



Find out who volunteered to fight in the Great War from your street

SOLDIERS' STORIES ON OUR STREETS

WW1 Centenary Commemorative Project

Open days at Medway Archives Centre
32 Bryant Road, Strood, Kent, ME2 3EP

- Wednesday, 31 October • Saturday, 3 November
 - Tuesday, 20 November • Saturday, 24 November
- All 9.30am to 12.30pm

Free open day minibus service

More information: visitmedway.org/soldiers-stories-on-our-streets

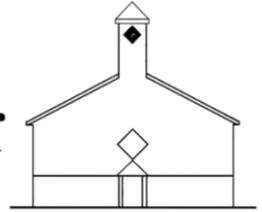
1918 2018
MEDWAY REMEMBERS



If undelivered, please return to:
Medway Archives Office, c/o Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent,
ME4 4TR.



The Clock Tower



Issue Number 52: November 2018
£2.00; free to members

The Friends of Medway Archives
Excepted Charity registration number XR92894

Men of the Medway Towns: The Ultimate Sacrifice, 1918-1919



FOMA commemorates. More inside.

Front Cover: Men of the Medway Towns: The Ultimate Sacrifice, 1918-1919

This wonderful FOMA exhibition runs from Thursday 2 August until Saturday 1 December 2018.

Pictured in front of the display boards in the foyer of the Medway Archives Centre is (left), FOMA Committee Member, Tessa Towner and FOMA Chairman, Elaine Gardner. Elaine and Tessa created the exhibition together, the fifth and last one they have collaborated on to commemorate the centenary of World War One.

World War One Items Reunited by The Clock Tower



From left to right: Elaine Gardner, Valerie Tresadern, and Jennifer King at the *Men of the Medway Towns: The Ultimate Sacrifice* exhibition at the Medway Archives Centre (MAC).

Jennifer contacted Elaine when she read about her great uncle, Ernest Franks and his World War One story in an online issue of *The Clock Tower*. Thanks to that discovery she was reunited with some precious family items. Read the full story on page 6.

Soldiers' Stories on Our Streets



As part of the outreach programme for the *Soldiers' Stories on our Streets* joint project between FOMA and Medway Council, local children have been finding out more about the First World War and how it impacted on the places where they live. See page 12.



Above: *The Two Tommies* (both boys are actually called Tommy) at Swingate Primary School, Chatham.

Left: Tommy, and Poppy (again, their real names) at Swingate Primary School.



Jeremy Clarke Medway Heritage Team's Education Officer, runs a session with children at Barnsole Primary School in Gillingham.

The Committee

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Professor Sir Robert Worcester KBE DL



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Chairman's Letter

Elaine Gardner



The clocks going back and the cold weather has made us all realise that winter is on the way and Christmas just around the corner.

FOMA and MAC have been busy with the last of the projects and events to commemorate the centenary of the World War One armistice. Medway's Heritage Development Officer, Abby Found has been busy working on the *Soldiers' Stories on our Streets* and the *Lost Helmet* projects (see pages 12 to 15 and the front and back covers). I have been out and about with Abby and Jeremy Clarke, the Guildhall Museum's Education Officer, visiting a number of primary schools in the past couple of weeks telling them about the war and the commemoration – and, of course, our projects. It has been fascinating to see how involved, informed and interested the students are and it is great that history is being handed on to the next generations. For me it was my grandfather who fought in WWI, but for them it was their great great grandfathers who were involved. Students have told me how their grandmothers have been telling them about their grandfathers, which really does put the passage of time into some perspective. The work being produced has been outstanding in many cases too. There are also opportunities for adults to get involved with the *Soldiers' Stories on our Streets* project with events on at Medway Archives Centre throughout November. Abby will be giving a talk for FOMA members when the project finishes and we hope it will lead to greater awareness of how Medway men were involved in WWI. In addition all the new information we glean will be added to our online FOMA De Caville Index (<http://foma-lsc.org/wwi/index.html>).

I am excited to tell you that *The Clock Tower* has been instrumental in reuniting some First World War artefacts belonging to Ernest Franks with his great niece (see opposite). Items also included family records she had assumed had long since been thrown out. You can read about this wonderful story on page 6.

At the end of October we held an excellent and well attended quiz and raised £330 for Archive funds. If you haven't been to one of our quiz nights do come to one next year.

At the last FOMA Committee Meeting on 7 November, we heard that Simon Lace (see page 4) has decided to retire from the committee. We are indebted to Simon for all his hard work and support. In addition, our Secretary, Odette Buchanan has announced that she will be retiring next year at the 2019 AGM. Odette has been on the committee for many years and we thank her for the enormous amount of work she has done. What are we going to do without her? Thankfully both Odette and Simon will remain FOMA Members.

In the meantime, enjoy this last edition of *The Clock Tower* for 2018 ... while I enjoy the sunshine with my brother in Australia!

Secretary's Report

Odette Buchanan



Hullo all! I was going to bang on about how lovely this autumn had been but I'm sitting here now with frozen feet 'cos I need to find me slippers – I've not worn them, nor taken any paracetamol since early July; the weather has been so lovely and warm that all my arthritis pains disappeared! What a shock today was! Do hope your heating is working as well as mine is.

Never mind the cold, after the huge success of the Quiz in October (see Elaine Gardner's report). As usual, thanks must go to Elaine for not only devising such challenging questions but also buying and organizing the food for the interval. The lovely big profit went a long way to paying for some documents Bob Ratcliffe sourced last month for MAC (see page 8) All the money we make at our FOMA events go to very good use for MAC so do watch out for details of other events coming up on page 36.

Another successful event was FOMA's participation in the NET exhibition at Chatham Historic Dockyard on 2 October. The *NET*, for those who don't live in Medway, is a free magazine that appears each month with lists of all sorts of events and information not only of societies and volunteer groups around Medway but also details of many trades people. This is really handy if you're looking for plumbers, painters, gardeners, etc. Well, FOMA had a stall and we not only picked up a few new members but what we found especially useful was networking (excuse the pun) with all the other societies and volunteer groups attending – we made some very useful contacts and it was well worth attending. Our thanks to all those who manned our stall.

Not all of you will know that our Committee Member Bob Ratcliffe has been quite poorly and is still not very well. We keep him up to date with what is going on and I know you will want to join with the committee in wishing him well soon!

That in turn reminds me that the committee is a small but dedicated band of volunteers. However, I must emphasise the word *SMALL* and it is becoming smaller, as you will have seen in Elaine Gardner's letter on the previous page. Working on the theory that *many hands make light work* it would be so helpful if some of you out there could spare a few hours a month to join us. We meet once every other month for two hours at the Archives to sort out events, problems, how we can help MAC, etc.

About The Clock Tower

The Clock Tower is the quarterly journal produced and published by the Friends of Medway Archives (FOMA), www.foma-lsc.org/index.html.

Editorial deadlines

Please note, the deadline is the **last** Monday (or Tuesday when a Bank Holiday occurs) of January, April, July and October. Articles, letters, photos and any information to be considered for inclusion in the journal must be received before this date by the Editor, Mrs Amanda Thomas, 72 Crabtree Lane, Harpenden, AL5 5NS, Hertfordshire; amanda@ajthomas.com.

The copy deadline for Issue 53 of *The Clock Tower* is Monday 28 January 2019, with publication on Wednesday 20 February 2019.

Publication date

The fourth Wednesday following the editorial deadline.

The Clock Tower is printed by Barkers Litho, Unit 18 Castle View Business Centre, Gas House Road, Rochester, Kent, ME1 1PB; telephone: 01634 829048, email: info@barkerslitho.co.uk

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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

The Clock Tower Index (<http://foma-lsc.org/journal.html>) is updated by Nic Nicholas.

Further Information

Further information on the Medway Archives Centre can be obtained on the MAC website <https://cityark.medway.gov.uk/> or by writing to Medway Archives Office, c/o Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4TR. Telephone +44 (0)1634 332714; fax +44 (0)1634 297060; email: malsc@medway.gov.uk

General enquiries about the Friends can be obtained from the Secretary, Odette Buchanan: 72 Jersey Road, Rochester, ME2 3PE. Telephone: 01634 718231; email: odette_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk

Membership enquiries should be directed to the Membership Secretary, Betty Cole, 98 The Wharf, Dock Head Road, Chatham ME4 4ZS, Kent. Telephone: 01634 892976; email: betty-cole@outlook.com

Events

July – December 21 2018

2018 Marks the centenary of the Armistice which brought the First World War to an end. We will be marking the anniversary with a major exhibition and community-based project focusing on the Sapper Victoria Crosses of the First World War. Supported by a grant of £10,000 from The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), VC: For Valour.

The Bridge Study Centre

Bridging has been an essential part of warfare for thousands of years. In this gallery the full history of military bridging is explored. Hands on activities from our Sapper Workshop and dressing up are also available for kids.

Opening hours: Tuesday – Sunday 10.00am to 5.00pm, last entry 4.00 pm; Bank Holidays: 10.00 am to 5.00pm, last entry 4.00 pm; CLOSED MONDAYS. Admission: adult – £8.40, child (Aged 5-16) – £5.70, concessions – £5.70, family ticket (2 adults and 2 children) – £22.50; children under 5: free.



Blue Town Heritage Centre, The Criterion Music Hall and Cinema

www.thecriterionbluetown.co.uk/#!/criterion-music-hall/cb3i

The present Heritage Centre and café are on the site of two earlier establishments. Originally the New Inn in 1868, the site became The Royal Oxford Music Hall. The following year the building, situated a few doors down from the court house, became The Criterion public house, which included to the rear a music hall

called The Palace of Varieties. This offered "rational amusement for all classes" including, in April 1876, a one armed juggler! In 1879 the earlier building was replaced with a brick built one. The Heritage Centre is packed with items, memorabilia and artefacts, including an upstairs area dedicated to HMS *Victory*.

Open Tuesdays to Saturdays 10am - 3pm and for events. Entrance £2.00 and includes entrance to the Aviation annexe at Eastchurch. Entrance is free to Friends. To become a Friend costs just £5.00 a year, for this you receive information before it goes onto the website and invites to special Friends-only events, plus a regular newsletter.

Today the main space at the centre is occupied by the Criterion Music Hall, one of just a few remaining authentic Music Hall buildings, lovingly restored by Jenny and Ian Hurkett and their unbeatable team of volunteers. The Criterion stages professional Victorian style music hall shows (three seasons a year), cinema every Friday and theatre and live music shows; it is also available for private hire. Booking on 01795 662981 or by visiting the website: <http://www.thecriterionbluetown.co.uk/#!/criterion-music-hall/cb3i>

An added bonus is that Elaine always bakes beautiful cakes for us to have with our tea and coffee – there's an offer you can't refuse, especially those who are regulars at the talks – you know what lovely cakes they are! We always have fun and we get a lot done in a short space of time. Please contact me if you want to join – see page 46 for details.

Don't forget to participate in the myriad of exciting things that are going on with regard to the centenary commemorations for the end of World War One. The FOMA exhibition, *Men of the Medway Towns: The Ultimate Sacrifice, 1918-1919*, will be going on until 1 December in the foyer at MAC. In the spring Medway Heritage Development Officer, Abby Found will be reporting back to us on the progress of FOMA's joint project with Medway Council, *Soldiers' Stories on our Streets*. An update can also be seen on pages 12 to 15.

Looking towards 2019, have you any anecdotes or family stories re the awful 'flu pandemic of 1919? Please let myself or Amanda Thomas know for future talks, articles, etc. – see page 46 for contact details.

Finally, KEEP WARM and have a Happy Christmas and healthy New Year!



Simon Lace, who has retired from the FOMA Committee. Simon is the Chapter Clerk and Executive Director at Rochester Cathedral.



**A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A
HAPPY NEW YEAR
FROM EVERYONE AT FOMA!**



World War One Items Reunited by The Clock Tower

Elaine Gardner



Twelve years ago, having been asked by my neighbour Dawn, who was terminally ill, to be her executor I had no idea what I would find or just how long it would take to return family memories to the next of kin!

Dawn had always led me to believe that since her mother Phyllis had died she lived alone and had just couple of cousins. It was only a couple of weeks before she died, when I asked if there were family I should be notifying that she mentioned a sister, Rita, with whom she no longer had any contact.

Dawn had moved into her house back in 1938 with her parents and younger sister. It was therefore no surprise that when I was later clearing the house, in addition to family birth, marriage and death certificates I should come across many photographs and letters. These included one from Rita, written after their mother had died, requesting the china plate with her picture on it that was then hanging over the mantelpiece. When there was no response from Dawn, she assumed this and everything else had been thrown out. I also found numerous items relating to a man called Ernest Franks and his death in World War One; I felt that all these things should be passed on to Dawn's sister Rita. It transpired that Ernest had been Phyllis's older brother and so she had cherished his belongings. I recently learnt that she had carried the letter informing the family of his death in her handbag for the rest of her life.

Twelve years were to pass and the family mementoes remained in a suitcase on top of my wardrobe – just in case. Since neither cousin knew where Rita or her two grown up children were living I decided to resort to the local press. FOMA Member Peter Cook kindly wrote an article in his *Memories* page in the *Medway Messenger* to see if anyone knew of Ernest Franks' descendants. This produced a lady, Valerie Tresadern, whose mother was a cousin to Ernest, but no direct family. I researched Ernest's WWI story at the Royal Engineers Museum and his items have featured in WWI talks and exhibitions during the 2014-18 commemoration events, including the current 1918 one at the Medway Archives, with a promise that I would give them to Valerie if no other family turned up.

Imagine my total surprise, amazement and delight therefore when I opened my emails about six weeks ago to find a message from Jennifer King saying that she had

December

Film Night: Orphee

Tuesday 11 December 7.30pm-10.00pm Doors open at 6.45pm for refreshments and to view galleries and shop.

£6.50adults £4.00 concessions

Cocteau's spellbinding update of the Greek Orpheus myth sees a guilty poet journey to the Underworld in search of his dead wife, only to fall in love with a mysterious black-clad princess.

Drop-in family activities

Thursday 20 & Friday 21 December 11.45am-4.00pm

£2 per child or free with a family day ticket

Pop into the museum and have a day of family fun! Inspired by our miniature prayer book, we will be shrinking down to explore a world of miniatures. What will you create?

January

We are looking forward to an exciting programme of events in 2019, filled with creative workshops, talks, exhibitions and family activities. Our programme runs from January – June so do keep an eye on our website for more information as well as our Jan-Jun leaflet.

A highlight for the new year:

We have an exciting special display running from January-March by ceramicist Claudia Clare, who uses ceramics to tell contemporary social stories. We will be displaying her work 'Travelling West' which shares the experiences of a Kurdish refugee travelling from Iran to the United Kingdom.



The latest information can be found at:
www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/

The Royal Engineers Museum, Library and Archive

Prince Arthur Road, Gillingham, Kent, ME4 4UG

SEE THE WEBSITE www.re-museum.co.uk **FOR FURTHER DETAILS.**

The Royal Engineers Museum is Kent's largest military museum, with a designated collection of historical and international importance.

Library and Archives: essential building maintenance is taking place but a limited service will be available from early summer 2018 – please check the website www.re-museum.co.uk for more details.



Brompton History Research Group

www.bromptonhistory.org.uk/

Brompton village is a complex civilian area in the heart of a military world. To the south and east lie the Chatham Lines, a series of fortifications built to defend the Chatham Dockyard. To the west lies the Dockyard itself and to the north Brompton Barracks, home of the Royal Engineers.

For more information email bromptonhistoryresearchgroup@gmail.com

Strood Fellowship

Strood Fellowship meet every third Monday in the month, 7.30pm, at St Nicholas Church Hall, Edward Street, Strood (first right off Gun Lane to car park). Admission £2 for members or £3 for non-members (including tea and biscuits), £5 Annual Membership. We are interested in the history of Strood and surrounding areas and have outings to local historic buildings. For more details ring J Weller on 01634 309033 or Len Feist 01634 717135.

HUGUENOT MUSEUM

discover your story

The Huguenot Museum is open Wednesday – Saturday 10am – 5pm on the top two floors of 95 High Street, Rochester, Kent. Entrance is £4 for adults and £3 concessions and can be validated for 12 months with gift-aid. For more information or to get in touch visit www.huguenotmuseum.org, call 01634 789347 or email learning@huguenotmuseum.org Unless otherwise indicated all events can be booked at the Huguenot Museum reception, over the phone on 01634 789347 or via our website: www.huguenotmuseum.org

We have a busy programme of events over the next few months, from guided walks of Rochester, exploring life on the high street during WWI, to drop-in family activities, creating miniatures of objects in the museum!

November

Book club

Thursday 29 November

Free, refreshments included.

We read a variety of historical novels as well as the occasional non-fiction that relate to the Huguenots. No specialist knowledge required, just a love of history and a good story. We usually meet on the last Thursday of the month but please check our website for exact dates. Our next book club will be exploring Kate Mosse's new best-selling novel, *The Burning Chambers*. Kate Mosse is talking about her new book on 24 November here at the museum. Even though this talk is now sold out, we will be selling her book in our shop as well as discussing her book in our November book club.

been searching the internet for any information about her great uncle Ernest Franks and she had come upon an article in a back copy of the *Clock Tower* magazine (Issue Number 41, February 2016) where I had written something about him! Noticing my address in the committee details at the back of the journal, she wondered, "Is it a coincidence that you live just three doors away from the house of my Granny Phyllis?" As she had included a photo of Ernest that had been in her Gran's locket and as I knew Jennifer King was the name of Rita's daughter, it didn't take long for there to be a flurry of emails back and forth that same morning. She too had been remembering Ernest during this centenary period as she knew how fondly her grandmother had spoken of him.

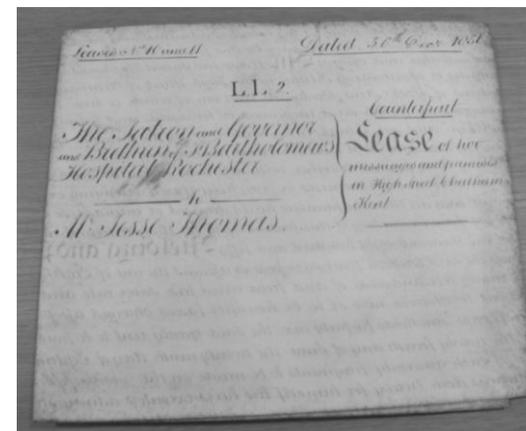
It transpired that the family did not hear of Dawn's death until some considerable time after the event and just assumed everything had been cleared and thrown away. So it was with considerable surprise that Jennifer discovered that not only had it been kept – even the china plates with the transfer pictures of the two sisters when young – but they were still sitting on the top of my wardrobe after twelve years! Sadly, Rita too is now dead but her husband and children have finally inherited all those family items.

I am delighted to say Jennifer came down a couple of weeks ago to the Archives in Strood to see the latest WWI exhibition and to collect the suitcase that now no longer collects dust on the top of my wardrobe. She also met the other family relative, Valerie (see the inside front cover) who was happy that Ernest's artefacts had gone to his direct descendant.

Serendipity perhaps that Ernest should have featured in *The Clock Tower* and that Jennifer should have been thinking about her lost relative when her father-in-law had just died and spent the evening browsing the internet? Who knows but we can thank *The Clock Tower* for reuniting the family and their lost belongings!

Right: an example of one of the latest documents purchased by Bob Ratcliffe for the FOMA Collection held at the Medway Archives Centre.

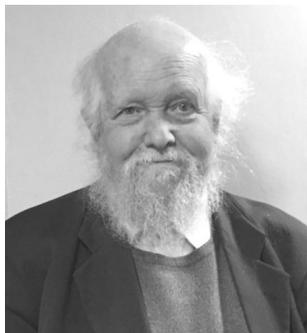
See overleaf.



The FOMA Collection

Elaine Gardner and Amanda Thomas

The FOMA Collection was started in April 2013 with the presentation of some 52 historic documents relating to the Medway area by FOMA to the Medway Archives. Since then, the FOMA Committee has added to the Collection and it now numbers almost 60 items. Recently Committee Member Bob Ratcliffe (pictured) came across quite a number of documents for sale, which he purchased on FOMA's behalf. They include the following:



Counterpart lease (L2) 30 December 1865, The Patron and Governor and Brethren of St Bartholomew's Hospital Rochester to Mr William Hills, a messuage wharf and premises situate in High Street Chatham [inset plan]

Counterpart lease (LL2) 30 December 1865, The Patron and Governor and Brethren of St Bartholomew's Hospital Rochester to Mr Jesse Thomas, two messuages and premises in High Street Chatham [inset plan]

Counterpart lease (P2) 30 December 1865 The Patron and Governor and Brethren of St Bartholomew's Hospital Rochester to Mr William Crockford, lease of five messuages and premises at Chatham [inset plan].

Counterpart lease (X2) 30 December 1865 The Patron and Governor and Brethren of St Bartholomew's Hospital Rochester to Mr Edward Boys and others, lease of six messuages wharf and premises situate in High Street Chatham [inset plan].

The FOMA Collection is held at the Medway Archives Centre and an Index can be viewed on the FOMA website at:
http://foma-lsc.org/_images/collection/Catalogue%20Collection.pdf

Right: an example of one of the latest documents purchased by Bob Ratcliffe for the FOMA Collection held at the Medway Archives Centre.



Grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Rochester Bridge Trust have allowed completion of two fundamental stages – the reconstruction of the body structure and overhaul of the engine. We are now seeking further funding to complete the restoration and to prepare our organisation for its educational role.

We offer talks to interested bodies, and organise occasional events to which the public are invited. For more information contact Richard Bourne (Chairman); 31 Usher Park Road, Haxby, York YO32 3RX; 01904 766375, or 07771 831653. Email Richard@thebournes.me.uk.
Or see our website at www.chathamtraction.org.uk.

Gillingham and Rainham Local History Society

Twydall Evangelical Church, Goudhurst Road, Twydall, Kent. ME8 6LQ.

The society meets on the second Friday of the month, from September to June (no meeting in January), from 2.30 - 4.30 pm.

Friday 14 December 2018 - *The Suffragettes*, a talk by Ian Porter.

Friday 8 February 2019 - *Water Divining*, a talk by John Baker.

Friday 8 March – *Hadrian's Wall*, a talk by Chris Wade.

Friday 12 April - *Medway's Remarkable Women*, a talk by Elaine Gardner.

Friday 10 May - AGM.

Friday 14 June - Quiz Afternoon.

We have monthly talks and visits are arranged throughout the year. Tea and coffee is available before the meeting for a small charge.

New members and visitors are always welcome; annual membership £20, visitors £3 per meeting.

For further information, please visit the website www.grlhs.org

Or contact Val Barrand on 07947 583327 or email lupusrufus@sky.com

The Chatham Historical Society

Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month, except January and August, at St Stephen's Church, Maidstone Road, Chatham, ME4 6JE. There is a small car park to the front of the church and access is via Maidstone Road. Alternative parking is available in nearby roads including Maidstone Road. Please do not park in the bus bay; there is disabled parking and step free access to the hall.

Wednesday 12 December 2018 - Christmas Social Evening.

February 2019 - *Medway Prison Hulks* - Jeremy Clarke (date to be confirmed, please see website).

Doors open at 7:15 pm for a 7.30 pm start; meetings finish at 9:00 pm. All meetings are open to the public, and visitors are very welcome. No need to book; just turn up and pay at the door! Members £1, visitors £3; annual membership is £10 and can be paid on the night. Further information is available at www.chathamhistoricalsoc.btck.co.uk

Friends of Broomhill

Broomhill Park has been awarded a seventh consecutive Green Flag; the Award recognises the best green spaces in the country. The Park has again been awarded 'Outstanding' in the RHS S.E in Bloom competition.

Healthy Walks

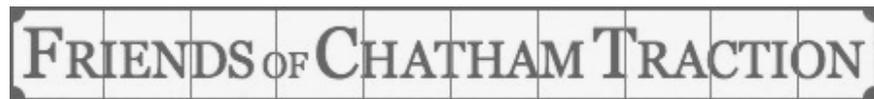
Every Tuesday, meet at Strood Library at 9.45 am. A guided and pleasant walk with wonderful views overlooking the Medway and Thames, and woodland paths. Duration about 60 minutes. Complimentary tea and coffee served in the library after the walk. Sorry - dogs not allowed in the library. Contact: 01634 333720.

Task Days

Task Days are the first Sunday of every month except January, from September to April, inclusive, from 10.00 am to noon. Meet in King Arthur's Drive car park. Hot drinks afterwards. Bring your own tools or we have plenty. Help us keep our Green Flag status for the eighth consecutive year and our RHS S.E. in Bloom status of 'outstanding'. IT'S FUN IT'S FREE and IT'S HEALTHY.

The Friends Of Broomhill would like to thank all those who contributed so generously towards the purchase of the Old Orchard. We now look forward to the hard work of realising our ambition for this to remain a green and inviting place in perpetuity for everyone without fear of development.

For further details see park notice boards, www.friendsofbromhill.org.uk, find us on Facebook or contact David Park, Secretary on 01634 718972, email: davidpark1999@yahoo.co.uk



The Friends were constituted in 2007, with aims centred on the restoration of the sole surviving Chatham Traction bus, GKE 68 of 1939. The Chatham & District Traction Company had operated bus services over Medway's former tram routes from 1930 to 1955, when it was absorbed into Maidstone & District. The bus, a once-familiar piece of Medway's fabric, is to come alive again as a resource for the study of local and social history.

Buses were central to life in the Towns for many decades, taking people to school, shops, work or play. Studies might look inward to the company's people and facilities, or outward to its services and locations served, and how lifestyle changes influenced its development.

To support the educational aim we are collecting relevant material to form an archive of local transport history, including an oral history collection. We would be happy to receive any items – photographs, artefacts, ephemera – relating to Chatham Traction, its predecessor trams or local bus operations up to 1970 (the year of withdrawal of the last Chatham Traction vehicle).

News from FOMA Members

Will of Sarah Hillman, née Hemmington, of Gravesend

Brenda Paternoster



A couple of weeks ago I arrived at Medway Archives for my turn on the family history helpdesk and was handed a padded envelope addressed to the Kent Family History Society (KFHS) which had been posted in Canada but had a return address in Australia!

When I opened the envelope it contained an original office copy of a PCC (Prerogative Court of Canterbury) will complete with its embossed seal and the probate dated 1834. There was also included a short note saying that it had been found amongst a deceased relative's possessions but with no knowledge of the name the sender thought best that it should go to our Society.

I have transcribed both the will and the probate document. The will goes into great detail about how the testatrix had inherited some money from her widowed mother for her *'own sole use and benefit to the intent that the same might not be at the disposal or subject or liable to the controul [sic] debts forfeitures or engagements of the said William Hillman my husband but only at my own sole separate disposal.'* She then left that money to her Executor, Samuel MAN and the remains of her estate and personal effects to her husband as the law required.

The documents together with my transcriptions have been passed on to the KFHS library. The transcription is printed at the end of this article in the online version of *The Clock Tower* (see <http://foma-lsc.org/journal.html>) and is also available from the Editor, Amanda Thomas (amanda@ajthomas.com) on request.

*Sarah d/o George HEMMINGTON bapt 29 January 1761 Milton-next-Gravesend
Sarah HEMMINGTON (single age 21) marr William HILLMAN (wid age 31)
12 April 1792 Milton-next-Gravesend*

*Sarah HILLMAN age 70 buried Northfleet St Botolph 30 July 1834
Sarah's parents were probably George HEMMINGTON and Sarah BANKS
married 10 June 1755 St Martin's-in-the-Fields, London
William HILLMAN's first marriage to Ann NEAL (wid) 15 Oct 1781 Milton-next-Gravesend*

Ann HILLMAN buried 8 July 1790 Milton-next-Gravesend

I have found no reference to any children to Sarah and William HILLMAN

Unfortunately I have no knowledge of who Samuel MAN was, but he had been a joint executor to the will of Sarah's mother, so likely a trusted family friend or relative.



Cindy O'Halloran (pictured), Senior Archive Assistant at the Medway Archives Centre, has been able to find some additional information for Brenda's story.

The Hillmans do not appear to have owned property, they are not listed as voters or listed in the directories for Milton, Northfleet or Gravesend.

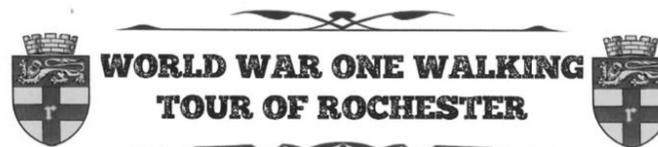
William died in 1837 aged 95 years and is also buried at St Botolph. The burial transcript for Sarah states that she was buried on the north side of the Hemmington Stone (her family) near the Great Doors, and she was from Gravesend. I am not sure where this comes from as it is not on the burial entry itself. Any headstones seem to have vanished as the memorial inscriptions (MIs) for St Botolph do not list headstones for the Hillmans or the Hemmington stone mentioned.

Page 118.

BURIALS in the Parish of <i>Northfleet</i> in the County of <i>Kent</i> in the Year 18 <i>37</i>				
Name.	Abode.	When buried.	Age.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
<i>Eliza Barber</i> No. 937.	<i>Northfleet</i>	<i>July 25</i>	<i>5 Months</i>	<i>J. Sutton Curate.</i>
<i>Sarah Hillman</i> No. 938.	<i>Northfleet Gravesend</i>	<i>July 30</i>	<i>170 Years</i>	<i>J. Sutton Curate.</i>

Samuel Man was a Baker from West Street Gravesend and was obviously fairly wealthy. He appears in the Poll Books for West Street and in the Freemasonry Registers; his will runs to three pages. He died the same year as William Hillman. Sarah's will states that she was the wife of William Hillman, labourer, so did she marry below her social station which is why her mother protected her inheritance? The fact that no money was left to William either indicates that their relationship had broken down, they were separated and Samuel Man was a 'close friend'. Perhaps William was senile and not capable of being left any money - either way as an elderly man no provision was made for him which is odd particularly as they had no children. There is certainly some background story to this!

Tours are 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.



A 90 MINUTE TOUR LED BY AN EXPERIENCED CITY OF ROCHESTER SOCIETY GUIDE. HEAR ABOUT THE EXPERIENCES OF THOSE WHO LIVED IN ROCHESTER THROUGH THE GREAT WAR AND HOW IT SHAPED THE WORLD WE LIVE IN TODAY.



GLIMPSE INTO THE LIVES OF THE ORDINARY FOLK OF ROCHESTER DURING ONE OF THE MOST TURBULENT TIMES IN RECENT HISTORY.

TOUR DATES AND TIMES

FINAL TOUR
Saturday 24th November @ 10:30am
THIS IS LAST 'OPEN' WW1 TOUR



MEET IN FRONT OF THE GUILDHALL MUSEUM

THE TOUR IS FREE BUT DONATIONS GRATEFULLY RECEIVED. ALL PROCEEDS GO TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION. VISITING WITH FRIENDS OR PART OF A GROUP? CONTACT OUR TOURS ORGANISER ON INFO@CITY-OF-ROCHESTER.ORG.UK



THE CITY OF ROCHESTER SOCIETY
SUPPORTING THE RBL



The Rochester Bridge Trust

Further information from <http://www.rbt.org.uk/>

ICE Kent & East Sussex Historical Engineering Group (KESHG) lectures are held at various venues around Kent and East Sussex. To register for information about events, please email kesheg@gmail.com

Please note that due to staffing levels, Medway Archive Centre will only open on Saturdays between the hours of 9.00 – 12.30pm commencing 5th May 2018 until further notice. Opening hours Monday to Friday remain as advertised 9am – 5pm (closed Wednesdays).

Until further notice, the postal address is Medway Archives Office, c/o Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4TR.

Unless otherwise stated, all events take place at the Medway Archives Centre, 32 Bryant Road, Strood, Rochester, ME2 3EP.

Eastgate House

Opening hours are Wednesday to Sunday, 10am to 5pm (last admissions 4.30pm); Mondays and Tuesdays CLOSED. For large group visits and special events it may be possible to open the house on Mondays and Tuesdays. Please contact eastgate.house@medway.gov.uk for further information. Adults: £5.50, Concessions (inc. Friends Group): £4, Under 5s: free, Family Ticket: £15. Groups of 10 or more: 15% discount and school groups: 15% discount on concession price.

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. Further information can be obtained at: www.friendsof-eastgatehouse.org on Facebook on 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 zbyszewska@yahoo.co.uk; a copy of the membership form is also available on the website.

The Friends of the Guildhall Museums

www.friendsoftheguildhall.com

The Friends of the Guildhall Museums is a group which supports the work of two important but very different elements of Medway's heritage - the Guildhall Museum in Rochester and the Old Brook Pumping Station in Chatham. Supporting the Guildhall Museums will help conserve our local history for generations to come through specialist events and opportunities designed to educate and inspire, telling the stories of the Medway Towns.

For all events see www.friendsoftheguildhall.com/events/

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, where further information on the society, its events and how to join is available. All talks are at The Moat House, 8 Crow Lane, Rochester, ME1 1RF; there is a small charge for events to defray expenses. 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!

New Chatham Dockyard Historical Society WWI Research Papers

Colin Allen



The Chatham Dockyard Historical Society (CDHS) has recently added to their growing list of research papers the following:

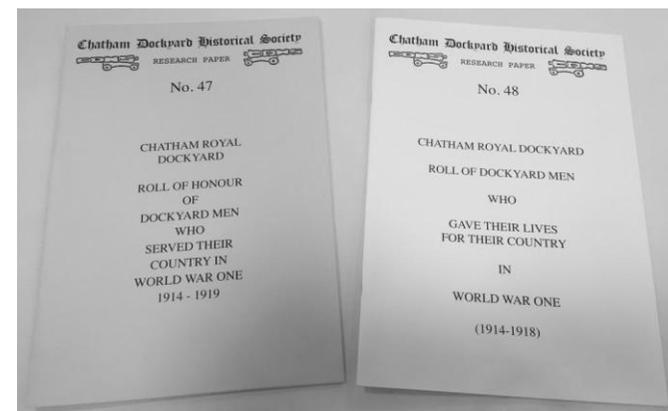
No. 47: Roll of Honour of Dockyard Men who served their country in World War One, 1914 -1919

No. 48: Roll of Dockyard Men who gave their lives for their Country in World War One, 1914 -1919

There were in excess of 2,000 dockyard men who went to war and within these new publications they are listed alphabetically together with the force in which they served. Of those who went to war, 143 did not return – some seven percent.

The CDHS Research Papers are available from:

Chatham Dockyard
Historical Society,
The Historic Dockyard,
Chatham,
Kent, ME4 4TE.



More information is available at:
<http://www.dockmus.btck.co.uk>

Soldiers' Stories on Our Streets

Abby Found



Abby currently works as a Heritage Development Officer for Medway Council's Heritage Team, based at the Guildhall Museum in Rochester, but covering several sites including Rochester Castle, Upnor Castle and Temple Manor. Abby is responsible for the management of heritage site development projects from funding bids through to practical completion including monitoring consultants work programmes and contract management.



In the summer Medway Council's Heritage Team was awarded a grant of £8,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund's First World War *Then And Now* programme to help mark the centenary of the end of the Great War in Medway. Working in partnership with FOMA, our project, *Soldiers' Stories on our Streets*, is a community research and learning project enabling local people to find out who volunteered to fight in the Great War from the streets in which they live today. Our project was inspired by the FOMA De Caville Index (foma-lsc.org/wwi/index.html) and more can be found out about the project at:

<http://www.visitmedway.org/soldiers-stories-on-our-streets/>

I am delighted to now be able to give an update on the progress of our project.

Training

We held a training day at the Medway Archives Centre for FOMA members on 3 October. The aim was to familiarise volunteers with skills and sources which would help them be even more effective at dealing with the pupil as part of the project. We covered customer service skills, running education sessions, and WWI sources at the Archives. Six FOMA and KFHS members joined us for the day, and feedback was very positive.

Joining FOMA is easy and can be done on the website (www.foma-lsc.org); membership enquiries can also be directed to the Membership Secretary, Betty Cole, 98 The Wharf, Dock Head Road, Chatham ME4 4ZS, Kent. Telephone: 01634 892976; email: betty-cole@outlook.com

See our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/fomalsc) and our website (www.foma-lsc.org) for all the very latest information on FOMA and Medway heritage.

Medway Archives Centre

Thursday 2 August – Saturday 1 December 2018.
Men of the Medway Towns; The Ultimate Sacrifice 1918-19.
A FOMA exhibition.

Wednesday 12 December 2018

Seasonal Event!

10 am to 12 noon

Book Sale

old and new book stock for sale

2.10 pm

Who's Who in Hoo,

The extraordinary history of Medway's most remote region.

An illustrated talk by Christoph Bull.

Tickets £4, **BOOKING ESSENTIAL**

Please contact Medway Archives Centre, 32 Bryant Road, Strood, Rochester, ME2 3EP.

www.medway.gov.uk/archives, tel. 01634 332714.

Thursday 6 December – Tuesday 5 March 2019.

Bridge Works

Crossing the River Medway – A story of the Rochester Bridge Trust,

www.rbt.org.uk/bridgeworks

Find out more about 2,000 years of bridges and the modern day role of an ancient charity; an exhibition by the Rochester Bridge Wardens Trust.

32 Bryant Road, Strood, Rochester, Kent, ME2 3EP (previously the old Strood library).

Contact our expert team if you require further information on 01634 332714. For further details see the MAC Facebook page www.facebook.com/malsc/, the FOMA website (www.foma-lsc.org) and Facebook page www.facebook.com/fomalsc/

If you would like to make a Local Studies donation please e-mail the local studies Librarian at malsc@medway.gov.uk

Current electoral registers can be still be viewed at Gun Wharf. Please contact the Electoral Services Team on 01634 332030 to arrange an appointment.

28 August 2018.

Dear Michael and Rosie,

Great to hear from you and thanks.

Well spotted! I think the article is rather ambiguous as the Textus was **bound** in the fourteenth century. See: <https://www.rochestercathedral.org/textus-online/>
We should have made this clearer. I don't know if the whole thing was re-written as well in the fourteenth, but apologies nevertheless.

I will make sure this is clarified in the next *Clock Tower* and do hope to see you soon,

Amanda.

News and Events

Calendar of Forthcoming Events and Exhibitions

Friends of Medway Archives

Talks and Events

UNDER THE NEW DATA PROTECTION LAWS WE ARE ADVISED TO TELL YOU THAT PHOTOGRAPHS MAY BE TAKEN DURING OUR EVENTS. IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO BE INCLUDED IN A PHOTOGRAPH, PLEASE ADVISE A FOMA COMMITTEE MEMBER ON YOUR ARRIVAL.

Thursday 2 August – Saturday 1 December 2018.

Men of the Medway Towns; The Ultimate Sacrifice 1918-19.

A FOMA exhibition.

Tuesday 12 March 2019, 7.30 pm

Medway's Remarkable Women,

A talk by Elaine Gardner.

Tuesday 9 April 2019, 7.00 for 7.30 pm,

FOMA AGM

Booking for FOMA events is not necessary and **until further notice they are held at Frindsbury Parish Hall**, ME2 4HE – please check our website (www.foma-lsc.org) for further information. 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.

Schools

Over the past few weeks, Medway Heritage Team's Education Officer, Jeremy Clarke and I, supported by FOMA's Elaine Gardner, have visited nine Medway schools, and delivered introductory workshops to 30 classes, around 900 pupils. Jeremy has been using objects from the museum collections to highlight life on the Front Line, which have proved very popular (you can see his WWI periscope on page 15). He usually ends his session with medals and a death penny. This makes a nice link to the talk Elaine and I have been presenting on the FOMA De Caville Index, and life in Medway during the war with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation compiled by Norma Crowe from documents available at MAC.

For each school we have designed a specific presentation using maps from 1900 showing the area of the school, and then a selection of names from the area from the FOMA De Caville Index. We then focus in on just one, to show the variety of information we can find out about a serviceman at the Archives.

A particularly interesting example occurred at Barnsole Primary School in Gillingham. We focussed on Private Cyril Parramore, who died on 4 September 1916, aged 23. Not only were we able to show the children his census records from 1911, and several cemetery documents showing how he was identified upon burial (through his initials stamped in his service boots), but we had a school registration document, from Barnsole Primary School itself. Private Parramore is one of several old boys remembered on the school's memorial plaque, so it was certainly a workshop which resonated with the pupils as well as ourselves.

Following our visit, Barnsole teacher Lynne Arnold sent the following:

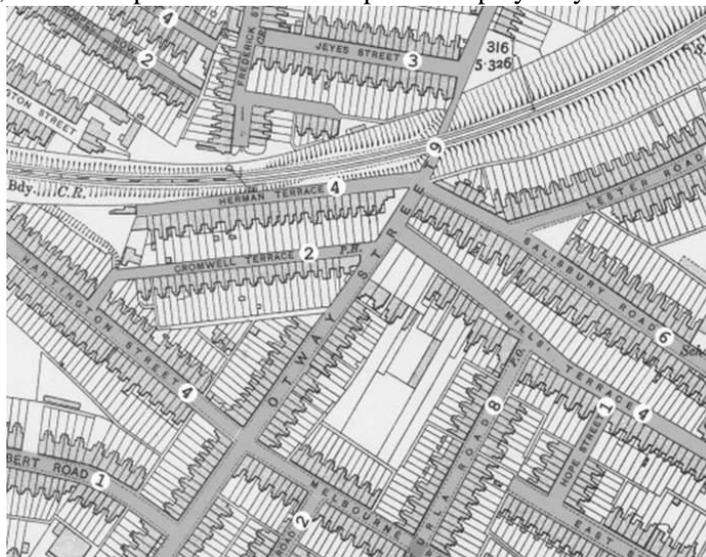
On behalf of Barnsole School, I wanted to thank you for the workshops you have presented to the children this week. The children across all year groups have been inspired by the range of facts and information that they have learnt around World War One which is relatable to them. It has been a talking point for numerous discussions around the school for both children and adults!

We are currently booking schools for their follow-up sessions, which will include WWI re-enactors reading letters from the trenches, and a chance for the schools to showcase their own research about local men from their area. We are also working on the education packs for all schools which will contain introductory material, as well as examples of sources and information on servicemen featured in the FOMA De Caville Index.

Maps

Staff at the Medway Archives, volunteers and I have been working hard over the past few weeks to shade in all of the streets on maps of Medway upon which a serviceman on the FOMA De Caville Index lived. The streets have been shaded,

and numbered to indicate how many men from each street. The maps are now with the designer, and we hope to have them on public display very soon.



Section of Chatham 1909 map showing the number of soldiers lost during the Great War from the street on which they lived.

Open Days

On Wednesday 31 October the Medway Archives Centre (MAC) held its first project open day, and it was well attended. Three FOMA members supported the event, assisting members of the public with their enquiries about WWI. Everyone who attended were first-time visitors to MAC, and several intend to come back to continue their research. One gentleman came in with printouts of information of a family member who wasn't listed on the Index, and so copies were duly made to add the information to the FOMA De Caville Index. This is exactly what we hoped would come from the project – community involvement which enhances the FOMA De Caville Index as a whole, whilst showcasing all that MAC has to offer. We are holding three more open days like this on 3, 21 and 24 November, however only the latter date will be relevant when you read this.

The Lost Helmet

Although not part of the same Heritage Lottery Fund's project, *The Lost Helmet* has been out and about to the local schools and the open days. As I write, it is visiting Strood Academy and Cliffe Primary School next week, and then work will begin on collating the images of people wearing the WWI helmet, and adding a name from the FOMA De Caville Index to each image. We hope to have the completed the display ready for the MAC Open Day on 21 November.

- 1) 14 Refers to the purchase of the land by the Gerrard Land Investment Company 1908;
- 2) 1936 document with details of proposed development of Haig Avenue, Rochester;
- 3) Mortgage document relating to the first occupant of 63 Haig Avenue, Mr. F.A. Wilkinson to the Corporation of Rochester;
- 4) Change of ownership 1977 and 1979.

Kind regards,
Nicola Lynch.

The documents have since been donated to the Medway Archives Centre.

John Thomas Hawes

October 2018

Dear Mrs Cole,

I am writing in the hope that you will be able to forward the enclosed letter to Pat Slater [sic], who I see from your committee listings is a current Vice President and who I am hoping is related to Jean Slater, who wrote a marvellous piece on John Thomas Hawes. [See *The Clock Tower*, Issues 8, 9, 10, and 11: November 2007, and February, May, August 2008].

I won't go into the full story but my Great Uncle was John Thomas Hawes, although I was separated from my family at birth. I have in the last two years traced some of my family members but none on the Hawes side. I hope that you will be able to forward on my letter to Mrs Slater and help me in connecting with this side of my family.

All the best,
G.D. Jones

Readers will have noticed that here has been some confusion, as Pat's surname is Salter. However, FOMA Membership Secretary Betty Cole subsequently contacted Jean Slater and she has been put in touch with Mr Jones.

Textus Roffensis

28 August 2018.

Dear Amanda,

Pleased as ever to see *The Clock Tower* drop through our letter box. However, one small discrepancy noted - *Textus* was not written in the fourteenth century, it was written in the twelfth century between 1122-1124, pre-dating *Magna Carta* by almost 100 years! [See *The Clock Tower*, Issue 51, August 2018; p. 13].

Warm regards,
Michael & Rosie Jennings.

12 men joined up out of a total population of only 39. The 17 ft. high memorial cross given by the *Weekly Dispatch* to mark the Bravest Village still stands.’*

The Thankful Villages include: Stoke Hammond (Buckinghamshire); Toft (Cambridgeshire); Llanfihangel-y-Creuddyn (Cardiganshire); Herodsfoot (Cornwall); Ousby (Cumberland); Bradbourne (Derbyshire); Langton Herring (Dorset); Hunstanworth (Durham); Strethall (Essex), Colwinston (Glamorgan), Coln Rogers, Little Sodbury, and Upper Slaughter (Gloucestershire); Knill, and Middleton-on-the-Hill (Herefordshire); Puttenham (Hertfordshire); Knowlton (Kent); Arkholme, and Nether Kellet (Lancashire); East Norton, Saxby, Stretton en le Field, and Willoughby Waterleys (Leicestershire); Bigby, Flixborough, High Toynton, and Minting (Lincolnshire); East Carlton, and Woodend (Northamptonshire); Meldon (Northumberland); Cromwell, Maplebeck, Wigsley, and Wysall (Nottinghamshire); Herbrandston (Pembrokeshire); Teigh (Rutland); Harley (Shropshire); Aisholt, Chantry, Chelwood, Holywell Lake, Rodney Stoke, Shapwick, Stocklinch, Tellisford, and Woolley (Somerset); Butterton (Staffordshire); Culpho, and South Elmham St. Michael, (Suffolk); East Wittering (Sussex); Catwick, Cundall, Helperthorpe, Norton-le-Clay, and Scruton (Yorkshire).

*With thanks to *The Thankful Villages* website. For more information visit: <http://www.hellfirecorner.co.uk/thankful.htm>

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.

Documents

4 November 2018

To: Betty Cole, betty-cole@outlook.com

Hello,

I got your address from ‘Friends of Medway Archive’. My name is Nicola Lynch and I have been sorting through paperwork and came across a number of documents that I forgot I still had. I didn’t want to throw them away and wondered if they would be of interest to you or whether you would know of any other organisation. They are documents from 1908, 1930s relating to land known as Maidstone Road N°2 Estate, Chatham.



Images from the Training Day for the Soldiers’ Stories on our Streets joint project. Top (from left to right): Jeremy Clarke, Len Feist, Brian Butler, Brenda Burchell, Tessa Towner, Elaine Gardner.

Above left: Elaine Gardner using a WWI type periscope used by Jeremy Clarke in his talks for schools.

Above right: a view of the Medway Archives Centre during the Training Day.

Not Just The Workhouse – The Kent Poor Law Union Index

Deborah Collins



In the May Issue of *The Clock Tower* there was an article by the Medway Archives Centre advising that a hard copy version of my Index to the Hoo, Medway and North Aylesford (later Strood) Poor Law Union documents for the period 1835 to 1841 was now available. This index, which also includes the other Kent Poor Law Unions, is now available to be searched on Findmypast and I thought this would be the ideal time to give some examples of what information these documents may provide.

Most people think of Poor Law Unions as just being the workhouse, usually because their first contact with them is by finding a reference to someone either being born or dying in the workhouse or being recorded in a Census Return as being an inmate of one. However, this is far from the true picture of what the Poor Law Union did for the poor, as only a minority of persons requiring assistance received it by way of admission into the workhouse.

To illustrate this point the following is from the Minutes of the Board of Guardians for the Hoo Union from their meeting of the 19 November 1835:

'Ordered. That one pair of shoes be provided for Hester Randall - that Robert Bakers relief be reduced to ten shillings per week - that a pair of shoes be provided for Sarah Pannell and a pair for Harriet Hands - that ten shillings relief be given to Jasper Witts - that in consequence of the family of Peter Williams having experienced much illness he be relieved with a pair of shoes for his boy ...'

This is just one example of the many instances when the Guardians decided to give out relief rather than offer admission into the workhouse. There are also examples from the Minutes of the Board of Guardians for both the Medway and North Aylesford Unions of similar *out relief* being given to the poor. In some cases it may also be possible to find mention of such individuals in the correspondence of the Unions as shown by the following example, which is taken from the correspondence books of the North Aylesford Union, of a letter dated the 20 October 1836 and sent to Mr William Stephenson, one of the Union Medical Officers, from the Clerk to the Guardians:

Editor's Footnotes

Amanda Thomas



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, and The Council for British Archaeology; she has a degree in Italian from the University of Kent and is a member of their alumni association. Amanda was made a full member of the Society of Women Writers and Journalists in 2008.

The Thankful Villages of World War One

The commemorations for the centenary of World War One are drawing to a close. Most of that which has been put together and talked about over the past few weeks has been about the men who did not come back. Indeed we at FOMA are focussing on that very subject with our joint project with Medway Council, *Soldiers' Stories on our Streets* and the publicity surrounding the FOMA De Caville Index (see pages 12 to 15 and the front and back covers). However, at our last committee meeting our Membership Secretary, Betty Cole mentioned the Thankful Villages and said how nice it would be to hear something about those places which did not suffer the dreadful losses associated with the Great War. The other day I was watching a television documentary about life in the trenches and the question was asked, 'Who was not affected by the War?' Well, I have to say, my own family was not as my grandfather was only just old enough to sign up in 1918 and was assigned a job as a *pen pusher* at Chatham Dockyard. However, it would seem that our family was not alone in our good fortune.

It was in the 1930s in his series called *King's England* that the author Arthur Mee coined the phrase *Thankful Villages*. The title described places to which all those who had served returned. Mee identified 32 locations, but recently three men, Norman Thorpe, Rod Morris and Tom Morgan have undertaken some more in-depth research. They have located 53 parishes using information gleaned from many different sources and also cross-checked against lists of the fallen. Knowlton was the only village in Kent to be spared fatalities and was hereafter known as '... the Bravest Village in the United Kingdom in a competition organised by the *Weekly Dispatch* in 1914 for sending the biggest percentage of its population to the colours.



Alfred; studio photograph by Guy and Co. Ltd. of Cork.

Notes

1. AWB 1893 11 19 from Buttevant.
2. AWB's *Pocket Game Register* from The E. C. Powder Company (R4). There was a woodcock shot at Owletts in November with Admiral Nicholson there.
3. His cricket scores he kept in a notebook diary D3.
4. AWB 1895 02 19 from Tralee (this date is estimated from his Game book R4, possibly 1896 or 97).
5. AWB 1895 05 21 from Ship Street barracks, Dublin.
6. Messrs Holt passbooks: R2 for 1884 to 1889 and R3 for August 1892 to August 1897.
7. Herbert Baker in Cape Town to his brother Ned, Feb 19, 1899.
8. AWB 1898 08 06 from Nigeria (see the next part in this series).
9. Ibid 1895 05 21. His last match in Ireland was for Military of Ireland v I Zingari on 16-17 August 1895, per invitation letter dated 30 June from F A Adam of the S. Lancashire Regt (loose leaf in D3).

'The Board of Guardians request your immediate attention to the state of Joseph Cooper a sick Pauper residing at Cliffe within your District, and that you will have the goodness to attend the Board on Thursday next in Strood to explain the circumstances of an alleged omission to afford him prompt Medical Relief.'

Although the workhouse Admission and Discharge Registers for the early years of the three Medway Unions have not survived this is not necessarily a hindrance as there are other documents which may supply this information. The Hoo Union documents have Indoor Relief Lists for these early years, and these particular documents provide details of people in the workhouse. The information is recorded by parish for each quarter of the year and details the person's name, age and the number days of each week of that quarter that they were in the workhouse. Although no such documents have survived for the Medway and North Aylesford Unions, it is still possible to find details of people being admitted and discharged from their workhouses. For example, for Medway Union there is recorded in the Minutes of the Board of Guardians of the meeting held on the 4 September 1837:

'The following Persons, were ordered to be admitted into the Workhouse at the Charge of the several Parishes to which they appear to belong, and due enquiry be made as to their legal places of Settlement, where any doubt has arisen Viz

At the charge of the Parish of Chatham

Henry Sparks, Ann Hider, Sarah Braugh, Mary White, Sarah Sifleet (Hartlip) Henry Pleasant (4 Months Old) Mother dead, the Father a Marine in Chatham Barracks ...

Ordered that William Sharp be allowed 2/6 to leave the House in search of employment - and Eliz Stone 74 Years be allowed 1/6 P week and Clothing not exceeding 12/- in Value to leave ... '

This is just a very small sample of some the many thousands of individuals who required relief, whether in or out of the workhouse, and that appear in the documents of the Poor Law Unions over the nearly 100 years that they were in existence. They offer a tantalising glimpse of the many interesting stories to be found in these documents and I hope that the above examples will tempt you to explore these records more.

Find out more on Deborah Collins' website, *Kent Workhouses and Poorhouses*: www.kentworkhouses.uk

What and Why?

The Kidwell Memorial Clock Tower and Shelter

Kevin Russell



At the top of Star Hill, Rochester at its junction with City Way and New Road, stands a brick-built clock tower and shelter erected in 1953. Its official name is the Kidwell Memorial Clock Tower, but who was Mr. Kidwell and how did he come to have such a structure named after him?



Left: the Kidwell Memorial Clock at the top of Star Hill, Rochester; below: the plaque; photographs, Medway Archives Centre



A little bit more information on him can be gleaned from the metal tablet affixed to one of the interior walls of the shelter (see above right), and which has the following, somewhat old-fashioned inscription:

To the glory of God and in grateful memory of John Kidwell, 1857-1929. The City of Rochester erected this clock tower with funds bestowed by his relict Charlotte Maude Kidwell. A life of public service humbly and faithfully rendered.

The son of Alfred Edward Kidwell, John was born in 1857 and was educated at Doddington, a small village on the North Kent Downs near Faversham. In view of the fact that John's father ran the family firm of auctioneers in Rochester, it is surprising that on reaching working age John did not enter the family business, but appears to have taken a position in the City of London with a firm of stockbrokers. Later on he took a job in the Railway Clearing House, a London-based organisation set up by the pre-nationalised group of railway companies to manage the allocation of revenue collected by them from passenger fares and freight charges paid for any journey made over the lines of two or more companies.

circumstances, but he did not acknowledge that until 1898 when more land was sold: *sorry my profession is not a money making one to enable me to help.*⁸

Alfred had asked his eldest brother Harry, retired from the Rifle Regiment, to recommend him to Kitchener's Egyptian Army, which was trained and partly officered by the British and which set off into The Sudan in 1896, but to no avail. The attraction of course was the pay. However he had been appointed captain of cricket of both the regimental and garrison XIs. The cricket he recorded for 1895 was all in Ireland, but after that season his records dry up and I was unable to find others in the DLI records.⁹ Did the responsibility of being captain take the energy from his statistical mind?

The last record of his being in Ireland is in October 1895. The absence of cricket records and of letters home leaves us with shooting records only, all in Kent, for 1896 and in both Kent and the north in 1897. More unusual among these are five "landrail" (corncrake) shot in Cumberland in early September 1897 and 38 (red) grouse in Kielder later that month. After four days shooting in Ayrshire in early October, the records are all in Kent apart from two days in January 1898 near Newcastle.

A Brief Guide to the Life of Alfred William Baker

When?	Rank	Where Was He?	Doing What?	Other Events
Oct 1893 to Sept 1895	Captain	Buttevant, Ireland	Training troops for India. Returned home in June and Oct 1894	1894: Dahomey declared French Rosebery is PM
Sept 1895	Captain	England		June: Lord Salisbury PM again
July to Aug 1897	Captain	South of England	Cricket tour with Northumberland team	
Sept to Oct 1897	Captain	Northumberland		

Now a captain, Alfred was in charge of a company, which in practical terms in peace time meant running a training school at a camp at Buttevant, Co Cork: *rather busy getting a big draft ready for India. They start next week. I half wish I was going it's so cold here.*¹ He threw himself into work and the shooting: there was an opportunity two or three times a week in a wild part of Ireland and his colleagues were keen too. After little variety at home (usually pheasants, partridge and rabbits with his brothers and the Edmeades), Ireland offered snipe and duck as well as hare.²

The 1894 cricket season gave him lots of scope: a game twice a week and he amassed 1393 runs and took 52 wickets, impressive figures again.³ He was home for two weeks in June to play for Cobham and the old boys at Tonbridge and again for two months from October to December, but was back in Ireland for Christmas. This time he was posted to Tralee. He liked Tralee: *having a very good time and like the place, hospitable, the ladies of all classes beautiful. The shooting is good and I am getting as much as I can manage.* To remind us of the other side of Irish life, he added: *they condemned a man to be hanged yesterday who came from the village where our shooting is. The keeper was a witness against him and they say is sure to be dead in a month in consequence. It is in the wildest part of the country ...*⁴

The seasons of cricket and shooting continued through 1894 to 1897, including a short season for grouse in August 95 in the southern Irish highlands. Despite all the hospitality and no doubt expense, one letter showed some frustration. Written from Dublin one spring he acknowledged a "tip", i.e. some pocket money his mother sent: *thankfully received. Only don't worry about me if you are hard up.* He found Dublin expensive despite a captain's pay and *I must be out of it ... Little chance of getting to Egypt as better men have been passed over.*⁵

Since he was promoted to Captain in 1893, Alfred's pay was 11/3^d a day, almost double the 6/6^d of a Lieutenant. It's his bank book that reveals this information. But it shows something more: his father Thomas Henry was also contributing a regular £20 or sometimes £35 three times a year in 1884 and 85, nothing in 86 or 87, but it resumed in 1888. There are no records for 1890 or 91 but the contributions were still coming in July 1893.⁶ I find these payments interesting because the 1880s and 90s were a long period of economic stress for English farmers. Markets were depressed by improved transport and refrigerated ships that could bring meat and grain from overseas and push prices down. Thomas Henry had started to accumulate debt, borrowing first from the bank and then from his neighbours. Elsewhere Alfred's brother Lionel too was making calls on the home purse: £600 was lent to him by Thomas Henry to buy a share in a South African farm in 1893. There was a payment to Alfred in May 1894. It was not until early 1895 when the other brother Herbert was making enough as an architect in South Africa to send contributions home that the position eased.⁷ But matters had become critical by 1896 and the first tranche of Owletts land was sold. Alfred would have known of the straitening

John joined his father's firm of auctioneers in 1880 and continued as a partner until his retirement in 1927. This long-established firm developed by his father and grandfather, Robert Kidwell, has records dating back to 1835, however, John always understood its foundation to have been in the late eighteenth century. The firm had its premises at 300 High Street, Rochester on St. Margaret's Banks, between where the railway line crosses the High Street and the Nag's Head public house. There is no longer a number 300 and so its exact location is hard to pinpoint today.

John was married to Charlotte Maude, the only daughter of Dr. F.T. Wright, formerly of Hoo, and it appears they lived over the shop until John's retirement. When they moved to *Rusco*, 65 Maidstone Road. They had no children. John was a trustee of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Rochester, for which he and his wife raised large sums of money. He was also a trustee of the Richard Watt's Charity, and the Baynard's Charity. He was a City of Rochester councillor, a Justice of the Peace, and was a director of the City of Rochester Land Company, whose registered address was at 300 High Street. John was an officer of the Castle Club as well as vice-president of the Rochester and Chatham Liberal Association as a secretary of the Rochester and Chatham Savings Bank.

John died on 23 February 1929, aged 72. He is buried in St. Margaret's Cemetery, Rochester, with his wife who died in 1943, aged 81. The inscription on their headstone reads:

*In ever loving memory of John Kidwell J.P.
Died Feb 23rd 1929 aged 72 years.
Also Charlotte Maude Kidwell widow of the above
Died April 30th 1943, aged 81 years.*

Among the many mourners who attended the funeral were the Mayor of Rochester, Councillor F.C.A. Matthews, accompanied by the Town Clerk, Mr. J.L. Percival who, according to the local paper, *attended-in-state*. Charlotte Kidwell left a bequest in her will of £1,500 for a suitable memorial to her husband to be erected in Rochester. Obviously nothing would be built during the Second World War and the post-war years of austerity when all building materials were needed to repair and rebuild shattered homes and buildings. Finally a plot of land was found and arrangements made in 1952 for the construction of the clock tower, which was completed in 1953. It is a fine tribute to a man who gave a life time of public service for the local citizens of the Medway towns.

Notes

Information for this article is from the *Chatham, Rochester and Gillingham News*, dated 1 March 1929, and other documents which can be viewed at the Medway Archives Centre. Additional information was sourced from Mr. D.E. Williams, memorial inscriptions at St. Margaret's Cemetery, and Mr. Alan Moss.

A shorter version of this article was first published in Neighbours, the magazine of the Parish of St Peter with St Margaret, Rochester.

What a Phone Call can Lead to ...

Ian Smith



Ian was born in Chatham in the early 1950s and has lived all his life in the Medway Towns. He fell into family history accidentally when a relative died and he was asked to sort the estate out; he now researches other people's family trees. Ian is a member of the Kent Family History Society and Chairman of the local Medway branch.

Ian has previously written about his Arthrell ancestors in *The Clock Tower*, Issue 44, November 2016, but has never revealed how the quest first started.

Part 1: Heir Hunters

About ten days before Christmas one year towards the start of this century the phone rang at about 6.30 pm one evening asking to speak to me. I was asked if my name was Ian Smith, was my mother Enid Smith née Howard? Was her mother Nellie Howard née Arthrell and was my great grandfather Henry James Arthrell, known as Jim? My answer to all these questions - except the last one about the name Jim - was yes.

The next comment made me at a loss for words: "We believe that someone in your family has died and you could be in line for an inheritance. We would like to see you this evening at about 7.30 pm; we are coming from Kensington." I asked who else they were seeing and I agreed to see them at my elderly aunt's house nearby.

As soon as the phone was replaced it rang again. Other members of the family were ringing each other to see if they had been contacted. I was a little suspicious so I contacted the police to see if it was some sort of scam. The police had not heard of it but gave me some pointers to protect my aunt and myself.

The time arrived and a young attractive lady knocked at the door and introduced herself from Finders International. I showed her my family tree and said that we knew who was alive and who was dead and that we were surprised by her visit. She would not at first tell us who had died, but I kept pressing and eventually she gave in and told us it was my great uncle's son who had lived in Strood.

Travels of a Tin Trunk

Michael Baker



Michael Baker's interest in family history was started by a great-uncle who once unrolled a family tree on the dining-room table. It was seven feet long. After a career in Electrical Engineering, including 20 years overseas, he opened some boxes in the Owletts' attic ...

In his issue of *The Clock Tower*, the fascinating story continues of what Michael found in the tin trunk belonging to Alfred, the brother of Michael's grandfather, Herbert Baker.

Part 9: Ireland and England, 1893 - 98

The next gems found in the trunk are a pair of "Pocket Game Registers", both dated 1895-96, issued by the E. C. Powder Company of Eyeworth in Hampshire, with instructions on loading, the cost of a gun licence (£3) and the dates of the seasons. Here is a typical page with Alfred's records of his days in the field:

DATE	GROUND SHOT OVER AND PARTY.	Pheasants.	Partridges.	Grouse.	Black Game.	Woodcock.	Snipe.	Wild Fowl.	Hares.	Rabbits.	TOTAL.	REMARKS, HOW DISPOSED OF, &c.
1894												
Aug. 13	Brasier Creep, Delyorath J. Guinness, J. Smith, self.	.	.	6	.	.	.	.	5	.	11	Ballyhorna Mb.
Oct. 23	W. Nichol, G. Nichol, G. Nichol J. Nichol, T. H. Nichol, W. Nichol.	28	2	.	.	.	.	.	20	2	52	Owletts
.. 25	W. S. Masters, Capt. H. W. S. B. self.	23	5	.	.	.	.	.	4	35	67	Owletts
.. 26	J. Scroton, W. S. B. self.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	83	83		Owletts
.. 27	H. S. B. self.	4	5	.	.	.	.	.	1	4	14	Owletts
.. 29	W. S. Masters, G. Nichol, G. Nichol J. S. B. self.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	31	31	Murstead
.. 31	W. S. Masters & self.	.	4	.	.	1	.	.	.	11	16	Canter

The Gun Club International Cup has been won five out of six times with "E.C." Powder in both barrels, viz.: in 1890, 1891, 1893, 1894 and 1895.

With the commitment of a new, positive committee, the use of the Oast began to take off. Now there is everything going on from aerobics and boxercise to yoga and zumba. For the youngsters there is Cycletots, Jo Jingles singing and movement, a youth club during school holidays, and a gaming hub. There are child-friendly coffee mornings, a dementia cafe and music for carers and disabled adults, crafts and social groups, including the Women's Institute. A small history group was also formed and local people started to come forward with fascinating tales and photos of the building through the ages, letters, receipts, and stories of hop picking.

Currently the Oast is guaranteed funds from *Groundwork Bags of Help*, through the Tesco carrier bag tax levy. The amount donated depends on local shoppers voting for one of the three charities nominated. This money is earmarked for improvements to the tea room, for an improved community space, with a view to welcoming more people to the Oast and it becoming more dementia-friendly. Through the efforts of a very dedicated committee and the support of the local community a dark sad looking building has become safe, inviting and welcoming place. It has also drawn a number of people together who share their knowledge, enthusiasm and friendship.



The Oast today viewed from Rainham Station; photograph, Hazel Thorn.

Acknowledgements

Action Forum, Liz O'Hanlon Secretary of the Oast Community Centre, Maggie Francis History Officer.

My aunt and I signed the form giving Finders permission to apply for the money on our behalf. I later spoke to family members and only two of them had ever heard of my great uncle's son. Nothing was heard from the company until the following summer when I rang to find out what was happening. They then requested if I would become the administrator for the estate, and when I asked what it entailed I was told next to nothing. How wrong that proved to be.

It transpired that as administrator I had a house to empty, get valued and then sold. On emptying the house I discovered my relative was a radio ham and had contacts around the world including King Hussein of Jordan as well as some high profile politicians. When I entered the bedroom and started looking in drawers and wardrobes, I found that he still had clothes from his dead wife who had died some 12 years earlier. The contents of the house were either sold or given away and some of the little bits and pieces were kept by me.

Once the estate had been settled I asked the solicitors and the Finders Company for a full list of those who had received a cut of the estate. Little did I realise that this request would start me on a hobby that would consume most of my spare time and become very addictive. The list arrived and I decided that I would write to many of the relatives who I knew very little if anything about. Letters went out and replies came in from around the world with information that was priceless.

It turned out that my great grandfather, Henry James Arthrell started life with his parents in Temple Street, Strood after being born in the Wrotham area on 19 July 1867. In about 1875 he was working as a chemist's messenger, but by the time of his death in 1948, Henry was chairman of his own haulage company. Henry died at home at 1 St. Catherine's, Halling on 17 October 1948 and left an estate of approximately £12,000.00, today a value of around half a million pounds. Looking into the history of H.J. Arthrell & Son Ltd. it appears that the company's 24 lorries were travelling throughout the United Kingdom. Some were away for up to two weeks at a time and the bulk of the work was carrying cement as far as Scotland. In 1948 when the whole of the transport industry in the United Kingdom was nationalised, the government paid out approximately £84,000.00 to Henry's company for his stock and lorries.

Henry and his wife Emma Kent, who was born in the Wouldham area of Kent on 6 June 1869 and died in 1940 in Halling, had ten children, five boys and five girls; one of each died before their 21st birthday. Two of the sisters married two brothers (Howard) and the other two sisters married two other brothers (Wickers).

Henry had a number of jobs during his life. He was a market gardener in Higham, he had a greengrocer's business in Cuxton Road, Strood and High Street, Rochester, he was a restaurateur in Strood, a coal merchant, and also a Rochester Councillor for the Tory Party. Henry was also the lay leader of the Gospel Mission Church in Brompton Lane for 12 years and there was a plaque in the Church to that effect.

In 1881 Henry was living at 19 Temple Street, Strood where the census shows him as a chemist's messenger aged 13. Ten years later in 1891, Henry was married, working as a general labourer and living at 35 Bowes Road, Strood. In 1901 Henry was living with his family at 167 High Street, Strood and was working on his own account as a restaurateur and employing two servants. Then in 1911 he and the family were living at Gore Green, Lower Higham. Henry also lived in Gordon Road, Strood and 4 Goddington Road, Strood where he had his transport yard opposite where now stand the flats called Epps Court. He also purchased 6 Goddington Road which he donated to the local Methodist Church as accommodation for the minister. While living in Higham, Henry and his family were involved with the Congregational Church and later (as explained above) at the Gospel Mission church also in Strood. In fact the fourth generation of the family is still involved with the church.

The next part will focus on the children of Henry and Emma Arthrell.



The Arthrell shop, as featured in Ian's first article in November 2016.

After that, it seems it lost its way with various different groups of people trying to get it up and running, but at the same time the fabric of the old building was not really sufficiently looked after and maintained regularly. Consequently another 20 years on, the present committee found it in the state it was in.

Through the 2000s the building hosted a chess club, quiz nights, the Rainham and District Dolls House and Miniaturist Group, *Oast 'ouse 'opping* Morris dancers, bridge and whist clubs, Rosemary Conley diet and fitness, Weight Watchers, badminton and line dancing, children's playgroups, and guitar lessons at the Folk Club.

In 2015 some local residents became concerned at the condition of the shared boundary wall and were keen to help raise funds for the work. The building was generally becoming rundown and with only a small committee and no council involvement, it was difficult to manage. The old committee didn't stand at the next AGM and a new committee came into place, then one year later a new committee again came into place with fundraising and redevelopment at the heart of the agenda. This involved fundraising events, community engagement activities to get the Oast on the map, such as a Macmillan World's Biggest Coffee Morning, and new things to try. This year (2018) there was a beer festival and local companies sponsored over 30 barrels; the event was so successful there are plans already for 2019. Appeals went out for help, skills, ideas, and donations. Many local businesses, banks, supermarkets and shops rallied, donated furniture refurbished and people all helping knit the community together.

The chairman of the new committee was Paul Clark, the shadow MP. His father and uncle had worked at the Oast so he had a link and an interest; Paul was also chairman of the Rainham and Wigmore Residents Association. Many local businesses and groups worked hard to upgrade the facilities. The Woodland Trust donated shrubs which the students from Mid-Kent College planted to improve the area around the car park, which had been resurfaced by Southern Rail who own the land. The glass in the sack chutes was replaced and made secure, this prevented the pigeons from getting into the building. Whilst the roof was being repaired the workmen found bird nests in the gaps between the tiles, the birds were left to fledge, and the generosity of the scaffold company allowed a local group who make bird boxes, Men in Sheds, to have safe access to place boxes in appropriate areas. Some 50 apprentice bricklayers from Mid Kent College worked to repair the 120 year old boundary wall. This was the problem which had initiated the whole refurbishment project, and the project also giving them valuable practical experience. Kent, Surrey, Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company supplied labour for clearing, cleaning, painting and any skilled and unskilled jobs that needed to be done, including converting a storage room into an accessible toilet. The courtyard was jet washed and refurbished with painted walls, donated artificial turf, benches and raised flowerbeds: volunteers came from local groups and businesses. By the end of 2017 enough funds had been raised to repair the kiln wall.

When is an Oast not an Oast

Hazel Thorn



Hazel was born and has lived in the Medway towns all her life. She spent 30 plus years working in Kent and Medway Libraries and first got into local history working with a blind local history librarian at Springfield. She was one of the AIM group who produced the two volumes of Times of Our Lives recording the lives of the women in Medway, and then Dewponds and Doodlebugs, history of Walderslade for the Kent Arts and Libraries. More recently Hazel helped Doris Herlihy with her project on Parkwood. She is on the FPOGA committee and also enjoys photography and crafts.

Part Three: When this Oast is a Jewel in the Community

The Oast functioned as a community centre during the 1980s and 90s. There was a small team who ran the committee and the bar. Gillingham Borough Council had been very supportive of the project, but when Medway Council was formed as a Unitary Authority in 1997, the focus on Rainham was sadly lost. The community element went quiet though many varied groups still used the premises.

The variety of groups using the Oast mentioned in *Action Forum* during this time covered many interests. Folk at the Oast appeared regularly, as did Caledonian Scottish Dancing; the Rainham Afternoon Women's Institute met monthly (the evening one at a different venue), the Evangelical Church also held weekly meetings, and in the early 1990s there was a Folk Festival.

In the mid 1990s plans were drawn up for the Oast to become the Arts Centre for Medway. A lottery grant was awarded but the match funding which was required for it to go ahead, didn't happen. Then in 1999 there was an appeal to pay for some repair work. Morris Dancing in the precinct drew attention to the need for repairs and other fund raisers included a German themed evening, a Spanish themed evening, and regular boot fairs, even door-to-door collecting.

Rochester High Street Through the Eyes of a Child in the Early 1950s

Julie Gay

Julie Gay has lived in Rochester all her life, except for a couple of days when she was born in Chatham! Her first twenty years were in a flat on Rochester High Street near Northgate, so she has seen many, many changes over the years.

We are indebted to Julie for allowing us to publish this work which was written in 2016.

Part 3: From Northgate Onwards

Be careful we are going to cross the busy Northgate junction – wait for the traffic lights to change and still wait a few seconds till the traffic stops. As I said before, more than a few accidents happened at this crossroads. Living just a few yards away you got to the stage of hearing a bang and saying “another accident” and then just getting on with whatever you were doing.

Ok it is safe – over we go!

London Fashion Store was on the corner. A large, up to the minute ladies fashion house, with prices that most people could not always afford. If you were good with your needle there were design ideas to copy and make at a fraction of the cost. Mum used to make my clothes when I was a child and if I saw a style I liked she would try to copy it.

Another austere building that a child never entered unless with an adult, was that of Tribe, Clarke, Dorton and Pollock. Four clever men within who ran a successful chartered accounting office. Johnson Dry Cleaners was a tiny shop that did the cleaning on the premises. Living above the shop was a Miss Boyce, a lovely lady who had time for everyone and who used to wave to me from her window across the road.

The Rochester headquarters of The British Red Cross occupied the next building with training rooms upstairs and a medical loan centre on the ground floor and basement. The medical loan centre was run by a Mrs Chapman and she was there five days a week to loan out bedpans, bed cradles, crutches, wheelchairs and commodes among other things. Adults trained in the upstairs rooms under the guidance of a very tall, upright lady by the name of Mrs South, on a Monday. On a Wednesday the main room was used for a whist drive and on a Friday it was the turn of the cadets from the age of 11 to 16 years. The Area Director in charge was a small but very approachable lady by the name of Mrs Oag.

At this point, I will tell you a little story. I used to stand at my front room window or at my mum and dad's bedroom window and watch the goings on in that building. Mum could not get me away from the windows till the lights went out across the road. In 1953 at the tender age of six, mum got so fed up with me sitting or standing at the window that she took my hand one Friday evening and we walked across the road and into that building. Mum asked the officer in charge if I could join. We were told I was too young but if mum agreed I could go over and watch from their room. This was a dream come true and I not only watched but I was used as a practice casualty. This dream was to last some 14 years and I rose through the ranks to senior instructor.

Most of the banks in the High Street had a branch at this end and yet another stood next to the Red Cross Offices. This one was Lloyds under the manager Mr Pepperday, a tall gentleman always in a dark suit and looking very smart: even when not at work he always dressed smartly. He and his wife lived in the flat above the bank, and a Mr Luckhurst had the top floor flat. The décor of the bank followed the tradition of the 1950s with dark wood interiors and no screens or security features to shield the tellers. Mr Pepperday had his own office for private business but mostly sat at a tall desk at the back of the tellers.

Oh what an emporium was Mr Skinner's Gift and Art Depot! Reeves paints, brushes and canvases were on one side, paintings and fragile gifts on the other. A small child was not allowed in without an adult and with the strict instructions to "stand still and do not touch."

What a different story next door though. A small child's heaven – a toy shop with the name over the fascia of Lane's Toys. This piece of heaven was run by Mr and Mrs Comber, two really jolly people who knew how to win the hearts of children. Presents for children in those days were for girls, a doll and perhaps a pram, a dolls house or a tea set. For boys it was a wooden train set or an early version of Meccano. Both also loved a wooden scooter which gave hours of fun when ridden in safe places – not up and down the high street. The only problem with the much loved scooters was when your shoes went to be repaired your parents were often told that the spine or back of the shoe was broken due to riding the scooter. Evidently the result of the constant use of the right foot to propel the scooter. Oh dear! But it did not deter children from riding on their scooters.

Rochester and Chatham Printing and Stationery shop was a small shop with paper everywhere and early printing presses at the back of the shop. If you were in the shop or passing by as they were sorting the paper off cuts you were given them to draw on. A coloured pencil or chalk and a piece of paper meant no more drawing on the wall paper.

Patricia's' Pantry, a typical high class café of the day serving morning coffee, lunch and afternoon tea with sandwiches and cakes partaken of in the shop on road level.

At the rear was a large hall with a large clear and coloured glass bow end (a forerunner of the conservatory). This area was used for wedding receptions and parties as it led on to a walled, well laid out and tended garden. In both the 1940s and 1950s it was *The Place* to put on any invitation as the venue. It was painted green with a trellis of either wood or metal – more than likely wood- along the upper floor windows.

A.G. Smith, a hardware store* – similar to Collis up the street- but this shop did not sell the bigger items that Collis had. If you wanted a nail or a screw, a hammer or chisel this was the shop you went to. With walls of drawers of all shapes and sizes there was sure to be the item that fitted your requirement. If Dad wanted a screw or some other item from this shop, he would write a note and wrap the money inside and put it in my pocket, see me across the road and watch and wait for me to come back. To me it was like visiting friends to run this errand.

A large brick building at the end of this row of shops always looked out of place due to the size. It housed the Ocean Accident and Guarantee Corporation Ltd., a grand name to a child with no idea what went on behind that front door.

Lloyds Garage and Thomas Fowle Funeral Directors were housed in low wooden buildings. The large windows of Lloyds were the display for the black limousines used for weddings and funerals. What a shine these vehicles had, it must have taken hours of polishing to maintain that high gloss. The chauffeurs of these vehicles were always very smart with suits and peaked caps. These buildings were just the showroom, the garage was at the bottom of Boley Hill where it joined Epaul Lane.

The Gordon Hotel owned and run by two sisters, the Misses Strickland. A poky, dingy looking place with thick lace curtains at all the windows. Isn't it funny how some things stand out. The Misses Strickland had the appearance of witches, and the thick lace curtains gave an air of mystery even to a small child.

Joseph Stanley, a bespoke gentleman's outfitters under the capable management of Mr and Mrs Easton who again lived in the flat over the shop. This was a shop a child, especially a girl, did not go into unless with their father, but the Eastons were very friendly to everyone who passed by.

Julie Gay's walk down Rochester High Street will continue in the next issue of The Clock Tower.

*FOMA Chairman, Elaine Gardner adds: "A.G. Smith is still a place to go to for any size nut, bolt or screw even when you just want one of them and not a whole packet!"