, please contact Elaine Gardner on 01634 408595 or email  
emgardner@virginmedia.com**

“The Beatles made me laugh immediately. They all had this wonderful quality. It wasn’t innocent but everything was new to them...John Lennon has an upper lip which is brutal in a devastating way. George Harrison is handsome, whimsical and untidy. Paul McCartney has a round baby face while Ringo Starr is ugly but cute. Their physical appearance inspires frenzy. They look beat-up and depraved in the nicest way.”

11 January saw the release of *Please Please Me* (a song written by John Lennon at his Aunt Mimi's house in Menlove Avenue, Liverpool). Anticipation was high, as George Martin had told the group that he expected the song to reach number one on the charts. The previous week, Mersey Beat ran an article on the recording of the single in which Alan Smith raved about the song and talked of its “solid, insistent beat, defying you not to get up and dance.” He said he wouldn’t be surprised if the single jumped right into the Top Ten. The Beatles had a number of shows that day starting with a lunchtime concert at the Cavern, their first of eleven shows they would play there in 1963. The band then made a hazardous journey south to Old Hill, Staffordshire, for an early evening show at the Plaza Ballroom. Then they were scheduled to play a late evening concert at the Ritz Ballroom in Birmingham but bad weather struck again and the coldest night in the Midlands for over seven years prevented the band from travelling the eleven miles between venues.

This is where the exciting part of the story happens as far as Medway is concerned. On Saturday 12 January, the roads were safe enough for the Beatles to make the 160 mile journey to Chatham for what was their southernmost engagement to date, at the Invicta Ballroom. The Invicta was a 600 seat purpose-built cinema opened in April 1914 in Fullager’s Yard behind what is now Primark (Woolworth’s when the Beatles appeared, and demolished in 1987 after years as a bingo hall).

*The Chatham Observer, 11 January 1963.*

Tickets for the concert were five shillings and support came from a band called The Jaybirds. I don’t know for certain but the Beatles had alternated gigs at the Star Club in Hamburg with a band called The Jaybirds. I think it is a fair assumption that this is the same band and they are best remembered for featuring a young guitar player called Alvin Lee. Alvin was to find worldwide fame in the late ‘60s as part of blues rock band Ten Years After. I think it is also likely that at least one local band would have featured on the bill and although a number of support acts are hinted at on internet forums, I cannot find any definite names. One thing we do know for sure, though, is that a chap called Ray Wade introduced the band. Indeed, his name is mentioned on the poster advertising the show.

The other thing we know about the Beatles' performance at the Invicta is that it was to be the last appearance on stage of one of the most iconic aspects of the early Ringo Starr shows – that of his bass drum skin. Prior to joining the Beatles, Ringo had been playing with Rory Storm and the Hurricanes with a well-used brown Premier drum set. Early photos of the Premier set at Rory Storm appearances show the initials RS on his bass drum head, which could stand for either Richard Starkey (Ringo’s real name), Rory Storm or Ringo Starr, the



## Calendar of Forthcoming Events and Exhibitions

### FOMA Events

11<sup>th</sup> March 2014, 7.30 pm  
Hospitals and Almshouses  
A talk by David Carder

The origins and development of medieval hospitals and their post-medieval successors, almshouses, including many examples from Kent and the Medway towns.

Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> April 2014, 7.00 for 7.30 pm

#### FOMA AGM

Business will be followed by light refreshments.

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April, 7.30 pm start

#### Quiz Night

£5 for members and non-members. **BOOKING REQUIRED** (see below).

10<sup>th</sup> June 2014, 7.30 pm

#### A FOMA SPECIAL TALK TO COMMEMORATE THE OUTBREAK OF WORLD WAR ONE

The Quick and The Dead

A talk by celebrity speaker Richard van Emden

**Booking for FOMA talks is no longer necessary! Until further notice all events are at Frindsbury Parish Hall. Talks are £3 for members, £5 non-members. Booking for Quiz Nights and enquiries through the FOMA Secretary: Odette Buchanan , 72 Jersey Rd, Strood, ME2 3PE; odette\_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk; 01634 718231.**

### MALSC Events

#### Exhibitions

18<sup>th</sup> November - 28<sup>th</sup> January 2014

Beyond the Green Baize Door

Life at Cobham Hall above and below stairs

#### Talks and Events

4<sup>th</sup> December 10.30 am to 12.30 am

Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre Open Day

Your chance to meet the staff and members of local societies! Book sale and refreshments. FREE.

**Unless otherwise indicated, all the above are held at the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre, (MALSC) Civic Centre, Strood, Rochester, Kent ME2 4AU, and all talks and events are now free of charge. Further information is available from MALSC; please telephone 01634 332714 to book. TICKETS MUST BE BOOKED IN ADVANCE. Please note: You may be aware that Medway Council has been relocated to Gun Wharf. This move does not include the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre and until further notice, we are still to be found in the Clock Tower building, address as above.**

**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. For Satnav please use ME2 2AD.**

## Eastgate House

Eastgate House is one of Rochester's landmarks. Built in the 1590s by Sir Peter Buck, the most senior member of staff at Chatham Dockyard, its structure has been adapted considerably over the years, but research has indicated that the original building may be Medieval or earlier. A Heritage Lottery Grant awarded in January 2011 has enabled Medway Council to begin planning conservation work on the house and to start opening its doors once more to visitors. Eastgate House is now closed. Further information can be obtained at: <http://www.friendsof-eastgatehouse.org> on Facebook on <http://www.facebook.com/eastgatehouse> and on Twitter <https://twitter.com/EastgateHouse>. To join the Friends of Eastgate House, please contact Terri Zbyszewska, The Membership Secretary, FoEH, 31 The Esplanade, Rochester, ME1 1QW or at [tzbyszewska@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:tzbyszewska@yahoo.co.uk); a copy of the membership form is also available on the website.

## The City of Rochester Society

"The City of Rochester Society was founded in 1967 to help conserve the historic City as a pleasant place to visit. The Society is still active today, helping to improve the environment and quality of life in Rochester for residents and visitors alike." Taken from the City of Rochester Society website, [www.city-of-rochester.org.uk](http://www.city-of-rochester.org.uk), where further information on the society and how to join is available. Talks are on Wednesdays at the Auditorium of the Visitor Centre, 95 High Street, Rochester and start at 8.00 pm. There is a small charge for events to defray expenses; please contact the CoRS Secretary, Christine Furminger on 01634 320598 or at [caturminger@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:caturminger@blueyonder.co.uk) for further information and how to join. Members meetings take place on the second Wednesday of the month in the Auditorium at the Visitor Information Centre, Rochester. For further information please contact Christine Furminger, as above.

See Rochester's wealth of historic buildings and hear about the City's long and fascinating history from an enthusiastic and knowledgeable guide of the City of Rochester Society! Every Saturday, Sunday, Wednesday and Public Holiday from Good Friday until the end of October. Starting at 2.15 p.m. from The Visitors Centre, High Street, Rochester. The tours are free of charge, but donations to Society funds are always gratefully received.

## Friends of Broomhill

Broomhill Park has been awarded a second Green Flag for 2012/13. The Green Flag Award recognises the best green spaces in the country.



## Healthy Walks

Every Tuesday, meet at Strood Library at 9.45 am.

A guided and pleasant walk with wonderful views overlooking the Medway and Thames, and woodland paths. Duration about 60 minutes. Complimentary tea and coffee served in the library after the walk. Sorry - dogs not allowed in the library. Contact: 01634 333720

## The Royal Engineers Museum, Library and Archive

Prince Arthur Road, Gillingham, Kent, ME4 4UG; [www.re-museum.co.uk](http://www.re-museum.co.uk)



The Royal Engineers Museum is Kent's largest military museum, with a designated collection of historical and international importance. The many galleries tell the story of Britain's military engineers from the Roman period to the modern Corps of Royal Engineers. The millions of items in its collection tell a sweeping epic of courage, creativity and innovation and the stories of

## The Love Me Do Boys in Chatham, 1963

Rob Flood



*Rob Flood is a life-long Medway resident. He runs a Rochester based events company called Feet on the Ground which provides technical support for live events. He is a passionate music fan with a love of the Medway scene and a local history buff. Rob is a member of the FOMA Committee and webmaster for the City of Rochester Society.*

One of the things I like most about *The Clock Tower* is the brilliant members' memories the articles elicit. The *Big Freeze of 1963* cover story (see *The Clock Tower*, Issue 30, May 2013) prompted FOMA contributor Brian Joyce to speculate on whether or not *Top Recording Group* the Beatles had made their advertised show at the Invicta Ballroom in Chatham's Fullager's Yard. The show was scheduled for 12 January, 1963 and Brian had checked all three local newspapers for the following week with no mention of the concert having taken place. Many members wrote in with their recollections and I too was prompted to email a picture of the band on stage at the Invicta. As something of a Beatles fan, I thought readers might be interested to know some of the lead up to the "biggest band in history's" only Medway appearance.

1963 was the year that *Beatlemania* broke in the UK. It was to be a mammoth year for the band - they would play on 236 different days performing a total of 258 times. Looking back on that time now, it's hard to believe that the Beatles' first appearance on record had only been 12 months before and for most people, they were relatively unknown. This undoubtedly accounted for the lack of coverage in the local media for their Chatham gig. Ringo had only joined the band in August '62, their first single *Love Me Do* was released in October '62 (with only modest success) and their first appearance on BBC radio was broadcast at the beginning of December '62.

The Beatles began 1963 with a tour of Scotland that ran from 2 to 6 January. This tour was booked by Scottish promoter Albert Bonici who got the band for a bargain £42 a night, although bad weather meant he lost money. The first gig was scheduled for the Longmore Hall, Keith, Banffshire but snowdrifts made the Highlands impassable. The Beatles' flight from London to Edinburgh was diverted to Aberdeen and with no way of getting to Keith, the show was cancelled. The following day they managed to get to the Two Red Shoes Ballroom in Elgin and the tour got under way. On Saturday 5 January, the band performed at Museum Hall in Bridge of Allan, Stirlingshire, where they were billed as "The Love Me Do Boys" because the club manager was afraid they would be unrecognised by their name. The final night of the Scottish tour was back in Aberdeen. They then stayed in Scotland for a few more days and travelled down to Glasgow to mime their soon to be released second single *Please Please Me* for the children's TV show *Roundup*. On Thursday 10 January, the group was back in Liverpool, headlining a five-act concert at the Grafton Rooms with fans queuing around the building over two hours before the show began. Immediately after the concert, the band was interviewed by Maureen Cleave from the *Evening Standard*. Cleave reported,

The *Chatham News* later described the Stones' set: "Girl fans jammed themselves twenty deep around the stage and stewards struggled continuously to prevent them from pulling their idols down on to the dance floor. All the time the group were playing, paper, artificial flowers, boxes and sweets rained onto the stage. All the time too, hundreds of girls shrieked, waved, stamped, sobbed and almost fainted. Hysterically, they beat themselves into a frenzy, pulling their hair and imploring their idols to touch or even look at them." Tables and chairs were described as collapsing, which suggests that the Rolling Stones had outgrown a venue such as the Invicta, which was essentially a ballroom.

The band returned to the Odeon, Rochester, for their last appearance in the Medway Towns on Sunday March 14<sup>th</sup> 1965. By now, the *Chatham News* had belatedly recognised the Stones' fairly local origins, referring to them as "the Dartford group."

On the day tickets went on sale, fans began to queue outside the Odeon at 3.00am. First in line were three fourteen-year-old schoolgirls – Lyn Robinson of Chatham, Carol Cumberlidge of Rochester and Rani Cooray of Rainham, who comforted themselves with transistor radios and flasks of coffee. The Odeon's doors were thrown open at 10.15am, and the exhausted girls soon emerged clutching their precious tickets.



*Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones, the Invicta, Chatham, March 1964, Chatham News; with thanks to Northcliffe Media*

A measure of how far the Stones had come since their first appearance at the Odeon fifteen months before was the fact that the main support band was the Hollies, who were themselves very popular. This slickly professional group, who had already had five Top Ten hits of their own, wound up the audience into a state of excitement so that when the Stones finally came on stage, the Odeon became, in the words of the *Chatham News*, "a cauldron of fantastic hysteria."

The newspaper's review was remarkably similar to that of the Stones' Invicta appearance of March the previous year: "Screeching, wailing teenagers tore their hair as tears streamed down their faces; girls rushed the stage in a mad frenzied effort to touch their idols; scores of youngsters hurled sweets and gifts around the feet of the five-man group in the spotlight."

However, there were a few quite touching signs that the turbulent social revolution of the "Swinging Sixties" had not yet quite overcome more staid traditions. The National Anthem was played at the end of the show, and one girl had baked a cake for Mick Jagger. Harry Minnican, the Odeon's manager claimed that this had been "the most fantastically successful show ever to put on at the cinema." He added optimistically, "I spoke to the group during the interval and they said they loved working in Rochester, so perhaps that's a good sign that they will return." Vastly rising appearance fees and the Stones' ability to fill much larger venues ensured that they did not.

individuals of great renown (General Gordon, Lord Kitchener, John Chard VC) and the average Sapper who has helped the British Army move, fight and survive for over 200 years. The Royal Engineers Museum now has an e-newsletter. To subscribe for free, email 'Yes Please!' to [deputycurator@re-museum.co.uk](mailto:deputycurator@re-museum.co.uk)

## Events

14th-15th December, 10am - 4pm

Make-do and Mend Christmas on the Home Front

Join us this Christmas at the Royal Engineers Museum to find out how Christmas time was celebrated during the Second World War. Normal admission prices apply; ticket valid for 12 months on gift aided entrance.

- Listen to the Royal Christmas Message radio broadcast by King George from 1939.
- Watch the 'Medway Lindy Hoppers' dancing in the style of the 1940s, with the opportunity to participate in the fun.
- Observe demonstrations of cooking with rationed food.
- Visit 'Sapper Christmas' and receive a traditional toy (additional cost £2.50).
- Make vintage home-made decorations.
- Listen to a choir singing classic Christmas carols.
- Have your hair turned into a 1940s up-do hair style.
- Listen to fashion historian Lee Ault, talk about 'Rationed fashion: Clothes of the 1940s'.
- Browse through our in-house vintage market.

Opening hours: Tuesday – Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm; Saturday – Sunday and Bank Holidays: 11.30am to 5.00pm; CLOSED MONDAYS. Admission: pay once and get in for 12 months! Adult: £7.80; Family: £20.80; Concession: £5.20; Children under 5: Free.

## Chatham World Heritage News

To receive the latest information about Chatham Dockyard, its defences and the project to make Chatham a World Heritage site, you can receive their newsletter directly as well as invitations to meetings. Joining the Chatham World Heritage Partnership is free of charge and by telephoning 01634 331176 or by contacting the group at [chathamworldheritage@medway.gov.uk](mailto:chathamworldheritage@medway.gov.uk) or at [www.chathamworldheritage.co.uk](http://www.chathamworldheritage.co.uk)



### KENT: IMMIGRATION AND EMIGRATION

The Kent Archaeological Society, with the support of the School of History

**Kent University, Canterbury,**

**7 December 2013, 9.30 am. – 4.30 pm, Grimond Building**

Tickets £10, (to include coffee and tea); cheques made payable to **Kent Archaeological Society**, and to be sent to:

Dr Elizabeth Edwards, School of History, Rutherford College, The University, Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NX. Booking forms and further information at:

<http://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013-12-07-immigration.pdf>

The day's talks will include:

A fine mixer-maxter! Incomers, multiculturalism and cultural transmission in prehistoric Kent?,

Peter Clark;

The "Romans" in Kent, Jake Weekes;

Who were the Cantwara? Migration and Identity in early Anglo-Saxon Kent, Andrew Richardson;

Ethnicity in Norman Kent, Richard Eales;

Starting a new life: the Intranter in Ricardian and Henrician Canterbury, Sheila Sweetinburgh;

Immigrants from the Low Countries to Kent in the late 16th and early 17th centuries: the experience of the port and town of Sandwich, Jane Andrewes;

A small but persistent presence: people of African origin and descent in Kent since c.1600, David Killingray;

Migrants to the Kent Coalfields until Nationalisation in 1947, Ann Kneif.

## Kent in World War One



At the end of August the FOMA Secretary, Odette Buchanan, received some exciting news from Screen South, the community focused creative media company, based in Folkestone Kent. They were writing to let FOMA know that they had received a confirmed grant of £99,900 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for their Kent in World War One project, and as follows:

"The project aims to commemorate the people, places and events of Coastal Kent in WW1 with the creation of an interactive website bringing together and creating *one click* access to the heritage of the coastal communities of Kent in WW1.

The site will incorporate 15 micro-sites for locations around the coast enabling stories and material to be uploaded by contributors in each location, and ensuring that people find out about the impact of WW1 in their locality, plus events and activities in which they can participate.

A programme of community sharing events and school activities will enable people to take part and learn about the life of coastal communities in this period, whether sharing their memorabilia in pop-up exhibitions or adding to a flat map of their locality to show where actual people lived (both those who served in the forces and civilians). There will be opportunities for local heritage and community groups as well as interested volunteers to help develop and deliver the programme and website - making this a truly community project.

The Kent coast had a pivotal role in WW1, with the involvement of all three services (Army, Navy and Air forces). Kent saw major upheaval as the gateway through which men and material passed to the Western Front. The influx of men and women this produced, and the changes that occurred to every day civilian life as a consequence of the War, had a huge impact on the coastal towns and villages of coastal Kent which still resonates today. The project will bring together fragmented information into one common portal, providing access to all to the extraordinary history of the coastal communities and people in this period - bringing the past to life.

Jo Nolan, M.D. at Screen South, said: "Screen South is absolutely delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund grant will enable us to lead this important community heritage initiative for WW1. We look forward to working with people from the coastal community in Kent and other partners on this project. Kent is home to some great stories and hidden gems, which by working together we will be able to uncover and share with a much wider audience- bringing the past within touching distance."

More information can be found at [www.screensouth.org](http://www.screensouth.org)

Having made the point that three months before few had heard of the band (rather an exaggeration as their first single 'Come On' had already reached 21 in the chart when they played the Odeon), the *Observer* went on:

"A similar show will move into the Odeon on February 15<sup>th</sup> for one night, and those same boys will be in the programme - but this time they will be way up on top of the bill. I refer, of course, to the Rolling Stones, who in the past few months have been gathering a heap of star-studded moss."

However, despite building up the band in advance, the newspaper did not follow up with a review after the show. This was left to the *Chatham News* with a story headed 'The Stones Made Them Scream.' The nominal stars of this road show were John 'Johnny Remember Me' Leyton and Mike 'Come Outside' Sarne. Other support acts featured even lesser second-string British artists. The *Chatham News* compared these performers with the Stones unfavourably, especially John Leyton, who was "attired rather grotesquely in embarrassingly tight trousers and a short box jacket." As the nominal star of the show, he had to follow the Stones; "alas poor John Leyton," said the *News*. Not that the reporter could understand the Stones' appeal. "Just what makes this group so popular is a problem indeed for the sociologists. They are the longest-haired line up ever to hit the stage." Even so, the writer noted the reaction they generated: "Had the house been completely packed, it's doubtful whether the Beatles could have raised more screams."

The Stones were back the following month, this time at the Invicta Ballroom in Fullager's Yard off Chatham High Street (see the photograph on the front cover). At this gig, the Rolling Stones were top of the bill with only one support band. Fans were denied the opportunity of seeing the drummer Charlie Watts in action; he had missed a flight from Majorca and was replaced by Mick Waller in this show. More than a thousand fans queued outside on that wet Sunday evening in March for what Frank Sims, the Invicta's manager later called "the wildest night we have ever had." The *Chatham News* summed the evening up as "an hour of deafening, thundering rhythm and blues," after which the fans were left "limp, sweating and exhausted."



*Screaming fans watch the Rolling Stones at the Invicta, Chatham, March 1964, Chatham News; with thanks to Northcliffe Media*

Even before their performance, the Stones managed to generate hysteria. They entered the Invicta through a rear door, but could only reach their dressing room by walking across the stage while the hapless support band was playing. This unfortunate group was forced to stop performing as fans went berserk at this first sight of their heroes.



## A Clock Tower Special Christmas Feature



### *Rocking Medway!*

### *A Teenage Tornado: The Rolling Stones in the Medway Towns 1963-65*

Brian Joyce



*Brian Joyce is a retired teacher who lives and works in the Medway Towns. He was born in Chatham and has always been fascinated by the history of the area. Brian is the President of the Chatham Historical Society and the author of several books, including The Chatham Scandal, Dumb Show and Noise and Chatham and the Medway Towns, a History and Celebration. With Bruce Aubry, Brian co-wrote In the Thick of It-Medway Men and Women in the Boer War, which was published by their own Pocock Press. Brian is currently working on a similar volume which will examine the experiences of men and women from the Medway Towns during the First World War.*

The Rolling Stones visited the Medway Towns four times between 1963 and 1965. During that time they evolved from a virtually unknown support act into a phenomenon to rival the Beatles.

Their first visit was on Friday November 1 1963, supporting Little Richard, the Everly Brothers and Bo Diddley at the Odeon in Rochester. The local newspapers made nothing of their Dartford origins; in fact the *Chatham News* did not review the show at all. The *Chatham Observer* did, describing the American acts, but ignoring the Stones. The reviewer was fairly curmudgeonly, criticising the girls in the audience for their screaming: "I would have been better able to judge had I heard the show without interruption."

Three months is a long time in the pop world. By the time the Stones played the Odeon again, on Saturday February 15 1964, their third single was in the chart, and the *Chatham Observer* previewed the show under the headline, "The 'Stones' are Rolling to Rochester!"

## 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 33 of *The Clock Tower* is Monday 27 January 2014, with publication on Wednesday 19 February 2014.**

### 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)

## Readers' Letters

We welcome letters and emails from readers with their comments. If you have anything you would like to say please write to: Mrs Amanda Thomas, Editor, The Clock Tower, 72 Crabtree Lane, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, AL5 5NS or email at amanda@ajthomas.com. FOMA Secretary, Odette Buchanan, often receives queries from members or visitors to the FOMA website, www.foma-lsc.org/index.html. If you have any additional information for the following correspondents, please contact the Editor.

### Ambrose Etherington

From: Roland Price

Sent: 15 August 2013

To: Rob Flood, City of Rochester Society

The above [Ambrose Etherington] had a book shop 326 High Street Rochester and High Street Chatham, I suspect that his son, also called Ambrose, ran/took over one of the stated premises. I would be very delighted if you have any detail information in relation to the above or could direct me to elsewhere. Ambrose Etherington born 1766 (York) died 1817 Kent, son Ambrose b1796 died 1881 Kent. To say the least my family tree can be rather confusing with the name Ambrose going through 4 generations!

Your assistance will be appreciated.

Kind Regards,

Roland Price.

From: Rob Flood

To: Roland Price

Cc: Odette Buchanan

Sent: Friday, 16 August 2013

Hi Roland

I've copied in Odette from the Friends of Medway Archive to this reply as that is probably the best route to try and find the information you're after.

Best regards

Rob

From: Odette Buchanan

Sent: 19 August 2013

To: Rob Flood; Roland Price

Dear Roland,

Among the Friends of Medway Archives are members of Kent Family History Society. I have copied these into this email. They may be able to help you. Also, Amanda is editor of our quarterly newsletter - *The Clock Tower*. She will publish your query in the next edition. It is quite likely that members will have helpful info. for you.

Good luck in your quest,

Odette Buchanan.

1764, 1843-1847; overseer's rates 1814-1819, and poor house diary 1813-1818 (collection ref : P305). I also visited the Math School in Rochester to collect some volumes of minutes and these will be added to the new catalogue (as part of the HLF project) over the next few months. The accession consists mainly of Governors minutes 1860-1946.

New archive catalogues since May 2013:

N/I/150B	Strood Zoar chapel	1714-1935	Jun 2013
DE1209/4	Lease: property near the Brook, Chatham	1820	Jun 2013
HRDC	Hoo rural district council	1897-1935	Jun/Jul 2013
HB/Ho	Hoo Highway Board	1869-1895	July 2013
DE629	Artificial collection: shipping	1718-1876	July 2013

## The FOMA Collection

The collection consists of documents purchased at various times by FOMA, for deposit at the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre.

The newly purchased lease regarding The Brook, Chatham has been added to the FOMA Miscellaneous Deeds collection (DE1209) and as follows:

### DE1209/1

1. Ann Jeffery of Rosherville near Gravesend, Kent widow; 1848  
George Jeffery of Maidstone, gent; and Thomas Selly and Silas Norton, both of West Malling, gents, devisees in trust for the executors of James Gardiner. Jeffery late of Yalding, Kent, esq, deceased.
2. George Edward Houghton of New Brompton, [Kent], butcher.
3. James Wickenden of Lambeth, co. Surrey, carpenter.  
*Conveyance* of a piece of land or ground being part of a field, late meadow now arable called Fox Meadow, part of Brittins or Brittins Farm lying in the parish of Gillingham.

Plan annexed. Schedule of deeds attached [1807-1847]. Date: 10 October 1848. Consideration: £44.

(*On dorse: a memorandum of conveyance by G E Houghton to J Woodger of a portion of the aforementioned land 7 May 1851*). 1 parchment doc.

### DE1209/2

1. James Brazier of New Brompton, co Kent, shipwright diver; 1896  
George W Lane of New Brompton, dockyard writer and Thomas Hibbard of New Brompton, veterinary surgeon.
2. The Sheerness Permanent Benefit Building Society.
3. Sarah Brazier of New Brompton, co Kent, widow.  
*Conveyance* of a parcel of land at New Brompton, par. Gillingham, north of May Rd. Measuring 100 x 14 feet. [Plan annexed]. Date: 9 May 1896. Consideration: £195. 1 doc.

### DE1209/3

*Sales particulars* for house and shop at 1 King St, Troy Town, Rochester; 1893  
Feb 1893. 2 pp.

### DE1209/4

1. William Jefferys of Chatham, gent. 1820
2. Richard Pemble of Chatham, house-carpenter.  
*Lease* of property on or near the Brook or Smithfield Bank, Chatham, with messuages, workshop and outhouses currently in the possession of Richard Pemble and William Burnell.  
Term: 27 years. Rent: £52 10s.  
Date: 22 June 1820. 1 parchment.

## Archives Update

Alison Cable, Borough Archivist



It has been another busy year in the archives, and I am delighted to be able to give you a synopsis of what has been going on.

We have been tying up the final strands of the FOMA HLF project. The collection is being used much more than it was before and particularly with school groups. Examples from the collection have been used in workshops that we have run for students on the subject of public health, crime and punishment and other subjects. A special thank you to all FOMA members involved in the project. Everyone was so enthusiastic and helpful and I think we all got a lot of job satisfaction from the project. Special thanks indeed to Elaine Gardner, Jean Skilling and Tessa Towner for their hard work in pulling together all the required end-of-project paperwork! I have also been working closely with Rochester Cathedral's librarian, offering advice and support. We will retain custody of the early Dean and Chapter records but key items will need to be identified in order to be included in the proposed exhibition area in the crypt which will be part of the outcomes of the cathedral's HLF lottery project, which was announced in January this year (2013).

Other partnership work has included the use of material from our Jezreels collection which was used as inspiration for an artwork displayed at Rochester Art Gallery last summer. I visited the Bishop of Rochester to offer advice on archive material, we worked with the Royal Engineers Museum, and hosted a reminiscence day at MALSC (Brompton). We have also been involved with many projects and exhibitions: Time and Tides, Holocaust Memorial day, the Will Adams Festival and had a display at the River Festival. We were delighted to welcome The Very Revd. Dr. Mark Beach in February when he viewed the Dean and Chapter records in our strong room; the new Dean also kindly agreed to become the new FOMA Patron. Throughout the year I continued our relationship with the Kent History Centre, Screen Archive South East and Kent's Universities; I have also been talking to the National Archives with a view to looking at possible future collaborations using archival collections.

In the summer we also assisted in research for a new television series *Secrets of the Workhouse*, featuring Fern Britton transmitted on ITV1 in June (see *The Clock Tower*, Issue 31, August 2013). Finally, we were delighted to welcome Dr David Wright to MALSC in October to run a one day course on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century hand writing. This was the first time David had run a course with us, as he normally works in conjunction with Canterbury Cathedral Archives. Twenty archive collections were fully catalogued during 2012. I have been able to arrange for conservation work on a number of St Margaret's (Rochester) parish records. A number of key records from this collection had been unavailable to researchers for some time. The work has been undertaken by a leading conservation workshop in London and has taken many months. The newly available records include parish rates 1749-

## Rochester Water Works

**From:** Dr Peter T J Rumley FSA

**Sent:** 4 September 2013

**To:** Rob Flood, The City of Rochester Society

I would be grateful if any of your members have any photographs or information relating to the Rochester Waterworks (and Brewery) sited at East Row above Restoration House "Tudor" Garden. It was shown on Baker's plan in 1772 and a leave for a Bill from Parliament was made on 13 June 1685 to supply water. The waterworks no longer appears on the 1898 OS map, although the reservoir located on the corner of East Row and Crow Lane, was extant on the 1955 OS map. About twenty years ago two pseudo-Georgian houses were built on the reservoir site. Thank you for your consideration.

Peter Rumley

**From:** Rob Flood

**To:** Dr Peter T J Rumley FSA

**Cc:** Odette Buchanan

**Sent:** 4 September 2013

Hello Peter

Thanks for your email. We don't have an archive at CoRS but I've forwarded your enquiry to Odette from the Friends of Medway Archive. I'm sure Odette will publish your enquiry in the next issue of their magazine.

In the meantime, if you are local to Medway, I recommend a visit to the Medway Archive and Local Studies Centre in Strood.

Best regards,

Rob

**From:** Odette Buchanan

**Sent:** 16 September 2013

**To:** Dr Peter T J Rumley FSA

Dear Mr. Rumley,

Please excuse the lateness of this reply to your query about the water works. As Rob Flood told you, Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre has a wealth of local knowledge. If you are not able to call in, you can ring them on 01634 332714 or email them at [malsc@medway.gov.uk](mailto:malsc@medway.gov.uk) or visit their website: [www.medway.gov.uk/archives...](http://www.medway.gov.uk/archives...) You do seem to have amassed quite a lot of info. already - good luck with your further research.

Kind regards,

Odette Buchanan.

FOMA Members *can be found on the inside back cover.*

## Keeping up with the Victorians

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



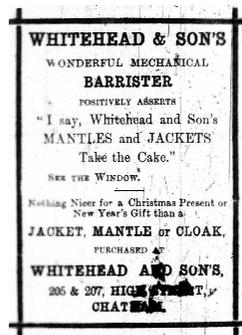
After completing a degree in medieval and modern history at the University of Birmingham, Alison Thomas trained as a teacher and worked in primary education for several years. Whilst bringing up her family she had various part time jobs within education ranging from playgroup assistant to special needs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

## Local Businesses through the Advertising of the Day

Lewis Whitehead and Son

### Automated advertising!

The latest advertisement to catch my eye was one placed in the *Chatham News* in January 1891 by Whitehead and Son, a draper on Chatham High Street.<sup>1</sup> I suspect the 'mechanical barrister' that asserted that Whitehead and Son's mantles and jackets 'take the cake' was an automaton – one of the mechanical figures much beloved of the Victorians. Automata were always a source of popular interest. Earlier in the century, the King's Head Inn in Rochester held an exhibition of mechanical curiosities. Here for the price of a shilling the inhabitants of the city could prepare to be amazed by mechanised musical flute players accompanied by a little boy beating a tambourine. Or by a Turkish landscape, complete with a moving waterfall, and swans swimming and diving down the stream.<sup>2</sup> During the later Victorian period similar curiosities became more widely available; often from Parisian based companies who exported their products around the world. I imagine Whitehead's barrister adorning Whitehead's front window on the High Street in Chatham. As the fascinated onlookers watch, he stretches out his hand and takes a piece of cake from a delicate Victorian tea plate, bringing the slice to his lips before returning it to the plate!



### Whitehead and Son

The advertisement of 1891 was placed by Lewis Whitehead. He owned a draper's shop at 205-207 High Street, in the vicinity of the present day entrance to the Pentagon shopping centre. Lewis, the son of Lewis and Rebekah Whitehead, was born in 1840 and baptised at Bethel Chapel in Rochester.<sup>3</sup> After his father's sudden death in 1876,<sup>4</sup> Lewis inherited the family business. The shop was originally numbered 139 but by 1882 this area of Chatham High Street had seen dramatic changes. Fifteen businesses took the place of the eight original premises and 139 was renumbered as 205 and 207.<sup>5</sup>

Whitehead and Son is described in many contemporary directories as a drapers specialising in mourning ware and on one occasion as a 'mourning warehouse and undertakers'.<sup>6</sup> The mortality rate in Victorian England was high, and mourning was governed by strict rules. In

The research that went into this book must have been daunting. The depth in which the information is explained is incredibly detailed and the presentation, in words, diagrams, maps and pictures (some in monochrome, but most in glorious colour) is absolutely beautifully achieved. Unfortunately some of the images containing text and legends have been compressed so much that parts are virtually impossible to read. Having said that, the book is handsomely presented in a size which will easily fit in the briefcase or bag, with gorgeous colour pictures on its covers as well as on almost every page within those covers. With its flexible format it is not heavy or cumbersome as it would be if it were produced in hard-back.

When I first obtained this book and quickly flicked through its pages, my first impression was that this was going to turn out to be just another dry history book about Kent. How wrong I was! When I started reading it, I couldn't put it down. If it had been possible I would have read it all in one hit. I have never read any of the other books in the England's Past for Everyone series, of which there are many, but after reviewing this book I feel sure that I will now actively seek out other examples, merely for my own enjoyment. It is almost certain that when you have read this book you will also want to do the same. Dr. Sandra Dunster and her team have done a marvellous job!

*The Medway Towns: River, Docks and Urban Life* (England's Past for Everyone), Dr. Sandra Dunster; 2013, Phillimore & Co. Ltd.; £18.99. ISBN: 978-1-86077-728-8.

## Mystery Photos

BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of <u>Strood</u> in the County of <u>Kent</u> in the Year 189 <u>1</u>						
When Baptised.	Child's Christian Name.	Parent's Name.		Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
		Christian.	Surname.			
1891/01 Oct 22	Bentley Hedge	—	Hedge	Seaman & Parents unknown	—	—
1369	—	—	—	—	—	—

In this issue of *The Clock Tower*, we have a mystery photo with a difference. Cindy O'Halloran, Senior Archive and Local Studies Assistant at MALSC, discovered this entry (above) in the records of St Nicholas' Church, Strood. In 1904 a baby boy was found abandoned in a field close to Brompton Road, Strood, and was aptly named, Bentley Hedge. The mystery would have been, "Where are the baby's descendants today?" Sadly, an entry for the October/November/December quarter of the same year showed that poor little Bentley Hedge had died. So no mystery, just a very sad story.



## Magnum Opus

Steve Cross

Steve moved from Yorkshire to Chatham with the Royal Navy in 1977, and has lived there ever since. He was an engineer at BAe. Systems at Rochester Airport Works for 29 years, retiring in December 2008. He is now a volunteer at MALSC also a member of FOM.A and the KF.H.S. He has been researching his own family history since the birth of his son in 1985 and now enjoys helping others research their own families with the aid of Ancestry. He also dabbles in the repair and improvement of digital or scanned photographs.

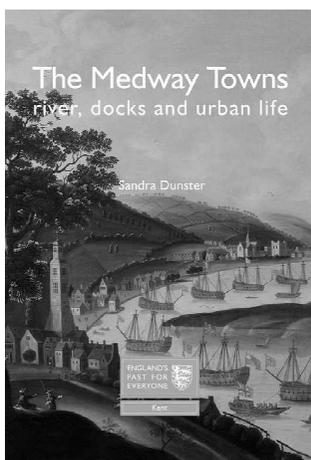


## The Medway Towns: River, Docks and Urban Life (England's Past for Everyone), Dr. Sandra Dunster.

In this book, Sandra appears to have put together a time-line of the Medway Towns covering more than 360 years from 1550 to 1914 when the Medway Towns were becoming almost a single entity. On closer examination, it is not one timeline, but actually four separate ones, each covering a different aspect of the Towns' history. The dockyard, political, social and medical, each one so cleverly intertwined with the other three that it becomes one continuous story, involving every area of life in those years.

The story starts with the creation of the King's navy and the use of the Medway Towns, and Chatham in particular, to build a safe, secure area where the ships of the, soon to be, Royal Navy can be stored, maintained and eventually even built. Unfortunately, because of the extreme handiness of its location relative to London and the open sea, it has had many problems over its long existence. All this is explained within the book to a very easily understood level, yet it is completely detailed, with every major fact backed up by named sources, references to which are all supplied in an appendix in the back of the book.

Many other events in the lives of the people are covered in detail, such as the sometimes incompetent or untrustworthy political characters, disease, plague and pestilence. The book describes the terrible housing conditions and the extremely late payment by government agencies to the poor people carrying out their work within the dockyard and surrounding areas. Other problems involving international disputes, wars and attacks on the estuary by foreign navies is also given in almost sufficient depth to make this effectively contain a diary of war in the River Medway.



the 1880s *Cassell's Household Guide* gave the following advice to mourners: 'After the funeral deep mourning is worn by the widower or widow for about a year. The same is also the case with mourning for a father or mother, sons or daughter, sister or brother. Occasionally, at the end of that period, half mourning is worn by the widow or widower for about six months longer. For uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, cousins, and other relations, the mourning is usually worn for a period varying from six to nine months.'<sup>7</sup> Whitehead and Son's advertisements claimed that they had 'every requisite ready for use.'<sup>8</sup> The receipted bill from The Couchman Collection was issued to Mrs Mantell in August 1891 and shows the price of one such costume.<sup>9</sup>

## From Chatham to California

In 1895 Lewis Whitehead decided to leave Chatham. He, his wife, Sarah, their four sons and two daughters made the 7,000 mile journey to Pasadena in California to take up fruit farming. Perhaps, like many others, they were drawn by thoughts of a better life in the new world? Contemporary newspaper accounts refer to California as having the 'finest climate in the world'. Lewis, in his farewell speech to his fellow members of the Ebenezer Chapel in Chatham, spoke of 'going to the land of sunshine' where 'they meant to work hard and work out there pays better than at home here.'<sup>10</sup>

On 28<sup>th</sup> July 1900 Lewis was granted citizenship of America. It seems that he did not entirely sever his links with the drapery trade. For many years he worked as the local agent for the John Wanamaker Clothing Company.<sup>11</sup> Wanamaker, often considered a genius of the American retail trade, had stores in Philadelphia and New York. He would employ a local agent to measure customers and send their details to Philadelphia. Wanamaker's would make a garment of roughly the right size and send it back to the agent who would make final alterations to ensure a perfect fit.<sup>12</sup> The Whitehead family also appear to have taken an active part in community events. The Los Angeles Herald records their participation in amateur dramatics and musical entertainment - the performance of *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* was billed as the social function of the season featuring the best vocal talents of the city!<sup>13</sup>

Lewis never returned to Chatham, but died in Los Angeles in 1905, after just ten years in his new country. His wife died soon afterwards in 1908. His family continued to take an active part in the Californian community. Lewis' daughter, Ethel, was an advocate of women's suffrage and spoke at several meetings in support of the cause.<sup>14</sup> His son, Vivian, married an American, and was assistant manager of the Pasadena Novelty works, a company specialising in curios from California. His third son, Hubert, was a professional musician who took part in the many and varied events which formed the social calendar of the day.<sup>15</sup>

## Notes

1. *Chatham Observer*, 3 January 1891, p.1.
2. MALSC. DE0284/P189 Printed handbill. Early 19<sup>th</sup> C.
3. MALSC. M5/2/Db/1/14 microfilm 372.
4. *Chatham News*, 24 June 1876, p.4.
5. *A business history of Chatham High Street mainly from the year 1839 to the year 1961*, Frederick W.T. Sanders, c.1961, MALSC Local Studies Collection ref. CHA381.
6. *1866 Post Office Directory of Kent*.
7. *Cassell's Household Guide*, c.1880s [no date], www.victorianlondon.org; accessed 19/10/2013.
8. *Chatham News*, December 20 1890, p.1.

9. £2 12s 6d would have been roughly the equivalent to £158 in 2005 (<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/>); accessed 21/10/2013.
10. *The Chatham News*, 23 March 1895 p.5. More can be read about Lewis' thoughts on America in *Aubry's Brief Lives*, Bruce Aubry, The Pockock Press, 2009.
11. *Los Angeles Herald*, 2 September 1905, California Digital Newspaper Collection, Center for Bibliographic Studies and Research, University of California, Riverside. <http://cdnc.ucr.edu>
12. *The Entrepreneurs. Explorations within the American Business Tradition*, Robert Sobel, Beard Books USA 2000.
13. *Ibid.* December 23 1904.
14. *Ibid* 29 September 1910.
15. *Ibid* 19 September 1903.
16. E.g., *Ibid* 12 August 1908.

## On the Trail of Sheppey's Heritage

Barry Cox



*FOMA member and our latest roving reporter Barry Cox is a retired sales executive who enjoys local history.*

At the beginning of October I followed up my assignment for *The Clock Tower* regarding the Isle of Sheppey's history on early aviation (see *The New Shorts Brothers Statue Unveiled*, *The Clock Tower*, Issue 31, August 2013). I visited Stamford Hill Prison which in earlier times was the RAF Airfield (see the photograph below). The Prison Service, in conjunction with Blue Town Heritage Museum, is allowing the former farm manager's shed to be turned into an aviation museum covering the period up until the First World War. There is much to be done, but the Prison Service is going to clean it out and decorate it. It will then be festooned with loaned photos from the Shurland Arms and the Aviation section from Blue Town Museum. I spoke to Karen Boosey who will manage the museum and she said they hope to get it up and running as soon as possible. Ellen Reed, who runs The Coffee Pot Cafe opposite said it will be a big boost to the Island's Aviation History.



*The museum and part of the interior display.*



considered to be more airy and commodious. The new *Spytall* had twelve apartments and the residents received an annual handout of coals, candles and money from the proceeds of the original endowment. This is the building depicted in this edition of *Little Gems*. A plaque over the door stated that, 'the ancient Hospital of St Catherine founded in Eastgate by Simon Potyn of the Crown Inn in this City 1316, was removed to this spot and this building erected 1805 with a legacy of the late Thomas Tomlyn of this City, Gent. To which was added a donation by the Executors of the late Joseph Wilcocks Esquire.'

Over the intervening years the house was used to house prisoners of war, used as a pest house and eventually let out for private dwellings. In July 1857 the old hospital was purchased by Watts Charity for £1,412 10s 0d and the current almshouses were built in their stead in 1858.<sup>1</sup> The new buildings with their ornate architecture did not meet with the approval of all. Phippen's *Sketches of Rochester*<sup>2</sup> described the new almshouses as, 'a most heterogeneous mass of bricks and mortar we have ever had the ill fortune to contemplate.'



*The Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre Couchman Collection; DE402/10/3(U).*

The illustration, reproduced on the back cover, shows a view of the old hospital painted circa 1848. A note on the back of this painting states that it is a copy of an original in the possession of Mr Cockburn of Borstal (1918). It is further annotated with the information that the house on the right belonged to Mr Hunt, a milkman, and the house to the left belonged to a Mr Ladbury. No information is given about the latter, but his wife is noted as a laundress. The garden in the foreground, where the hedge dwellers are making themselves comfortable, was in the possession of Mr Naylor who lived on the corner opposite Thomas Street. This simple little painting gives us a view of a long gone building and the semi rural surroundings which vanished a long time ago.

### Notes

- 1 A History of the Richard Watts Charity by E. J F Hinkley.
2. Phippen, *Descriptive Sketches of Rochester, Chatham etc.* 1862.

Manager of the Cement Works in Rainham. Her husband was born in Spain and his mother appears to have been Spanish. At the time of the 1901 census she was living in Station Road, Rainham with her 12 year old daughter Emilie, who was born in Chile in 1888. The couple also had a son Frederico Carlos born in Chile in 1890.<sup>17</sup> She died on 17 September 1944 in Tankerton; her husband predeceased her.<sup>18</sup>

#### Notes

1. Kent History Forum website quoting from pages 49-112 of '*A Glimt in the Sky*', by Martin Easdown with T Genth; Pen and Sword, 2004.
2. *A History of the Kent County Council 1889-1974*, Elizabeth Melling. BA. Pub. Kent County Council, 1975.
3. CES/296/1/4 Rainham Council School log book, mixed infant department.
4. *Chatham News* 17 May 1919.
5. Wikipedia.
6. *Bygone Kent* Volume 23 number 3. Pub. Meresborough Books 2002.
7. P296/25/17 Correspondence about the demolition of Rainham Church of England Primary school.
8. St George, Bloomsbury baptism register on [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk)
9. Rainham Parish marriage register on <http://cityark.medway.gov.uk>
10. Rainham Parish burial register on <http://cityark.medway.gov.uk>
11. 1911 census for Rainham, Kent RG14PN4429 RG78PN181 RD61 SD1 ED13 SN136.
12. Rainham Parish burial register on <http://cityark.medway.gov.uk>
13. 1901 census for Waddington, Lincolnshire RG13/3057/60.
14. 1911 census for Hardcastle, Lincolnshire RG14PN19798 RG78PN1185 RD419 SD2 ED7 SN4.
15. Rainham Parish burial register.
16. Marriage register for St Mary Chatham on <http://cityark.medway.gov.uk>
17. Chile Civil Registration Indexes on [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)
18. National Probate Index on [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk)

## Cindy's Little Gems

Cindy O'Halloran



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

## The Old Spytall

Simon Potyn of the Crown Inn, Rochester, founded the original Hospital of St Catherine in 1316. It was established under the terms of Potyn's will to care for the poor, impotent and leprous inhabitants of the City. The current almshouses stand at the top of Star Hill but this was not the original building. At first, the hospital stood within Eastgate, next to the site of the Star Inn and here it remained until 1805 when a new hospital was erected on the Canterbury Road (now Maidstone Road) opposite Troy Town fields. This site was

I then went into Blue Town to the Blue Town Heritage Centre to see Jenny and Ian Hurkett, who are restoring the old Criterion Music Hall. The building was a three floor hotel until around 1917 when a German aeroplane dropped a bomb on it. The Hurketts have rebuilt two of the floors and there is a nice little tea room there as well. They hope to have everything up and running by the end of November. I wished them luck, though I am sure it will do well as it will be promoted on The Heritage Trail (see [http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/kent/hi/front\\_page/newsid\\_9032000/9032104.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/kent/hi/front_page/newsid_9032000/9032104.stm))

Nobody deserves more success than the people who have put Blue Town on the map. It is a marvel to walk around and revel in such people's expertise, though I have to say it reminds me of the staff and volunteers of MALSC - people who are always willing to go the extra mile.



*The Eastchurch Aviation Memorial*



*Inside the Criterion Music Hall*

*Pictures, Barry Cox*

## Friary Place, Strood, and St Mary's Hospital

Barry Cox

FOMA member Barry Cox is a retired sales executive who enjoys local history.

As a small child I lived in Friary Place Strood, at my grandparents' house (see *The Clock Tower*, Issue 29, February 2013, where Barry describes his experience of the 1953 flood). I knew by my grandmother's stories that the area was known as The Manor of Boncakes, named, I think, after the Boncake Family. In my childhood Friary Place was all unmade road at the end going into Newark Yard and my friend Keith lived right on the bend. We used to sit in his garden and make up ghost stories about the bodies buried beneath us from the old hospital.

Some decades later with my friend, the late Michael De-Caville, we embarked on our interest with the Knights Templar. We travelled all over Kent researching sites. One sunny day we were on Dover Heights taking photos at the Templar church where King John sold out England. Some idle conversation took place over lunch and I told Mick about Newark Hospital. His eyes lit up and he said that I should take him there. Mick was ill for a few days but finally we managed to get there and park on the car park which was there before Aldi built on it. I showed him the photos I took when the second dig was on and the ones that are around from the 1966 dig. We had to walk up and down as Mick tried to put images in his mind. I pointed out where I lived and where the stables were and where the old oast house was. Mick was like a dog with two tails and with a gleam in his eye he said, "I will draw a picture for you as it was, not one hundred percent accurate but amusing."



I hope you enjoy Mick's work and my reminiscences; he died not long after: RIP, Mick, sadly missed.

Above: circa 1946/7, Friary Place: Barry Cox (standing in foreground), from left to right, Barry's mother, grandmother and aunt, holding a cousin. Left: the drawing by Michael de Caville.



Mrs Thomas has also written about health and welfare in Rainham before the NHS (*Bygone Kent* Vol. 26 no. 7). Copies of *Bygone Kent* magazine are still available, please contact Jean Skilling for details (See contact details on page 46).

## The End of the School

At the end of the summer term in 1968 the pupils moved into the buildings vacated by the former Rainham Girls and Boys Secondary Schools in Orchard Street.<sup>7</sup> The school is now known as St Margaret's Church of England Primary School. After closing as a school the building in Station Road served as a community centre for Rainham until it was demolished in 1977 to make way for Rainham Shopping Centre.

## Staff biographies

As an enthusiastic family historian I could not resist trying to find out a little about some of the teaching staff mentioned in the log book.

### Lucy Rowlatt – Head of Infants when the log book began in 1870

Born in St Marylebone, London daughter of William, a butler, and Eleanor. The 1871 census for Rainham is the only one in which she appears. From 1881 to 1901 she is living in Langley Marsh, Buckinghamshire and presumably teaching at the school there. By 1911 she had retired and was living with her sisters in Church Street, Folkestone. She died in 1921.

### Emma Brice, Head of Infants school until 1916

Born in London on 6 April 1851 and baptised on 28 December 1851 at St George Bloomsbury, Middlesex, the daughter of James Smith a Publican of Kingsgate Street and Sophia.<sup>8</sup> She married Alfred the son of Solomon Brice on 19 May 1877 at St Margaret's Church, Rainham. The couple appear to have been childless.<sup>9</sup> Alfred died in 1908 probably at their home The Laurels, High Street, Rainham, aged only 60 and was buried in Grave 257 in Rainham Churchyard.<sup>10</sup> In the 1911 census Emma was living with a servant at 29 London Road, Rainham.<sup>11</sup> She died in 1917 aged 66 and was buried with her husband on 9 October 1917.<sup>12</sup>

### Adela Lilian Barlow Head of Lower Rainham School and from 1916 of the Infants School

Born in c.1884 in Waddington, Lincolnshire, the daughter of Robert, a wheelwright, and Emma Eliza Barlow. The census for 1901 indicates that she is a pupil teacher in Waddington living with her widowed mother Emma.<sup>13</sup> By 1911 she is an Elementary School Teacher boarding at the home of William Goodwin, a carter, in Hardcastle, Lincolnshire.<sup>14</sup> She must have returned to Rainham as she died there, unmarried, in 1960 aged 76, probably at her home 35 London Road, Rainham. She was buried in the old burial ground at Rainham Church on 12 October 1960.<sup>15</sup>

### Emilie M Charlesworth, Head of the Girls School

Mrs Charlesworth was head of the Girls School. She was born Emily Martha Verrall and baptised at St Mary's Church, Chatham on 29 March 1857, the daughter of Charles Verrall, a whitesmith, and Martha. In 1887 at Chatham<sup>16</sup> she married an engineer Frederic Aleck (Federico Alego) Charlesworth, the 24 year old son of Sampson William Charlesworth,

## Beginning School in 1913 by Helena Thomas

Sadly none of these records really told me what life was like when the Plum children attended the school. Luckily in 2003 Helena Thomas wrote about her early days at Rainham School in Bygone Kent.<sup>6</sup> Mrs Thomas, who still lives in Rainham, started school in 1913 so she was slightly younger than the Plum sisters.

“I clearly remember my first day. I was seated in about the middle of a long backless form behind a fixed ledge. For some reason the ledge was out of bounds and our hands were to be kept folded on our laps. School started with a hymn and a prayer.”

“Relief came when teacher told us she was going to give us some bricks to play with while she was busy. I felt bold enough to show my pleasure by clapping my hands under the ledge. I had to confess my crime and was told very sternly that I was not allowed to make such noises in school and as a punishment I would not be given a box of bricks.”

“At last we were sent out to play with the big girls. After playtime we sang nursery rhymes for a while and then were given the same boxes of bricks to learn to count”. As they progressed through the school they were given little bags of cowrie shells and learnt sums.

“Lessons followed a routine. We learnt to recognise lower case letters held up on large cards and progressed to spelling words not by sound but by name so a – t spells at and i – n spells in etc.” Mrs Thomas remembered her first book Macmillan's First Primer and the first story “It is an ox

I am on it

I am up on an ox.”

Their first writing lessons consisted of drawing lines and rings in sand trays before “progressing to slates using squeaky slate pencils to copy words.” In the upper class they were given copy books ruled with black and red lines. The first line was a perfectly written text such as, “I must be a good child,” which had to be copied in to the bottom of the page.

Great emphasis was put on learning multiplication tables, as it was when I was at school 40 years later. At the age of seven the children went to either the boys or girls schools. Before each session the children lined up in the playground and marched up the steps and round the classes to their places while reciting their tables. School days commenced with a hymn and the Lord's Prayer followed by the daily scripture lesson which “included learning by heart the Catechism, some psalms and long chapters from St John's Gospel.”

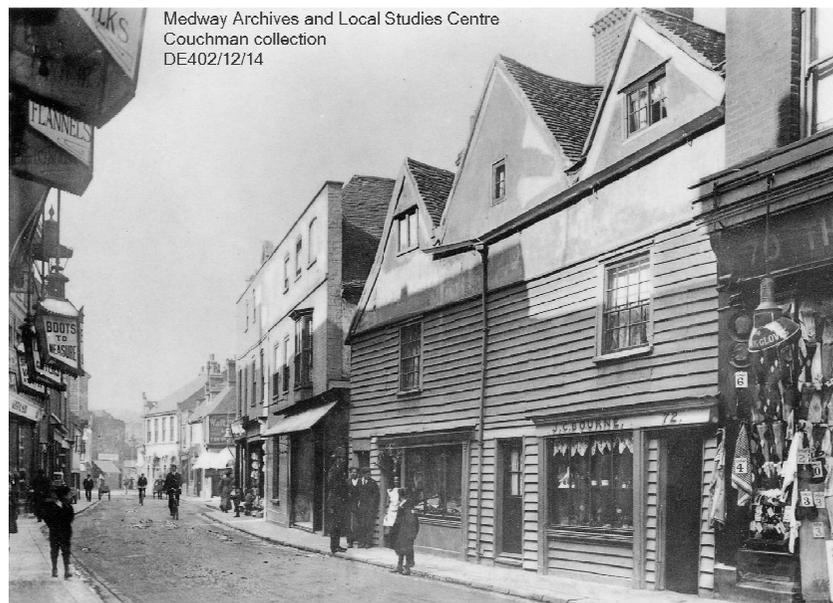
Mrs Thomas recalls that, although much time was devoted to the 3Rs, they also had periods of singing and poetry learning. The Upper Class learned to knit using rusty steel needles and much reused cotton twine, undoing their work at the end of each lesson, perhaps to avoid waste as the country was at war. As a contribution to the war effort the children were given squares of old sheeting and had to pull out the threads one by one to make a pile of lint. This, they were told, would be sent to hospitals to be used on the poor soldiers who were injured at the Front. “I accepted without question that it would only be used on wounds on the front and other treatment would be given on the back...There was a shortage of coal for heating during the war years and the children were allowed to clap their hands and walk round the classroom stamping their feet when the stove in the baby room, or open fire in the girls' room burned low.”

## Editor's Note

Further information on the dig which took place in 1967 can be found at: [www.kent.gov.uk/ExploringKentsPast/SingleResult.aspx?uid=MKE2378](http://www.kent.gov.uk/ExploringKentsPast/SingleResult.aspx?uid=MKE2378)

A synopsis of the Historic Environment Record (HER) is as follows:

'The 13th century plan of Newark Hospital, was recovered during excavations for the Kent Archaeological Society and the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works in 1967. Also referred to as St. Mary's Hospital, the excavation located the walls of the hall and chapel of the hospice. Documentary evidence suggests that the excavation was limited and there is the potential for survival of other buildings. Burials probably occurred inside the precinct, human remains already discovered may be related to this (see TQ 76 NW 262). Romano-British domestic deposits were also discovered during excavation.'

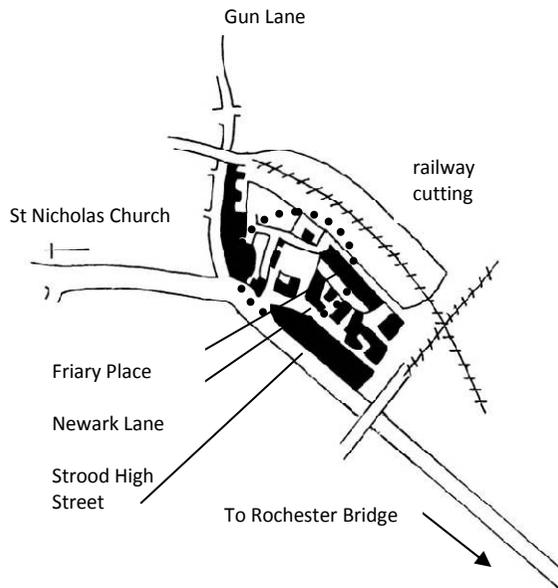


High Street (Watling Street, A2 trunk road), Strood.

Postcard photograph of section of High Street, Strood between Angel Corner (i.e. junction with North Street) and Station Road, showing left to right and clockwise, Cobb and Son, drapers, outfitters, house furnishers and china and earthenware dealers' shop (nos. 77-81), junction with Station Road, Angel Inn (no.98), range of shops including W. and R. Fletcher, butchers' shop (no.88), **entrance to Newark Yard**, range of shops, J.T. Smith, dairyman's shop (no.74), J.C. Bourne's dining rooms (no.72) and The Louvre Fancy Warehouse (later J. Smart, draper's shop) (no.70). Nos. 72-74 are part weather-boarded with gables and garments and price labels are displayed outside no.70. Street scene shows pedestrians, cyclists, hand cart, pavements, carriageway and very tall police constable in conversation with bystanders. c.1900 x c.1901 p.14.

The Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre, Couchman Collection; DE402/12/14.

Site of Newark/St. Mary's Hospital, Strood  
(approximate area of dig site circled in dots; drawing, Amanda Thomas)



Below: Newark Yard, Strood. Cutting from Chatham News comprising photograph of eleven members of Lower Medway Archaeological Research Group (LMARG) and pupils of Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School, Rochester, standing in trench around excavated foundations of the Hospital or Priory of the New Work (or Newark) of St. Mary, Newark Yard, Strood \*, all looking up at camera, subjects comprising, clockwise from left, Arthur Harrison, classics master at the Maths School, an unidentified boy from the Maths School, two unidentified girls, possibly sisters of Maths School pupils present, Peter J. Tester, teacher, Alec P. Detsicas of Tonbridge, teacher, two Maths School pupils, Miss Marion Beryl Webster, secretary of LMARG (later museum assistant, Eastgate House Museum and Guildhall Museum, High Street, Rochester).

David Bartram [?] of LMARG and Ron G. Foord, photographer and naturalist. 9 September 1966

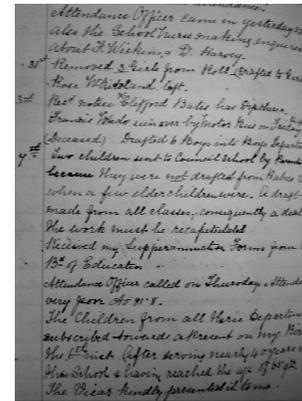
p.47. The excavation report for this dig was published in *Archaeologia Cantiana* lxxxiv 1969 pp.139-160; the finds excavated were deposited at the Guildhall Museum, Rochester.

Caption reads:  
'The remains of the ancient hospital off Strood high Street which was used by footsore pilgrims on their way to Canterbury hundreds of years ago. In the picture are members of the Lower Medway Archaeological Group and pupils of Rochester Mathematical School who are helping with the "dig".'



The Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre, Couchman Collection; DE402/12/47.

Log book for 7 April 1916 recording the retirement of Emma Brice.



Her replacement was Adela L Barlow. Sadly Mrs Brice did not enjoy a long retirement as the log book for 9 October 1917 records that the Mistress was absent 2 – 2.30pm for the funeral of Mrs Brice, late Head Mistress.

### Rainham School 1918-1920

On 15 May 1919 the children witnessed an event which many probably remembered for the rest of their lives. At 9.30 am they were taken to Rainham Station where they stood with local dignitaries while the train carrying the body of Nurse Edith Cavell passed through en route to London.

The children of the Council School (Solomon Road) assembled in their school yard.<sup>3</sup> The report in the *Chatham News* is headed "Nurse Cavell's Home Coming, the Martyred Lady's Association with Sittingbourne." The train carrying her body for burial in Norwich travelled from Dover en route for London and a ceremony in Westminster Abbey. As the train approached Sittingbourne at 9.30 hundreds of school children, their teachers, school managers and many leading townsmen stood to attention until the train was out of sight whilst the men and boys removed their headgear. Nurse Cavell's sister Florence was Matron at Sittingbourne Hospital for many years. The schools were closed for the rest of the day.

A similar demonstration took place at Rainham. "The children of both Sittingbourne and Rainham will have cause to remember this day, and will no doubt learn the lesson of Nurse Cavell, who counted it an honour to die for her country."<sup>4</sup> Helena Thomas in her memories recalled this nearly 90 years later. Some six weeks later, on 8 July, the children were once again taken to the station, this time to stand while the train carrying the body of Captain Fryatt came through. Charles Algernon Fryatt (1872-1916) was a Merchant Navy Captain who was executed by the Germans for attempting to ram a U-Boat in 1915. His ship *SS Brussels* was captured off the Netherlands in 1916. Captain Fryatt was court marshalled and sentenced to death, although he was a civilian non-combatant. In 1919 his body was exhumed and returned for burial in England. His funeral was held in St Paul's Cathedral and he was buried in Dovercourt, Essex.<sup>5</sup> There is no mention of this in the local newspaper nor have I been able to find any connection with Rainham.

The children had a half day holiday on 18 July 1919 following a special assembly held on the instruction of KEC at which they were given a short address on *Peace*. On their return to school after their summer break they were addressed on the subject of *Armistice Day*, and on 11 November at 11 am there was a silence as tribute to the dead.

The following year, 1920, there is a more detailed account of Armistice Day. After recreation at 10.45 the children had an assembly in the hall. After a hymn and prayer there was the "Great Silence" at 11 o'clock, followed by the National Anthem, saluting the flag and the march past the flag.

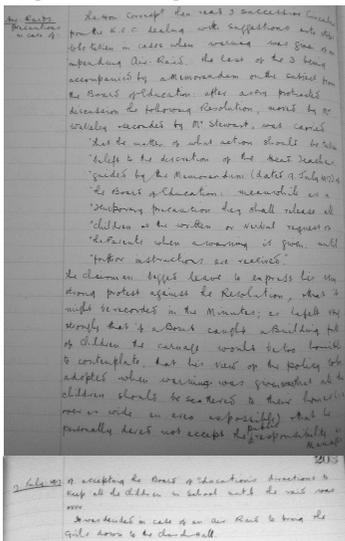
that could be ordered by schools and the abolition of school prizes although the presentation of medals for good attendance appears to have continued. National Savings groups were set up in schools and the children encouraged to collect waste paper for salvage, blackberries for jam and horse chestnuts to be used "as a substitute for grain in certain industrial processes."<sup>2</sup>

The children of Rainham National School collected waste paper but there is no reference to the collection of blackberries or horse chestnuts. The log book makes it clear that they were encouraged to help the war effort. "75 Empire Certificates" were sold on Empire Day 1915 and a rummage sale was held, 9s 6d (47.5p) was sent to the "Overseas Club." Flags were sold and 6s (30p) was "sent to the French Fund in London" and in 1916 the children expressed a wish that the prize fund for books should be given to a war charity.

An entry in the log book for 15 February 1917 reads, "Owing to the exploding of a mine at Fort Darland the children were sent out into the playground from 11.15 to 11.45am." I have found no reference to this explosion in the local newspapers or on-line.

The first day light bombing raid by Gotha planes was on 25 May 1917 with 95 fatalities mainly in Folkestone; 195 people were injured. There was a raid on Sheerness on 5 June and air raids must have been the cause of much concern to those in charge. The children were sent home early on 14 June 1917 as notice had been received of an air raid and attendance was poor on the morning of 4 July as a warning had been received at about 8 am of an approaching air raid.

In July 1917 new instructions were issued about the action to take in the event of an air raid. KEC directed that children should be kept in school, unless parents requested otherwise, until a raid was over. The Chairman disagreed, stating that he felt very strongly that if a bomb caught a building full of children the carnage would be too horrible to contemplate and that all children should be scattered to their homes over as wide an area as possible.



There is no mention of the bombing of the Drill Hall in September 1917. Finally on 29 November 1918 the managers decided, "In view of the happy cessation of hostilities the children could have their breaking up party treats." During the war, on 7 April 1916, the Head Teacher of the Infants' School, Mrs Emma Brice, made her last entry in the log book: "The children from all three departments subscribed towards a present on my birthday the 6<sup>th</sup> instant after serving nearly 40 years in this school and having reached the age of 65 years. The Vicar kindly presented it to me. Remained in school during this week as the teaching staff is not settled."

*The minutes of 17 July 1917 showing disagreement with KEC's ruling on action to be taken in the event of an air raid. P296/25/10.*



*A roof truss from the hospital, salvaged and photographed here in Eastgate House; The Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre.*

The following is taken from British History Online, [www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=62879](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=62879), and from Edward Hasted's *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent: Volume 3*, (1797), pp. 546-560:

'Boncakes, alias NEWARK, is a manor here, which had owners of the name of Boncake as early as the reign of king John [sic], when Elyas, prior of Rochester, put an end to a suit between that convent and Matthew de Bigstrobe, for ten marcs sterling, and redeemed the service, which was owing from the sacristy on the six principal festivals, to William Boncake and his heirs, for the land of Pinendence in Strodes, parcel of this manor.

In the 20th year of king Edward III. this manor seems to have been divided among several owners, for at the making the Black Prince a knight that year, the master of the Newark or hospital of Stroud, the heirs of Richard Gromyn, John, the son of William Prior, of Stroud, and the heirs of Simon de Cockeford paid respective aid for one quarter of a knight's fee, which the said master, Robert Frankelyn and Nicholas de Cokesford before held in Stroud of Simon de Chellesfelde, and he of Jeffry de Scoland, and he of the earl of Leicester.

In the 43d year of king Edward III. James Peckham released to Richard Havekyn, of Stroud, the third part of a certain court, called Frankelyne's-court, most probably from the before mentioned Robert Frankelyn, in Stroud, together with all rents, suits of court, services, and appurtenances, arising from certain tenements in Stroud and Frindsbury, which court and rents once belonged to Hamon Baker, of Stroud.

The manor of Boncakes, together with the manor of HAWKINS in this parish, afterwards became part of the possessions of the hospital of Stroud, frequently styled Newark, whence the former acquired the addition of that name to its ancient one of Boncakes. They continued with the hospital till it was, together with all its lands and revenues, surrendered, with the king's licence, in the 31st year of king Henry VIII. to the prior and convent of Rochester, where these manors staid but a few months; for next year that priory was also dissolved and surrendered, with the possessions belonging to it, into the king's hands; all which were confirmed to him, and his heirs, by the act of that year; after which the king, by his dotation charter, in his 33d year, settled, among other premises, the late hospital of Stroud, and all the lands and possessions late belonging to it, among which were these manors of Boncakes, alias Newark, and of Hawkins, on his new erected dean and chapter of Rochester, where they now remain. A court baron is held by the dean and chapter for the manor of Boncakes.'

## My Little Dormouse

Barbara Marchant



FOMA member and local historian Barbara Marchant was the founding member of the Strood Heritage Society, set up to promote the history and interests of the people of Strood. Barbara was born in Kent, and although she and her husband have now retired to Somerset, Strood, the Medway Towns and Kent are still close to her heart.

Barbara's previous articles in *The Clock Tower* include *A Stroll through Strood*, Issue 4, November 2006, and *Strood's Famous Botanist - Anne Pratt*, Issue 5, February 2007.

## Part Two

Jessamine Cottage stood in a green lane on a hill with plenty of wild flowers and large clumps of ferns in the hedges. The white blossoms of the jessamine were just coming out and would soon give off their sweet scent. Long sprays of their dark-green leaves were clambering up to the very roof where among the tiles were large patches of yellow stonecrop which looked so rich a yellow colour that country people called it *golden moss*. Throughout the book there are, as one would expect, plenty of mentions of flower names. After a quick meal of broiled ham with a "pretty little bantam's egg for me," they were soon on their way with Mr. Woolley to the hayfield which lay behind the house. There two men were mowing the grass with long sharp scythes, and four women wearing large sunbonnets for shade, were tossing the grass as it was cut down, shaking off the dew.

The next morning Nellie was told that Mary's father had brought her something out of the wood as a present and she had to try and guess what it was. She asked if it were alive and has several guesses. She is eventually told it is a little animal, "which you have not seen or heard of." It is a dormouse. Mr. Woolley was seated at the table eating his porridge and drinking his coffee and beside him on the table was an old box without a lid with a piece of thin muslin over the top. He had caught the dormouse the evening before, hidden under a mass of leaves in the wood. "There are not many of them about here," he told her, and they are very shy. In one corner of the box there was some moss, and among this moss sat the pretty little dormouse which was to be my pet and treasure for many months to come.

Dormice are shy and sensitive animals and I would think even less common now than then, and certainly these days you would not be allowed to capture one and keep it as a pet. I have been told that you now have to have a licence to handle them, but in the early Nineteenth Century there would not have been such controls, and if Mr. Woolley knew of a shop in the town where a proper dormouse cage could be purchased, perhaps keeping one as a pet was not so uncommon.

## Rainham Church of England Primary School

Jean Skilling



Jean moved to Gillingham at the age of four and has lived in Medway ever since. On leaving school she went to work for Kent County Council at Maidstone where she qualified as an accountant. After time as a full time mother she worked at Mid Kent College before returning to Kent County Council. Since taking early retirement in 2004 she has pursued her interest in family history and has begun to take an interest in the history of Rainham where she spent her childhood. She is Treasurer of FOMA, Kent Family History Society and the Medway Heritage Centre Trust.

## Part Three

### Rainham School 1914-1918

I was particularly keen to learn about the impact of the war on the school. There are 99 names on the war memorial outside Rainham Church and I expected to find references to past pupils who had been killed during the hostilities, but found none. There are few references to the war in the manager's minutes and the log book suggests that there was little disruption to normal school life. The first mention of the war in the managers' minutes was on 17 November 1914 when "a circular and general instructions from the committee on matters arising from the war was read."

On 8 December 1914 the managers decided to meet with the head teachers and decide what action should be taken in the event of an air raid. Of more interest to the children was a decision that they would not make the annual collection for the children's Christmas breaking up treats and parties. The minutes for the meeting on 2 March 1915 state "Immediately upon receipt of an alarm the schools should be emptied with all speed and the children hastened home. Infants should not be kept even to put their gear on. Zeppelin raids began in 1915, with bombs dropped on Ramsgate and Dover in May of that year."

In 1915 the managers were responsible for issuing permits for the employment of children. Permits could be issued for "agriculture only not to exceed 48 hours per week and were only permitted in places where there was an acute shortage of agricultural labour." The managers were obviously concerned about the exploitation of the children as Mr Filmer was refused a licence for his son as there was not a shortage of labour locally. In June 1915 requests were refused from two boys, Chambers and Long, for licences for agricultural work viz cherry picking as "cherry picking was too dangerous for children of either sex."

In 1916 KEC, as a result of calls by the Government Committee on Public Retrenchment, introduced economies which included the reduction of the variety of equipment and stores

in stating he was born in 1828, but not till November. We may argue that Wheeler was splitting hairs over a few months, but he was technically correct! The Board seemed to be more interested in establishing that they were feeding him properly than concern about their duty of care.

As Wheeler contends, 'the *military authorities* and the executive of the poor-law' took 'advantage of the helplessness and ignorance of an orphan child who has as yet scarcely looked abroad into the world, who is impatient of the restraint of a poor-law union and dazzled with the tinsel prospect of a soldier's life.' He went further and asked, 'Is it the intention of the legislation, or of the public, that such unions and workhouses should in this way be made wholesale recruiting establishments for the army, and their operations be carried on at the expense of the ratepayers?' The allure of the life as a drummer boy was probably appealing to James Potter and an escape from the drudgery of the workhouse.

Susannah, his eldest sister, visited James in the workhouse and ensured he had the right level of victuals. At some point James did manage to leave the army and was by 1851 working as a blacksmith with his brother Edward in Essex. In 1854 James married Sarah Ann Saunders in East London; a young woman he met while working in Aldham, Essex. On the 1861 Census he was resident in Southwark as a labourer with his wife and children, Elizabeth and James. After much searching the family was finally located on the 1871 Census, with James recorded as Joseph, but still in Southwark as a labourer. By this time the family has been added to, for Benjamin and Henry had been born in the interim. James died in 1873 at Southwark aged about 45. He did make a life for himself outside the army and had family support from his sister and brother when it mattered most.

Wheeler's campaign was effective. He realised the value of exploiting the media, even in those days, and ensured his report was published in local newspapers as far afield as Cornwall, Lancashire, Yorkshire and Norfolk. *The Bury and Norwich Post* of 28<sup>th</sup> February 1844 published Wheeler's reply to an article in the *Chelmsford Chronicle* about his investigation into two under age cases of pauper enlistment from that town's workhouse, which the local paper had refused to print. Interestingly there is no similar report in the *Rochester Gazette*, yet Wheeler highlighted a local case. Presumably the members of the Board of Guardians were influential people in the community and prevented the local press publishing the case. The families' petition also called for an inquiry into the practice of pauper enlistment, which was raised in the House of Lords. This practice seems to have waned following the adverse publicity it received.



*Strood Workhouse, from the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre Local Studies Collection.*

#### Sources

Strood workhouse minutes 1844; Strood workhouse letter-book 1844; *British Friend* 1844; British Library C19 Newspaper Archive; *The Bury and Norwich Post* 1844; *Herald of Peace* 1870; Frindsbury Wesleyan Baptisms; Frindsbury All Saints burials; Strood St Nicholas Baptisms and Burials; Chatham St Mary's Marriages; Census 1841-1871; www.freeBMD; www.ancestrylibrary.com; *Hansard* 1844.

Sometimes when Mary was helping her mother in the house Nellie used to stroll alone in the cottage garden, but there was one spot to which she never went - it was at the end of the garden, where on a long wooden stool there were four beehives...she thought the bees might sting her. One morning Mr. Woolley told his wife to be prepared as he thought the bees would swarm very shortly. A hive of bees is very valuable and if, when they are turned out of an old hive, they were not soon put in another, they might fly away for miles or get on the roof of a house or the top of a tall tree and be lost. Mary and Nellie watched from the bedroom window as Mrs. Woolley appeared with a veil tied over her face and they soon heard a tinkling noise as she struck a large key against a fire shovel.

This was, and still is, believed to keep bees from flying away. Mr. Woolley then dressed the hive, rubbing it with the leaves from the tops of broad beans, the scent of which is thought to be attractive to bees. Then he put the new hive near the old ones but it must have been about an hour before they settled in to a swarm. He held the new hive under the bough where the bees had collected and shook the bough; the whole mass were soon safely in. The hive was settled on the ground and covered with the green leaves. By the time it was dark the bees had settled in to their new home and he lifted the hive gently back on to the stool beside the old hives.

A friend who is a bee keeper\* has confirmed some of the ways of dealing with bees when they swarm. When bees are exposed to a loud noise like thunder they cluster and settle within 30 metres of the hive; the same methods of collecting swarms are practised today. Dressing the hives with bean tops probably came from the bee keeper observing bees enjoying feeding on such plants, but today's expert didn't think it would necessarily encourage them to set up home.

The visit to Jessamine Cottage passed very quickly and after four days Mary and Nellie set off for home. Nellie wanted to stay longer but after all her own home was really the best and dearest place on earth. Before they left, Mary was sent off at once to get a proper dormouse cage. It had wires all round and two rooms with a whirligig for exercise. Later on in the book Nellie lost her dormouse. It didn't run away, but merely sought out a quiet spot on the top of a heavy window curtain. The mouse remained close to her until its death and Nellie's mother said she would get her another, but as she had been in better health and went daily for a few hours to school, she never did have another one.

As you would expect in a book written by Anne Pratt the description of the plants both wild and garden and the countryside around is set out in exacting detail. However, what makes this more than just a book about flowers is the portrait of life in Chatham in the early nineteenth century.

*\*Grateful thanks for the information on bees and beekeeping are due to Tony Richards of Blue Anchor, Somerset.*

## Enlistment of Pauper Children for the Army

Dr. Catharina Clement



In 2005, Catharina completed a BA in history at Canterbury Christchurch University, and in 2013 a PhD in local history entitled Political and Religious Reactions in the Medway Towns of Rochester and Chatham during the English Revolution, 1640-1660. She has been involved in various local history groups and projects such as FOMA, CDHS, and the Victoria County History EPE projects. She won the 2009 Friends Historical Society Award resulting in a paper on Medway Quakerism 1655-1918 delivered at the Institute for Historical Research and later this year at the Friends Library in London. Currently Catharina works for MALSC.

### Part Two

Back to the story of pauper enlistment recounted in 1844. Frederic Wheeler was always meticulous in presenting evidence and for this article picked out two case studies. The one of interest to us is that of young James Potter, an inmate of Strood Union Workhouse. James Potter was born to Edward Potter, a wheelwright, and Susanna Dimond. His parents married at Chatham in 1820 and produced six children. The first four children, Susannah (1821), Edward (1822), Sarah Ann (1824) and Thomas John (1826), were all baptised in St Nicholas, Strood. Between then and the birth of James the family became Methodists, baptising him and his younger brother David (1831) in the Wesleyan chapel. This family lived in Frindsbury, but according to later census records James' actual birth place was Higham. Sadly his father died in 1832 and his mother in 1833; Thomas had already departed this life in 1830. However, five of the siblings survived their parents. James entered the workhouse in 1836, but who cared for him and the others between 1833 and 1836? The 1841 census records James as the only family inmate of the Strood workhouse at that time aged 10. Whether any of the other children entered the workhouse cannot be established.



Frederic Wheeler; reproduced with permission of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain.

Wheeler is often accused of bandying names and figures about to justify his stance. However, the following two versions of what happened to James Potter demonstrate that whilst he could be very pedantic he was nevertheless correct. First, Wheeler's account is given and then the report of the workhouse to the Poor Law Commissioners. A third source, a petition to the House of Lords by James Potter's relations on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1844, has sadly not survived, but is recorded as presented in *Hansard*:

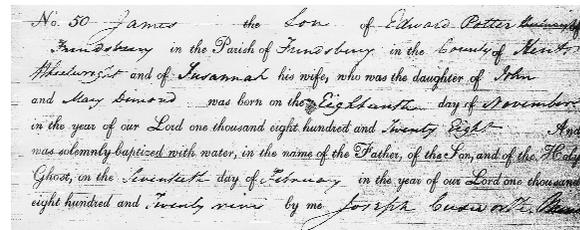
'James Potter, as an orphan inmate of the North Aylesford Union, was enlisted in the summer of 1842 in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Buffs, as having attained "the prescribed age of fourteen years," required by the regulations of the Horse Guards, but appearing by the register of baptism as well as the union register, as under that age. The relations state that they were not consulted in this

matter; that they knew nothing of the proceedings until it was completed; that they are much dissatisfied therewith, and were, in fact, concerting measures for placing out the youth in some situation on attaining a proper age [i.e. an apprenticeship at 14]. In a memorial to the Commander-in-Chief, embodying the above allegations, they ask for the discharge of the youth, stating it also to be his wish to be released. The reply authorises his discharge on payment of £20, and "on no other condition." Application was made to the Guardians of the Union, who reply that they can render no assistance in the case; and the boy consequently remains in the military service.'

The workhouse minutes for April 1844 headed 'Workhouse Reply to Petition of James Potters' family' records: 'The clerk laid before the Board a letter from the Poor Law Commissioners enclosing a copy of a petition to the House of Lords relative to James Potter who enlisted from the North Aylesford Union Workhouse into the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Foot and requesting to be furnished with an explanation of the circumstances under which the boy enlisted.

The Board having enquired into the circumstances it appears that the boy James Potter previous to the formation of this Union had been maintained in the Workhouse of the parish of Strood and at the time of his admission into the Union House in 1836 his age was supposed to be about 6 years; -the following entry appears in this admission and discharge book for the Quarter June to September 1841 viz:- "This Boys age is inaccurate, according to his sister's statement it appears he was born in 1828" the Board in consequence ordered him to be placed on the increased diet allowed to inmates who had attained the age of 13 years;- this would, of course make the age of the boy at the time of his enlistment to be 14 years;- the sister who made this statement is one of the Petitioners:-the Boy enlisted at his own request having stated he would abscond unless permitted to do so; -and that the only relation of Potter's who called at the Workhouse to see him was his sister, one of the Petitioners, and she did not call subsequently to July 1841 when the alteration of the diet took place;- this Board has no knowledge of Potter's having other relations in the neighbourhood and allowed him to follow the best of his inclination.'

A copy of this report went to the Poor Law Commissioners.



Frindsbury Wesleyan baptism register 1817-1837.

From further correspondence in the Strood Union letter-book for April 1844 it is obvious the Poor Law Commissioners were not entirely satisfied with Mr Smith's report and were seeking proof of the boy's age. A letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> April stated they could not get hold of the baptismal certificate straight away as Frederic Wheeler was still at the Registrar's Office in London obtaining a copy of the original. The Board of Guardians did not realise that this vital document, obtained and produced by Wheeler the following day for them to send to the Commissioners, drove a coach and horses through their argument that James Potter was fourteen in the summer of 1842. The Frindsbury Wesleyan Baptist entry for James Potter is shown below. His sister was correct