

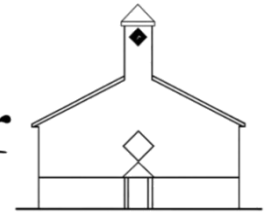
Holocaust Memorial Day

On 27 January each year Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) remembers the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust under Nazi persecution. Read more about this in Rob Flood's article on page 9, and the project *Closer Than You Think*, which brings together the near neighbours of Rochester's The Ship Inn (pictured below and thought to be one of the oldest LGBT pubs in the country) and the Chatham Memorial Synagogue.



Photograph, Christina Lamb - Intra Arts.

The Clock Tower



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The Friends of Medway Archives
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Dreaming of Freedom ...



Above: the view from Burham with St Mary's Church, centre, looking towards the River Medway, Snodand and Birling Hill. Taken August 2005; photograph by David Thomas.

The end of lockdown may be in sight. Many of us have survived the dark winter days by taking walks in our wonderful English countryside and soon we will be able to roam much further On 26 January 2021, Medway Archives Centre Local Studies Librarian, Norma Crowe led an online Reminiscences Session with volunteers to discuss the effect of lockdown and countryside walks came out as one of the best therapies. Read more on page 18.

Also inside – Philip MacDougall's *Medway Welcomes the Russian Navy*. See page 26.

Dreaming of Freedom ...

With the end of lockdown hopefully in sight, *Clock Tower* Editor, Amanda Thomas shares some holiday snaps from 2019 to remind us that soon we will be able to roam a little further

Read how others have coped with lockdown on page 18.



Above: the Scottish Highlands; below: the Italian Riviera. Photographs by David and Amanda Thomas.



Dreaming of Freedom ...

With the end of lockdown hopefully in sight, *Clock Tower* Editor, Amanda Thomas shares some more holiday snaps from 2019 to remind us that soon we will be able to roam a little further

Read how others have coped with lockdown on page 18.



*Above: the enigmatic Lindisfarne causeway
Below: Telford's Menai Suspension Bridge in North Wales with Snowdonia in the background.*



Photographs by David and Amanda Thomas.

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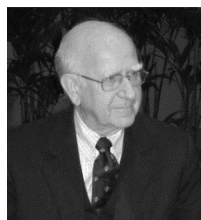
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Chairman's Letter

Elaine Gardner



Greetings and hoping for a better New Year. It's still January as I write this so hopefully not too late to send New Year greetings.

Who could have imagined as I wrote my newsletter for the May 2020 edition of *The Clock Tower* that we would still be locked down/in/up – however you like to think of it! I was a bit more hopeful in the middle of the year when restrictions eased that we would soon get to meet and I hesitated in cancelling the year's programme only doing so for each event as the chance of that talk going ahead disappeared. I have just cancelled the event scheduled for 12 March this year (Alison Cable's talk about the Rochester Bridge Trust Archive) and I suspect April's AGM will disappear again as well, but - ever optimistic - I haven't cancelled that booking yet. Indeed, we might be in a position where we postpone the AGM, and for that reason we are not including the usual AGM documents with this issue of *The Clock Tower*. Depending on what happens, these will either be sent by post or email, or included in the May issue of the journal. On the bright side I already have the programme set up for 2021/22 with just dates to confirm with the various speakers! It looks as though this issue will be going by post once again to all of you so I can only thank my lovely post lady (is that allowed?) who, if I tell her I will be sending them out the next day, will stop her van outside my door and, with a smile, take the whole box of 120 or so. What service! She is a very special key worker.

Our Treasurer, Josie Iles has regretfully decided to step down from the FOMA committee owing to personal commitments. I would like to thank her very much for her years working for and with us and wish her well for the future. Hopefully she will still remain a FOMA member. We will be looking for new members on the committee once things improve so if you would like to join us in our efforts to support the Medway Archives Centre (MAC), please let any of the committee know; we are all listed at the back on page 46.

When restrictions eased during July, August and early September, I did get across to MAC briefly to drop off their *Clock Tower* magazines but only saw one or two of the staff who happened to be in that day. A couple of weeks' ago when Norma Crowe sent out an invitation to her staff and MAC volunteers to join a trial online reminiscence session I was

delighted to volunteer and have a chance to catch up and see people again. The only drawback was that the session would be via Microsoft Teams: Medway Council insist on Teams it appears, but it is not particularly reliable. To date I have only had one experience of a meeting on Teams, at a local school Trustee Governors meeting, and it was a bit of a nightmare to say the least! Getting into it in the first place, getting my camera to operate and then finding the controls (which are so easy to use in Zoom), as only the Head Teacher's PA had any idea of how it works. Sadly our MAC Reminiscence session did not change my opinion of Microsoft Teams! It took ages for people's pictures to appear and they would randomly disappear leaving just their initials before appearing again. It was most frustrating, but it was great to interact with people again – if only to *hear* their reflections on lockdown. I briefly spotted Amanda Thomas taking notes and you can read more about the session on page 18.

The session made us all realise how we miss the human interaction which we used to take for granted. I so look forward to the time when we can meet again face-to-face. Let's hope it is soon!

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 62 of *The Clock Tower* is Monday 26 April 2021, with publication on Wednesday 19 May 2021.

Publication date

The fourth Wednesday following the editorial deadline.

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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 Dr 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 Centre, 32 Bryant Road, Strood, Rochester, Kent, ME2 3EP. 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 FOMA Chairman: Elaine Gardner, 102 Valley View Road, Rochester, ME1 3NX, Kent; emgardner@virginmedia.com; 01634 408595. All correspondence should be directed to the FOMA Secretary: Christopher de Coulon Berthoud, 4 Albert Road, Rochester, ME1 3DG, Kent; berthoud@blueyonder.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: becole40@gmail.com

News and Events

Calendar of Forthcoming Events and Exhibitions

FOMA Talks and Events

All events are subject to change and to government guidance for public gatherings. Further information will be available on the FOMA website (www.foma-lsc.org), our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/fomalsc) and sent to members via email, where appropriate.

Friday 9 April 2021, 7.00 for 7.30 pm,
FOMA AGM.

Booking for FOMA events is not necessary and **are now held at St Nicholas Church Lower Hall, Strood, Rochester, Kent. ME2 4TR**; car park entrance is off Gun Lane, almost opposite the Health Centre. Please check our website (www.foma-lsc.org) for further information and for other forthcoming events. Talks are £3 for members, £5 non-members. Booking for Quiz Nights and enquiries through the FOMA Chairman: Elaine Gardner, 102 Valley View Road, Rochester, ME1 3NX, Kent; emgardner@virginmedia.com; 01634 408595.

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.

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

32 Bryant Rd, Rochester ME2 3EP; 01634 332714.

Please consult the Medway Council website for further information on re-opening:
https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200182/arts_and_heritage/317/medway_archives_centre/3

Obituary

Rosemary Ann Jennings
3 May 1947 – 4 December 2020



We were most saddened to hear of the death of Rosie Jennings. Rosie was an enthusiastic and loyal member of the Friends of Medway Archives and many of you will remember her and husband Michael at FOMA events. We send our sincere condolences to Michael and thank him for providing the following words and the lovely photograph of Rosie above.

Rosie was born at 47 Birdhurst Rise in Croydon, the second of four children to her parents, Tom and Audrey GODBOLD. She went to Ashburton School, progressing at age 11, from the junior school to the secondary modern school. Rosie had numerous friendships, several that have lasted over sixty years! During her time at school, she learned all the tricks of naughty behaviour, such as banging desk lids in a kind of Mexican wave, harmless but annoying! Her awareness of these tricks stood her in good stead later, during her working life. One school photograph has her laying across the laps of her friends! She had success in a number of GCE subjects but developed an abiding love of science and the French language.

Upon leaving school, she studied to be a laboratory technician at Paddington Tech, where she met and eventually married her first husband. Sadly, the marriage ended in the mid-1970s and she was left to raise her family alone. A task she undertook with determination and ultimate success. It was during this period that Rosie's voluntary work began in earnest. She became District Assistant for the Girl Guides in Medway and Chair of Rainham School for Girls Parents Fund Raising Committee. Her success is reflected in her daughter's marriage in 1995 to a teacher at the school where Rosie worked and in the joy of her son, Matthew, daughter-in-law, Pauline and two beloved grandchildren, Jessica and Daniel.

In 1988, Rosie, working as a lab technician at Rainham School for Girls, decided to take a GCSE at an adult education class, *British Government and Politics*. with the aim of preparing herself to study part-time for a degree with the Open University. It was at this class that she met Michael. It is fair to say that they held differing views and Arthur Kimber, the tutor, took advantage of this often setting up class discussions and letting them loose! Opposites do attract and eventually she fell in love with Michael and he with her. They married on 3rd December 1990, honeymooning in Newquay and celebrating Michael's birthday, 6th December, at the same time; the hotel was beautifully decorated for Christmas. Her son, Matthew, described himself and Michael as a tag-team. As a teenager, Matthew looked after his mother and Michael arrived in time to take on this duty of care as Matthew left home to go to university! Rosie and Michael both studied part-time for their degrees with the Open University, Rosie one year ahead. In 1996, Rosie passed her exams and gained a 1st class BSc (Hons) degree. It is a tribute to her humility that she was never the one to reveal this success. This was down to Michael, who was inordinately proud of her. To cap this success, the Open University invited her to be an Associate Lecturer. In that role, she was able to process with the other academics at her husband's graduation the following year.

As well as continuing her day job, Rosie's role with the Open University grew and she became an Examination Script-marker and Mentor to new Associate Lecturers. She took pride in going into prisons to teach prisoners and on one occasion, gave an informative and well-received talk at the Ministry of Justice on the *Role of the Tutor in Prisons*. During her school career, she eventually came to manage the school laboratory at Rainham, organising the technicians (and truth to tell, some of the teachers) ensuring that practical lessons were delivered properly. She was further involved as Chair of the school Health & Safety committee and was a UNISON rep.

When she retired from full-time work in 2008, Rosie was asked if she would become a part-time examination invigilator. With her customary zeal she swiftly became Chief Invigilator until her final retirement in 2019! Following her

Editor's Footnotes

Amanda Thomas



Christmas Update!

For most of us Christmas 2020 was always going to be a little different. In the last issue of *The Clock Tower* (Issue 60, November 2020), I talked about resourcefulness and a return to more old-fashioned values - you can read Odette Buchanan's response to this on the previous page! What I certainly hadn't reckoned on was a return to the austerity of the seventeenth century when, in 1644, Christmas celebrations were effectively abolished. The scaling down of celebrations this year and the restrictions imposed by lockdown have impressed on all of us the importance - in fact, the necessity - of friends and family. This was something we were all keen to discuss during the reminiscence session on 26 January which was organised by MAC's Norma Crowe, and of which you can read more on page 18.

Whilst it was awful not to be able to celebrate Christmas in the usual way, I must say it was rather nice to have a break from all the usual cooking, tidying up and bed making. I enjoyed the peace, knowing normality has to return some time soon, and was also buoyed by this rather thoughtful present (below) from my husband which reminded me of my wonderful origins. Christmas was also a time to catch up online with emails and - for some of us - a bit of family history research. If you are into family history and (as well as FOMA) are a member of the Kent Family History Society, I urge you to put pen to paper and write about your ancestors for the 2021 Alan Neame Award. Details can be found on page 13.



My new 'Made in Strood' mug. The best Christmas present and perfect for coffee or tea!

As you see, there is more to the lady than being turned into a fictional character by E J Howard. As far as the books are concerned, may I ask a favor? Would you be able to find me a photograph of Marjorie Gunn? I would like to know if she looks like the character in the book ...

If you still are interested in my research, I will let you know if I find anything of interest. Best wishes,

Muriel.

If readers know of any photographs of Marjorie Gunn, please contact the Editor, Amanda Thomas; details on page 46.

Home-Made Christmas Pressies

In the last Clock Tower (Issue 60, November 2020), Amanda Thomas discussed the virtues of home-made Christmas presents. FOMA committee member, Odette Buchanan was swift to respond with her own memories.

24 November 2020.

I remember buying 1lbs of bath salts, putting them into fancy jam jars and giving them. Also - dried milk tins, covered in pretty paper full of 'spills' made from same pretty paper - these stood on many mantelpieces lighting fire for use of male persons' pipes and female persons' fags. Then there was sycamore 'wings' and other fancy nut things like acorns - paint them bright colour, glue safety pin on back - voila! Hideous brooch! Then there were garish place mats made from lengths of french knitting and pom-poms made from wool bound round cardboard milk bottle tops and cut thru'. Just fancy - all those baby-boomer end-of-war babies whose prams were decorated with them are now pensioners!

Odette Buchanan



retirement from full-time work, a seasonal role as Chief Invigilator was not enough for Rosie; so she volunteered and became a member of the Independent Monitoring Board, monitoring the day-to-day life in the local prison, Cookham Wood to ensure that proper standards of care and decency were maintained. Needless to say, Rosie had special responsibility for education! Her compassionate nature produced at least one good result. A boy who was very introverted opened up and spoke with her, surprising the prison psychiatrist who told her that the boy had refused all his attempts to converse.

It was also about this time that Rosie went on her first cruise to the Caribbean. Michael had arranged a *Renewal of Vows* service on *Sea Princess*, some of their friends who witnessed the ceremony are here today via weblink. She was overjoyed and she immediately bought a new dress, shoes and handbag – this will come as no surprise to those who knew her! She and Michael, with their friends, were privileged to be invited to the bridge by the Captain as the ship was due to sail – it was Rosie who was invited to sound the ship's whistle (six short and one long blast) to signal the ship was about to sail!

Whilst volunteering as a Steward at Rochester Cathedral, Rosie became involved in a conversation with the then Head of King's School, Rochester who told her that she was just the right person they needed to join the governing body at his school – she took this as a compliment. Rosie, however, joined the Academy Council of a failing school in Gillingham, quickly becoming Vice-Chair. When the school entered special measures, she was asked by the Academy Trust to Chair the Interim Executive Committee and work closely with the Head Teacher to improve the situation. With her typical enthusiasm and support the school jumped to "Good" status at the next Inspection!

Rosie's involvement at Rochester Cathedral was, typically 100% commitment. She took on the role of Group Leader, organising the stewards in her group to help run Services. Between 2016-2018, Rosie and Michael volunteered as Event Hosts. In 2019, they were asked if they would jointly take over organising the Event Hosts. They said they were going on holiday (yet another Caribbean cruise) and would let people know when they returned. During a visit to Barbados, Michael was able to check emails and discovered that Rosie and he had apparently agreed to be co-leaders of the Event Hosts and would organise Hosts for the 40th Anniversary Concert by *The Sixteen*, two days after their return! It will come as no surprise that the concert went well!

Rosie was organised and always available to help and encourage. The response to her passing from the Cathedral community, the Association of Men of Kent and Kentish Men and her wider circle of friends, has been one of overwhelming love. Rosie will always be remembered for her sense of fashion – she was always

smartly dressed. In winter her (faux) fur jacket was regarded as a “comfort coat” to several - including at least one former verger! Michael often teased her about her collection of over 50 hand-bags and for those who remember the 1990s, enough shoes to make Imelda Marcos jealous!

Primarily, however, her friends and colleagues will remember that she neither looked or acted her age. Choosing instead to recall her sense of fun and particularly her smile, with the twinkle in her eye

As an avid reader of English literature, and of EJ Howard, I have made a little enquiry about her, therefore my mail.

Yours sincerely,

Muriel Lhermé.

14 December 2020

Dear Amanda,

I have been doing some more research on Marjorie Gunn than the ones I have been writing about in my mail. The lady seemed to have had an eventful life.

During the First WW, she was part of the “Miss Lena Ashwell's concert party” which toured Europe to entertain Tommies. I spotted her in Belgium in 1915. She was then playing with Kate Coates (who was a pianist and became a composer) and Esmé Church who rose to fame as an Old Vic actress and director: she was the director of the famed *As You Like It* with Michael Redgrave and Edith Evans.

Then she began a solo career and had her first London concert in 1916 to some acclaim. Her accompanist was Myra Hess. Around the same time, she auditioned to enter in an agent's company “Ibbs and Tillett” which accepted her. Around 1920, her career seemed to slow down and she went on teaching in Down House, an exclusive public school for girls. She taught violin and generally appeared in the school magazine as “director of Music”. Nowadays, there is a “Marjorie Gunn prize [prize] for music” in the school. Myra Hess went there a lot of times to play Bach for instance and Marjorie Gunn conducted the chamber orchestra. There is a record of one of the sessions. In that school, she taught music to people who became of note, such as Anne Ridler (poetess) and Evelyn Rothwell (oboist). They mentioned her in their auto bios.

She lived with her sister and mother at 56 Abbey Road, with Myra Hess at 54 Abbey Road. Her sister became Myra Hess' secretary and spend [sic] decades with her as her companion, secretary, nurse and so on. During the 2 WW, Marjorie Gunn went on to drive an ambulance and there are stories when she drove M H in it to attend concerts.

Some of her connections were particularly interesting and, to me, unexpected: she had been living and studying music in Germany and was friend with Adolf Petzold [see Alison Cable's remarks on the previous page] and he [and] his wife, Hedwig (later on, the same Hedwig had a relationship with W Auden). He was a populist writer and left wing. During her brief soloist career, she played with Magda von Hattingberg, who, later on, became Rilke's pen-friend: there are a book collecting his letters to her “Letters to Benvenuta”.

'Diaries of Marjorie Gunn 1910-1923: Introduction

Mary Marjorie Gordon Gunn was born in 1888, in Strood, and died in London, 1967. She was the daughter of Barrett and Florence Gunn (née Winckworth). Barrett Gunn was a Royal Navy surgeon. The family lived at Elm Lodge, St Margaret's Street, Rochester, according to the 1911 Census. Marjorie attended music school in Surrey (possibly at Hindhead) and went on to become a concert violinist. Evidence from the diaries suggests that she taught music or violin at Downe School [then in Kent] for a short time, circa 1920. In later life Marjorie lived at Abbey Road, St John's Wood London, and it was here that her mother died in 1928.

Marjorie's maternal grandmother was Mrs Penelope Hulkes - the Hulkes family ran a brewery in Strood. [see DE1210 for Hulkes family legal documents].

Marjorie Gunn's diaries mostly describe trips to Europe (Germany, Austria, Switzerland) and it would appear that the trips to Germany were often related to Marjorie's music training. The trips nearly always include visits to the Petzold family.

There is no implication that Marjorie ceased to keep a diary during WWI, and in fact she only refers to a hiatus of one year when she recommences her journal in December 1919 [see DE1225/2]. The diaries are heavily illustrated with comical drawings, postcards and original photographs.

Custodial history is unknown: these diaries were bought at a London auction in 2011. Accession 1298. Deposited by FOMA. Catalogued June 2012. Copyright holder not established.

http://cityark.medway.gov.uk/query/results/?Mode=Search&SearchMode=explorer&SearchWords=&DateList=&.submit=Submit+Query&Boolean=AND&Results=25&PathList=%2FUnofficial_or_Privately_Originated_Collections%2FDE1225_Diaries_Marjorie_Gunn%2F&.cgifields=Verbose&.cgifields=Exact. ' '

03 December 2020

Dear Amanda,

I am French therefore my not-so-fluent English. I would like to contribute to a topic your magazine dealt about in 2012 You acknowledged that FOMA had bought Marjorie Gunn's diaries. She was a close friend of Myra Hess, a successful concertist, and her sister Anita was Myra Hess' secretary. And above all, she has been turned into a fictional character by Elizabeth Jane Howard in her Cazalet chronicles She is Sid, Rachel's friend and lover, Rachel Cazalet being Ruth Howard, EJ Howard's aunt.

Vice-Chairman's Ramblings

Rob Flood

In place of Chris de Coulon Berthoud's usual column, Rob Flood shares some Medway news.



Photographed in 2020, Rob is wearing a protective visor produced by the American new wave band from Akron, Ohio called Devo. The mask is a play on the hats worn in the video for their hit, Whip It, from 1980.

On 27 January each year, we mark Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) and remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust under Nazi persecution during the early years of the twentieth century. For HMD this year, and also to acknowledge LGBT History Month, a project called *Closer Than You Think*, brings together the near neighbours of Rochester's The Ship Inn (thought to be one of the oldest LGBT pubs in the country) and the Chatham Memorial Synagogue.

Facing each other on the Chatham Intra stretch of High Street where Chatham and Rochester meet, the two communities represented by these historic venues have both suffered prejudice and discrimination. During the Nazi regime homosexual men were identified by a large 'pink triangle' – also worn on concentration camp uniforms - and Jews by a 'yellow star'; many paid the ultimate price. The project uses these images to symbolise a bringing together of the two communities in a shared remembrance of the atrocities they endured during the Holocaust. Chatham Memorial Synagogue (see below) and the Ship Inn (see the back cover) are decorated with fabric replicas of these two iconic symbols, and an exhibition showing how the symbols were used – along with images of Jewish and homosexual prisoners - is on display in the windows at INTRA Arts until the end of February 2021.

Closer Than You Think is led by Peter Moorcraft, Intra Arts director, and local historian, Martin Adams a musician and gay rights campaigner, and Irina Fridman, an author and education and outreach manager at Chatham Memorial Synagogue. Irina has long had an association with the Medway Archives Centre and FOMA and much of her work, including that on the Jewish community in Medway, has been published in *The Clock Tower* (see the online Index for further details). Irina's new book 'Foreigners, Aliens, Citizens – Medway and its Jewish community, 1066 – 1939' is also featured in the INTRA Arts' windows.

In addition, the exhibition at INTRA features a selection of fascinating local LGBTQIA+ photographs and ephemera collected by me and Chris de Coulon Berthoud for our ongoing project, *Outing Medway's Past*. We are looking for stories about and from the Medway LGBTQIA+ community, so please get in touch with me if you have something to share. We are particularly interested in stories about the Dockyard, its workers, the merchant seamen and the sailors that passed through, tales about the pubs and social life in the Towns – both pre- and post- the 1967 partial decriminalisation, and what it was like to grow up as a non-hetero person in Medway.

You can contact me, anonymously if needs be, at rob@outingmedwayspast.co.uk or through the website www.outingmedwayspast.co.uk.

Closer Than You Think is generously supported with funding from the City of Rochester Society, and Historic England's High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) Programme in collaboration with Medway Council. Additional support from Intra Arts and Hulkes Lane Darkroom & Studio.



Chatham Memorial Synagogue. Photograph, Christina Lamb - Intra Arts

The nearly three years during which I worked in this building has provided me with many memories, including how cold it was in the winter, the bus exhaust fumes entering through the open doors of the Centre on warm days (the High Street was still open to traffic at this point) and having the company of a member of the City of Rochester Society at the weekends. I don't know when the Council purchased (or perhaps even rented) the property but I can confirm that it was occupied by the Tourist Information Centre from 1976.

Best regards,

Deborah Collins (pictured right).



The Diaries of Marjorie Gunn



In August 2012, in *The Clock Tower*, Issue 27, then Archivist Alison Cable (pictured left) wrote in her column, *Archives Update*:

'I have recently re-catalogued the records of Cliffe Parish Council (to include additional material) and the diaries of Marjorie Gunn.

The FOMA Collection was launched in April 2010 at the fifth AGM with the symbolic handing over to MALSC of some 52 historic documents relating to the Medway area (see *The Clock Tower*, Issue 18, May 2010).

The diaries of Marjorie Gunn were purchased by FOMA, at auction in May 2011 and shed a fascinating light on Marjorie and her family, as they enjoyed regular trips to the continent. The volumes mainly date from the early 1920s and are illustrated with numerous photographs, postcards and amusing drawings of various scenes and situations encountered on their trips to Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Marjorie clearly had a good sense of humour and enjoyed poking fun at friends, relatives...and most of all, herself. I have also discovered that Marjorie was a professional musician (violin) and was directly related to the Hulkes family (Hulkes Brewery) of Strood and the Winckworths. (See *The Clock Tower*, Issue 24, November 2011, pp. 8-11, *The Clock Tower*, Issue 12, November 2008, pages 39-40, and the FOMA website, <http://www.foma-lsc.org/Downloads/Catalogue%20Collection.pdf>. The collection has been catalogued under the reference: DE1225 and reads as follows:

Readers' Letters

We welcome letters and emails from readers with their comments. If you have anything you would like to say please email the Editor, Amanda Thomas, Editor, at amanda@ajthomas.com, the FOMA Secretary, Chris de Coulon Berthoud at berthoud@blueyonder.co.uk, or visit the FOMA website, www.foma-lsc.org/index.htm or our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/fomalsc>

The Lloyd Family of Rochester



21 January 2021.

Having read the above article [*The Lloyd Family of Rochester* by Pauline Weeds (pictured above) *The Clock Tower*, Issues 58 – 60 inclusive] I can add some information on what happened to the car showroom in Rochester High Street after it closed down as for a few years I worked in one part of the building.

In September 1975 I joined what was then Rochester Council as one of the two Tourist Information Assistants who were going to run the new Tourist Information Centre which they were planning to open. This did not happen until May 1976 when we moved into the part of the old showrooms which was next to the alley. The building had been divided into three shops with the Tourist Information Centre at one and Age Concern in the middle. I cannot remember what the shop was at the end. At the back of the Tourist Information Centre was the slope up which the cars would have been brought up into the showroom (which was very handy for parking!). I recall at one point being taken up the stairs (which I think were located in the last unit of the three) and shown the top floor of the building which was not being used as it was in an unsafe state. I don't recall that any work was carried out on this part of the building up to the time I left in December 1978.

FOMA News



FOMA congratulates our Webmaster, Dr Alexander Thomas (pictured), who has been awarded his PhD in Archaeology and Anthropology from the University of Bristol. His thesis explored the archaeological and manuscript landscapes of the Danelaw Boundary of the late 9th century.

The Danelaw Boundary (pictured) was seemingly a political divide that existed between the Kingdom of Wessex and the Danelaw; it was created by a peace agreement between Kings Alfred and Guthrum. Alex's thesis argued that the Danelaw Boundary provides a valuable insight into the governance of Anglo-Saxon and Viking Age England. This is because the Boundary affords for an important interconnection to be drawn between contemporary boundaries and the part they played in the law codes of the time.

Alex was supervised by Drs Stuart Prior and Lucy Cramp, as well as Professors Joanna Brück (of University College Dublin), Mark Horton (of the Cultural Heritage Institute, Royal Agricultural College), and Levi Roach (of the University of Exeter).



A Sonic Palimpsest: Revisiting Chatham Historic Dockyards

This major AHRC project started in September 2020 and is running until the end of 2022. It aims to recreate soundscapes of the past and explore the use of sound in heritage contexts. The project emanates from soundscape studies and will examine the sound environments of past incarnations of the Chatham Historic Dockyard.

Sounds of the Dockyard – Oral History – a Case Study Project

Get Involved!

This case study project involves the collection of oral histories, gathering memories and reflections on the sonic experiences of Chatham Dockyard, interviewing former employees, apprentices and anyone with memories of the working yard as part of a research project by the Universities of Kent and Greenwich.

History is often silent, told through images and the written word. Through this project we will explore the potential of sound to evoke the past, and use listening as a new opportunity to know about our shared histories and to reveal new understandings.

Your memories and reflections offer insight into a lost world of human industry and community. Through your experiences, and those of other participants, we will build a map of the Dockyard soundscape which has the potential to deliver new understandings of the space and the history of this important site.

If you are interested in taking part then please register your interest via this online form:
<https://forms.gle/i8sxpWTLX1qoGkNq8>

If you'd like to find out more about the project please visit our website:
<https://research.kent.ac.uk/sonic-palimpsest>

Further information is also available from:

Dr Andrew Knight-Hill
Senior Lecturer in Sound Design and Music Technology,
Creative Professions and Digital Arts,
University of Greenwich, London.

William Dawes Driver had married his wife Louisa less than twelve months before the unveiling of the fountain. On 3 January 1900, she gave birth to the couple's daughter, also named Louisa, but Mrs Driver died of post-natal complications a few weeks later. When the widowed Councillor Driver was re-elected Mayor of Chatham in 1903 and again in 1905, his colleagues agreed to little Louisa becoming Lady Mayoress. Driver continued to sit on the Council, being elected Alderman in 1905. However, he resigned that position in 1910.

He had followed his late father's occupation of corn merchant and continued to reside in the New Road residence but came to believe that his true vocation lay in the Church of England. At the time of the census of 1911, now living in Maidstone Road in Chatham, Driver described himself as a Clerk in Holy Orders. He went on to be the vicar of the new parish of All Saints in Chatham, and from 1915 to 1920 was the Vicar of Gillingham. His death was registered in the Leybourne District in 1927.



As stated earlier, the Driver Fountain continued to be an iconic Victorian monument for decades, but as time went on, its utility steadily declined. Sadly, it became more or less redundant and a traffic hazard, so was removed. It now languishes, minus its horse trough but still very impressive, in a quiet corner of Chatham Cemetery.

The Driver Fountain in Chatham Cemetery; photograph by the author.

By the time Joshua Driver died in 1898, he had become a substantial local figure and a prime example of a Victorian self-made man. His son William, himself a councillor for Luton Ward (and Mayor in 1898-9) felt that his late father warranted some kind of permanent recognition. He eventually decided that Joshua could be remembered by a commemorative drinking fountain.

The monument was designed by Charles Day, Chatham's Borough Surveyor and was constructed by an Aberdeen firm. It was made of Peterhead red and Aberdeen blue granite on a red granite base. On three sides were drinking basins complete with galvanised copper cups. On its fourth side was an inscription:

**In Memory of
JOSHUA DRIVER
Died 30th April 1898
Erected by his son
Councillor WD Driver
Mayor 1899**

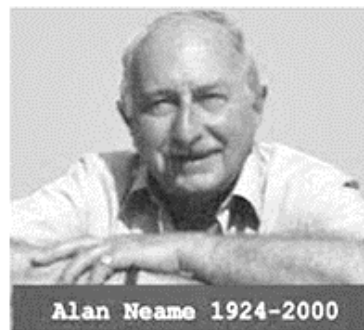
To cater for passing traffic, a horse trough was positioned underneath this inscription.



Cllr. William Dawes Driver; from a book published by Chatham Council on councillors.

On 4 October 1899, in an era where such public events provided much needed excitement to everyday lives, large crowds converged at the Luton Arches to witness the unveiling ceremony. Shrouded by a canvas sheet, the fountain itself was shielded from the spectators until its formal unveiling. Speeches were given, prayers were said, and then Sir Horatio Davis, the Member of Parliament for Chatham, pulled a cord. The canvas fell to reveal the handsome monument. Davis and Driver then demonstrated their faith in the Chatham and District Water Company by taking a drink from the new facility. Alderman Charles Skinner, the Chair of the Highway and Works Committee then formally accepted Councillor Driver's gift on behalf of the Council.

Alan Neame Award 2021



'With the family's extensive Kentish ancestry and his reputation as a genealogist, Alan became one of the founders of the Kent Family History Society, editing a monthly journal and later becoming chairman of the society. Within his own immediate locality, he spent much time recording monumental inscriptions from surrounding parishes, writing church guides and helping neighbours with their own family history endeavours. Throughout his life, Alan was generous

with his time, never allowing a somewhat scholarly life to detract him from the need for painstaking, often repetitive, research.' (From Alan Neame's obituary, <http://www.neamefamily.com/research/alan/>)

Are you a member of the Kent Family History Society (KFHS) as well as FOMA? If so, you might consider entering this annual writing competition which celebrates family history research and is dedicated to Alan Neame.

1) Entries accepted from KFHS members only.

2) Closing Date: 31st August 2021 *(N.B: the closing date has been extended)*

Entries to be submitted to the KFHS chairman: chairman@kfhs.org.uk or by post to: Mr David P Wood, KFHS Chairman, 32, Laburnum Road, Sturry, Kent, CT2 0LT; *postmarked no later than the 31st of August 2021.*

3) The article should be:

- An interesting read, complete with family tree diagram or other illustration if appropriate.
- Show methodology, make mention of problems encountered and how resolved.
- Give sources with references.
- No more than 2500 words (excluding references)
- The article must be previously unpublished.

Judging: submitted articles will be judged by an invited panel, with a prize of £100 awarded for the article which, in the opinion of the panel, best meets the criteria. Prizes of £50 and £25 for second and third-placed entries may also be awarded at the judges' discretion.

The winner: will be announced at the end of the 47th Annual General Meeting to be held on 23rd October 2021, and the winning article will be published in the following December Journal. Other submitted articles may be published in subsequent issues of the Journal at the editor's discretion.

Reproduced from the KFHS website with the kind permission of KFHS Chairman, David Wood.

Women of the Dockyard – we need you!

Hidden Heroines: the untold stories of the women of the Dockyard is a new temporary exhibition set to open at The Historic Dockyard in Spring 2021.



The exhibition explores the valuable roles women played throughout the Dockyard's 400-year history, right up to present day.

From the women of the Spinning Rooms and Sail and Colour Loft, to tales of stowaways, women masquerading as men and the extraordinary women whose impact left a lasting legacy. The exhibition challenges the misconceptions and superstitions of women at sea, women's place in war and highlights colourful characters including Jane Austen's sister, Fanny, and Zandra Bradley, the first female apprentice, whilst not forgetting those who continue to work at the Historic Dockyard to this day.

Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust is looking to hear and record the stories of women who lived and/or worked at the Dockyard, served in the Royal Navy or any related trade. Domestic help, ex-apprentices, WRNS, ropery workers, nurses, volunteers, Sail & Colour

This structure was paid for and donated to the town in 1899 by Councillor William Dawes Driver, who represented Luton Ward on Chatham Borough Council. It was designed to refresh both horses and people. Driver commissioned it as a memorial to his father Joshua who had died the previous year.

The older Driver had been born in Rochester in 1830, the son of a joiner. Joshua's family moved to Hardstown which was situated on the sloping ground above the Brook in Chatham. The census of 1851 reveals that the twenty-year-old Joshua had become a journeyman baker. Ten years later, he was still in Hardstown but had begun his own business, married and started a family.

His business clearly flourished. He moved down to premises in The Brook itself and by 1881 he was described as a corn dealer as well as a baker. Meanwhile, like so many small businessmen in Victorian towns, Driver was keen to serve on public bodies. He was a member of anachronistic parochial groups such as the Court Leet and the Local Board of Guardians (not to be confused with the Poor Law Guardians). More important, he served on the Chatham Local Board of Health, which was the most powerful civic body prior to Chatham's incorporation in 1890. Once the town had its own council, it was to be expected that a man of Driver's standing would be a candidate for election, and from November 1891, he represented St Mary's Ward. By now he had a prestigious address which was a far cry from The Brook: 9 Paddock Terrace, New Road, Chatham.



Drivers' premises at the start of the twentieth century, 282 and 284 Chatham High Street, at the Church Street end; from a 1902 directory.

What and Why?

The Driver Fountain at the Luton Arches, Chatham

Brian Joyce



*Brian Joyce is the author of several books on the history of the Medway Towns, including *The Chatham Scandal and Dumb Show and Noise*. He is a past President of the Chatham Historical Society and was on the FOMA Committee. Brian was born in Chatham and continues to take a great interest in the history of the Towns. However, he now lives in Tyldesley in Greater Manchester. Since moving to the North West in 2014, he has contributed articles to many journals specialising in the history of his new local area.*

This now vanished landmark was familiar to generations of Medway residents, not to mention their horses. Before the opening of the M2 in the mid-1960s, the route used by vehicles on their way to the north Kent coast included the New Road in Chatham. At the bottom of its incline, towering over motorists and coach passengers alike stood (and stand) the Luton railway arches. Situated below this iconic structure was a monument to fast-vanishing civic pride: the so-called Driver Fountain.



The Driver Fountain in its original position (centre); illustration from a postcard in the author's personal collection.

loft ladies, apprentices, wives who lived on site, caterers, pub landlords, civil servants, engineers, painters, electricians ... they would love to hear your stories. In addition, any images or objects relating to this theme.



The Dockyard Women's Cricket Team.

If you have anything relevant, please fill in the form on the Historic Dockyard website (at: <https://bit.ly/2JFbM3X>) or get in touch with Vikkie Mulford via vmulford@chdt.org.uk

Photographs, Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust.

Medway Archives Centre News

Elsbeth Millar



Hello Clock Tower readers! I write a few weeks into our third lockdown, and I hope you are all keeping well. My update will really be about some of the things we have been doing since the last *Clock Tower* issue, including projects we have been working on which are hopefully something to look forward to in the coming months.

Although our building is closed to visitors, we are still responding to email enquiries and are still able to fulfil essential research and reprographics enquiries (such as building control plan requests required for house sales and mortgage applications, internal Medway Council enquiries, and external data subject access requests).

With a return to increased home-working, the team have been working on remote and online engagement activities. We have two more online exhibitions (which will also be physical exhibitions when the Centre is able to reopen to the public) planned for launch on our webpages in February or March 2021, one on hospitals and health care in Medway, and another on epidemics and Medway. As reported on page 18 Norma Crowe recently ran a successful trial 'remote' online reminiscence session with some of the FOMA committee and Medway Archives Centre staff, and we hope to run another in February or March, so look out for details of when this will be and how you can sign-up. It will be with limited numbers to ensure each participant has time to contribute their experiences in the time available. Despite not being able to run our in-person reminiscence sessions we have had renewed interest during lockdown in our reminiscence resources (*Medway Memories*) from care home staff and have been able to send reminiscence packs (such as *Working Lives*, *Home Life*, *Leisure*, *Gillingham*, and *Summer Holidays*) as electronic resources.

Some of the other projects the MAC team has been working on include transcription and indexing projects to create extra resources to help search the collections. For example, Helen Worthy and Nikki Pratt have been busy transcribing index cards on the buildings of Medway. Created over many decades, the original index cards include valuable details and references to many notable buildings in the area, many of which have long gone. With additional material added by staff from a variety of sources including books, newspaper articles and archive documents, these indices provide a valuable resource for anyone interested in the historical and architectural details of Medway buildings. Now in digital form, the indices can be searched by staff for keywords such as a personal names or street, and an indexed printed version will eventually be created for visitors to consult at Medway

Chatham Rochester and Gillingham Observer, 25 January 1913.

Chatham News, 5 February 1960.

Chatham News, 14 April 1917, p. 6.

Chatham Rochester and Brompton Observer, 2 August 1902.

Additional thanks to Brian Joyce and for the use of illustrations from his personal archive.



Above and right: the site of the demolished Navy House today (2020); photographs by Janet King.

After the war its services were met by other organisations, including the naval barracks and the NAAFI¹ at Brompton. The Bishop of Rochester, Dr. C.M. Chavasse, proposed that other seafarers should be allowed to use the facilities. As reported in the *Chatham News*, dated 5 February 1960, there was considerable opposition from the navy to the proposals to widen the intake to include merchant and other seamen as well as current and retired naval personnel. By this time half of the property had been leased to private business interests anyway. The Bishop effectively controlled the charitable trust that administered the finances, and by 28 July 1960 the old Navy House was no more, and the building reopened as the Mission to Seamen. This followed extensive renovation costing several thousand pounds. It now housed ninety-five seamen of all nationalities and had quarters for officials and a lady warden. The improvements included a restaurant, TV room, chapel, and library. The chapel organ was apparently that used on Scott's ship, *Discovery* during his exploration of the Antarctic.

In September 1971, and after several rejected planning applications, the department of the Environment forced Medway Council to purchase the Navy House. Then, on 24 November 1972, it was announced in the *Chatham News* that, after five years of being vacant, the Council had made the decision to demolish the building.

Notes

1. The Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes.

From <http://www.naafi.co.uk/> :

'NAAFI was established by the British Government in 1920 when the Expeditionary Force Canteens (EFC) and the Navy and Army Canteen Board (NACB) were combined to run the recreational establishments needed by the Armed Forces, and to sell goods to servicemen and their families.

NAAFI expanded its operation over the next 17 years, supporting military bases and deployments across the world, from Bermuda and Jamaica, to Singapore and China. At the outbreak of WWII NAAFI grew exponentially to support the troops on active service, with the number of employees rising from 8,000 to a peak of 110,000 and the number of trading outlets growing from 1,350 to nearly 10,000.

Post war, NAAFI rescaled its operations, closing canteens at a rate of 200 per week and the number of employees reducing to 65,000 by 1947. From the 1950's onwards, NAAFI has supported the British Forces at home and abroad, including the conflicts in The Falklands, the two Gulf Wars and Afghanistan amongst many others. Today NAAFI operates in far fewer locations but is present in Germany, Gibraltar, Brunei, the South Atlantic Islands and on board HM Ships, providing convenience and a 'taste of home' to our Forces and their families overseas.'

Archives Centre. In the meantime, if you would like staff to search the buildings indices, please let us know. The indices currently cover Chatham (including some buildings in Brompton, Luton and Walderslade), Gillingham and Rainham, Rochester (including Borstal), Strood and some outlying villages. Catharina Clement has been creating an index of the 'vertical files' (as they are known to staff) at the Centre. These are files which visitors can access onsite and which comprise ephemera, photographs, newspaper articles and other resources on particular subject, people, or places. We hope to be able to make this index available via either the library catalogue or archive catalogue.

Before the spring 2020 lockdown we conducted a survey of our onsite visitors in February and early March. We were really pleased with the results, which showed the overall satisfaction with Medway Archives Centre amongst visitors was high – 82% of survey respondents scored their experience as 'very good' and 12% as 'good'. Satisfaction with Medway Archive Centre's staff was also high. 88% of respondents rated the time taken to be greeted by staff and the friendliness of staff as 'very good'; 85% of respondents rated the knowledge of staff as 'very good' and 87% of respondents rated the overall quality of service as 'very good'. Thank you to everyone who completed the survey. We hope to make a full report of the results available over the coming months.

The Centre has been creating a new community archive collection comprising material about, or created because of, the current Covid-19 pandemic, to ensure that the experiences of those that live or work in Medway is documented during this time. Submissions so far have included diaries, photographs and artwork. If you are interested in documenting this time, or have any material you would like to donate, please contact us at malsc@medway.gov.uk and we can send you some guidance notes.

Covid and Me – A Trial Online Reminiscences Session

Amanda Thomas



On Tuesday 26 January 2021, Medway Archives Centre Local Studies Librarian, Norma Crowe (pictured) led an online Reminiscences Session with volunteers and FOMA committee members to discuss the past year and how the pandemic and lockdown had affected everyone. It was a trial to see how we could adapt the sessions which are usually held face-to-face at the Medway Archives Centre. Sadly Microsoft Teams did rather let us down as none of us were able to see each other. Undaunted, however, we soldiered on, buoyed by the occasional on-screen image and by the fact that we could at least hear each other. Contributors included Rob Flood, Sandra

Fowler, Elaine Gardner, Cindy O'Halloran, Nikki Pratt, Jean Skilling, Alison Thomas, Amanda Thomas, Pauline Weeds, and Helen Worthy. Prior to the session Norma had asked everyone to consider the following points for discussion:

- Contacts
- Group activities
- Family and friends
- What you have missed
- Something new you have done. Hobbies, reading, contacts
- Health: physical and mental
- Have you had Covid? Your experience of it
- Vaccine? Have you had it?
- Has this year changed the way you do things or view things? What about the world order? What about the value of different jobs? What about the performance of both central, devolved, regional and local government and world events?

The session was recorded and will form a part of the Medway Archives Centre Covid-19 Community Archive.

accommodation for sixty-one additional cabins. In 1911 a similar block was added, providing eighty-one more beds, making a total of 157 available for use. In addition to these a small chapel was also built.

Navy House was used extensively during the First World War, and in 1918 the Duke of Connaught opened the new entrance hall and third wing. The facilities were to outshine those at The Sailors' Home and The Welcome. After the war the use of Navy House declined so seriously that in 1920 the building was leased to The Church Army. By 15 December 1924 Navy House was able to reopen due to a substantial legacy from Lady Ann Lampton and the efficient management by Archdeacon Donald Tate.

In 1926 considerable new building work was accomplished. The number of cabins was increased from 154 to 300, and by 1934 53,000 beds were being let each year, and a total of 200,000 customers took advantage of the services on offer. During the Second World War, Navy House provided magnificent and extended service and the number of customers rose to 530,000.



The Navy House, 1969; from the collection of Brian Joyce.

Navy House (illustrated above) was established in Clover Street, below Best Street, and cornering Richard Street. It was known at first as the Rochester Diocesan Naval Institute. I remember it, in the Sixties, having the words *Navy House* picked out in large white letters on the roof. It was a charitable institution, the original founders being Bishop Talbot, and Rear Admiral Swinton Holland who bought a suitable house for the purpose. There was some reluctance at first to establish a new premises as the existing hostleries, The Sailors' Home and The Welcome, had already been around for twenty-seven years. This proved not to be a problem, and in fact Navy House fitted in well with the other similar establishments in the Towns and made sure that any visiting sailor would have a bed for the night.

Enjoying the patronage of the Prince and Princess of Wales, it was visited by the First Lord and other members of the Admiralty. It catered for the spiritual and bodily needs of the seafarers. Its main difference from other similar sailors' establishments was the provision of the educational facilities. Education included recreational pursuits such as photography, billiards and an indoor rifle range, and sporting activities such as cricket and cycling. The good use of time was encouraged, as well as how to manage money. Classes were provided to help the men further their careers in the navy and particular emphasis was put on educating the men to lead a good and decent life.

Education for the younger recruits, and those intending to join up was of considerable importance. Chatham, as with other naval towns, posed *particular problems* for what would now be called *teenagers*. There were numerous distractions, especially the multitude of pubs and *houses of ill repute*.

According to the *Chatham, Rochester and Gillingham Observer*, Navy House came about in 1901, as a result of a letter from a *blue jacket* to the Reverend T.H. Tremenshaw which stated how badly Chatham compared with Portsmouth in 'the provision of recreational and creature comforts.' As a result of this, the reverend put out an appeal, and in December 1900 received a substantial donation from *a lady*. Further donations followed, totalling £2,000, which enabled Navy House to open in 1901.

The original house had four bedrooms, in which eighteen beds were placed. As well as the bed space there was a reading room, dining room, and a quiet room. Even a billiard room was added. As time went on an adjoining property became available, that of a malt house and brewery. This was bought from a naval person who had had the foresight to buy it in the hope that Navy House would one day be in a position to extend their property, and he could sell to them. Whether this was as a purely kindly gesture, we can only surmise, but it worked out very well for all concerned.

Navy House kept well up-to-date, and very early on had electric lighting, a mineral water machine, a telephone and a hot water heating system. As time went on they even managed to get a washing machine, no doubt a great help to the women in the laundry. The manager bought it for 25s in a sale. The laundry was set up and running in just four days, as the hot water to it was already in place. In 1907 a new wing was added which provided

In the May 2020 *Clock Tower*, Issue 58, Archivist Elspeth Millar (pictured) explained what this new archive will contain:

Our role at Medway Archives Centre is to help people discover the stories of Medway's people and places through the records, published materials, ephemera, and photographs that we collect, look after, and make accessible. A lot of our collections are historic but we also need to collect records about today so that future generations have access to sources which help them understand how we live now.

We want to create a new collection comprising diaries and other material about, or created because of, the current Covid-19 pandemic, to document the experiences of those that live or work in Medway during this time. But for this to happen we need your help. There are a few ways that we are asking people to consider contributing to the collection:



By keeping a daily or weekly diary or scrapbook recording your experiences of this period. There's no specific information that you need to record, or right or wrong way of approaching this. Diaries do not need to be long or detailed. They are about your experiences of the pandemic written in any way you choose. Diaries also do not need to be completely or wholly prose. They could be, or could include, collages, drawings, photographs, poetry and other forms of creative writing – we are really keen to encourage creative approaches to diaries and scrapbooks. Your diary or scrapbook could be on paper, in a notebook, or in an electronic format like MS Word.

By collecting any ephemera about, or related to, the pandemic - leaflets, flyers, notices, newsletters, advice/guidance notes – perhaps about social distancing or social isolation, about closures (or revised opening times), about community efforts to help the vulnerable, perhaps even local resources on homeschooling.

Through photographs or artwork. You may be taking photographs of the pandemic's impact (like empty shelves and roads, signs and notices in windows about closures or shortages) or creating artwork, such as rainbow pictures for windows.

Norma's January online session was extremely personal, in some cases moving, even distressing, and in order to preserve the anonymity of those who participated, only a synopsis of what was said will be given here. Overriding sentiments were loss, resentment, anger and emptiness, the lack of human contact, the inability to see family and friends as normal, the loss of income and the worry about money and the economy ... the lack of sleep, and no routine. There were some positive feelings as well.

‘At first it didn’t seem real’; ‘The world has shrunk’; ‘My new hobby is indolence’; ‘It’s the best of times and the worst of times’; ‘Things have changed a lot’; ‘Expectations have diminished’.

Memories were interesting and thought-provoking. One participant recalled dashing to the supermarket as the first lockdown began only to see staff loading the shelves with Easter eggs. Some felt guilty at managing to cope, enjoying being able to stay at home whilst others were suffering and losing loved ones.

On the positive side, many had started new projects and hobbies. Gardening had been popular during the first lockdown and traditional crafts such as quilting and embroidery. Some volunteers had started learning a new language or had begun research for forthcoming books; the closure of the Archives had obviously impacted on the scope of this. Reading was extremely popular and many relished the popularity of online meetings (on Zoom!) to replace face-to-face get-togethers. An advantage of such virtual events has been that people living beyond Medway – and even abroad – are able to take part. Everyone agreed that this should continue once *normality* returns.

It was only after the session that the vaccination programme would include some of the contributors, however, and at the time only one person had actually suffered from Covid itself. Readers will know that this was me, Amanda Thomas. I was able to describe how I had caught the illness in March, and how it initially appeared to have only a mild effect. The experience of Covid to date has shown that many people with relatively mild initial symptoms – including me - go on to struggle with so-called Long Covid. It is similar to other debilitating illnesses, such as glandular fever. Tiredness and an inability to walk very far are common factors and many are still unable to taste or smell properly – even months afterwards. I am happy to say that I am now very much better, though this has also been helped by the kindness and support of others, including FOMA members.

Despite the difficulties we have all experienced, walking was singled out by everyone as the most positive activity. Whether this was a stroll down Rochester High Street or a walk around the block to get some fresh air, being outside had an extraordinarily beneficial effect – and especially on the debilitating nature of Long Covid. However, that which gave the most pleasure of all was a walk in the countryside. As one contributor said, ‘It has made me realise how beautiful the countryside is ... it has been a life saver.’

If you are thinking of contributing to, or have any questions about the Covid-19 Community Archive project, please email Elspeth Millar or Norma Crowe at malsc@medway.gov.uk

The Story of the Navy House, Chatham

Janet King



I was born in the workhouse ! (All Saints Hospital) on Elizabeth Ward, and spent the first twenty years of my life living and working in Chatham. I became familiar with the high street as I worked at the west end and lived at the east end. I still live in Medway and am interested in its history, an interest kindled by one particular teacher at school.

Chatham, being a naval town of some significance, attracted a lot of naval personnel looking for accommodation whilst away from home. This became of more importance by the early twentieth century. Although there were The Sailors’ Home and The Welcome, there was clearly a need for more accommodation of this sort. It was also thought that the moral welfare and the educational needs of the sailors should be provided for. Thus, when the idea of Navy House was mooted, seafarers would be assured that their comfort and emotional well-being would be catered for. This approach differed from that of the existing homes which only provided accommodation.



The Navy House; from the collection of Brian Joyce.

attention was given to the Imperial fleet returning to Kronstadt, Russia's primary naval base on the Baltic. To assist the passage home, and following on from a serious outbreak of typhus that had broken out on board a number of the Russian ships while moored in the Medway, a British naval surgeon was assigned to each vessel. Among those surgeons was William Burnett, a future Physician-General of the Navy, placed in overall charge of the medical arrangements of those returning ships. For both this duty, and in work in helping combat the typhus epidemic he was, upon his arrival in St Petersburg, invited to the Winter Palace where Tsar Alexander awarded him the Imperial Order of Saint Alexander Nevsky.



*William Burnett;
Philip MacDougall Picture Collection.*

Philip MacDougall's book, Secret Chatham (illustrated right) includes reference to this story and many others. Published in 2016 by Amberley, it is available from all good book sellers, ISBN-978-1445654904.



George William Lyon MC – In Search of a Photograph

Elaine Gardner



As most of our members will know I was heavily involved with the World War One exhibitions that FOMA curated at MAC for the WWI Centenary Commemorations and, whilst researching information and pictures on the men that featured, I also collected information on the seventy-five or so names listed on the WWI Math School¹ memorial board. Having taught at the *Math* I knew that each November the school holds assemblies and lays a wreath in front of the memorial board in the main hall, so I had been providing the Head, Eliot Hodges, with any information I found to use in these assemblies. It was this that started the trail to George Lyon MC and his photograph (below).



George Lyon MC.

Back in November Eliot had forwarded to me – for interest – an article sent to him by the Chair of Governors thought to be of use for his November assembly. It came from the November 2020 issue of *Medal News* magazine which had been passed to him by a WWI medal collector friend. As I'd found very little about George in the local press, and my only knowledge came from a short obituary in the Williamsonian school magazine of summer 1918, I was indeed interested to read it - and even more so as it included a photo of George. I knew there wasn't one of him on our FOMA De Caville Index, but how could I get copyright permission to add it to the Index?

I started by emailing the Chair of Governors explaining what I was hoping to achieve and asked if he could please pass my details onto his friend and request he made contact. A few days later I duly got a reply from the friend asking that I telephone him. It transpired he had known Mick De Caville well and also Tessa Towner. Mick began compiling the Index over thirty years ago and before his premature death in 2010, Tessa promised him we would finish his work and publish it. On page 25 is an image of the launch of the FOMA de Caville Index in August 2014 – it has since grown to one of the largest and most popular WWI online resources of its kind with well over 4,000 names, including photographs and cross-referenced information.

I was given a telephone number for Token Publishing, the family-owned publishers in Exeter who publish *Medal News*. Their response was that if I put everything I had told them over the phone in an email they would pass this on to the author of the article, Dan Lyon. A week later a fantastic reply from Dan appeared in my inbox beginning by saying he was delighted that someone had read his article! He had started researching George Lyon MC as a possible ancestor (which in fact transpired not to be the case) but had continued looking at the stories of the one hundred or so Lyons who were officer casualties of WWI. Dan's email included all his research notes for the article and, most interesting of all, a folder of letters of condolence received by George's parents as well as that photo. These had been inherited by a great niece who was happy for George to be remembered and who Dan felt would be happy for me to include his photo on our index. Success!!

George William Lyon, born 1897 in Gillingham to parents Mark and Eliza, was the eldest of five children of whom only two, George and his sister Edna, were still surviving at the start of WWI. George, a very able student won a scholarship to the Math School in 1909 and went on to excel at mathematics culminating in his winning an open scholarship in Mathematics to Downing College Cambridge. In his final year at the Math, he was Head of School and a captain in the school cadet force. On leaving school in 1915 he joined as a Second Lieutenant the Kent Fortress Engineers, a territorial branch of the Royal Engineers (RE) and formed in 1908, but who increasingly were attached to RE Field Companies overseas as casualties increased in WWI. In 1916 George was promoted to Lieutenant with the 511 London Company based in Witham and Colchester where the company acted in a defence role. They were sent to France in January 1917 to serve on the Western Front.

Throughout its two-year placement on the Medway, great effort was made to make those who manned the Russian fleet feel welcome, with the Duke of Clarence, who later ascended the throne as William III, and at that time held the position of Admiral of the Fleet, making, in company with the Russian Ambassador, a ceremonial visit to the Russian fleet in August 1813. It was an event reported in the pages of *Kentish Weekly Post or Canterbury Journal* of 13 August 1813:

At the Nore, his Royal Highness took some refreshment with Admiral Crown, who commands a division of the Russian fleet at the Nore; after which the party returned, and proceeded for the flagship of Admiral Tate, Commander in Chief of the Russian Navy, with whom they dined.

Members of the local community were similarly hospitable in making the men of those ship, or more particularly the officers, feel welcome. Within a few weeks of the Russians having arrived, entertainment was organised for this purpose, local newspapers describing balls and formal dinners laid on by the officers of regiments based in the area and also Rochester's city council. These festivities were to become a regular event in the diaries of the fashionable with reports always appearing in local newspaper and sometimes in London newspapers as in this example appearing in the *Morning Chronicle*:

On Friday last, a grand entertainment, consisting of a splendid ball and supper, was given to the Officers of the Russian Navy, by the principal inhabitants of Rochester and its neighbourhood. Fort Pitt barracks were made use of for the occasion, the rooms of which were decorated with great taste, and enlivened with appropriate transparencies.

On that occasion, some 500 'sat down to a very elegant supper', with the evening concluding 'with a dance agreeable to the Russian fashion'. Inevitably there was a degree of fraternization between the Russian officers and eligible females, with at least two marriages recorded, these between Captain Hamilton, of the Imperial Russian Navy to Miss Post of Rochester and Lieutenant Sorochei of the Russian Navy to Miss G. Arnold, of Gravesend. Undoubtedly there would also have been liaisons between men of the lower deck and local women, those of the lower deck going ashore into Gillingham and Chatham while visitors were allowed to board the ships moored in the Medway. However, the marriage registers of Chatham and Gillingham do not indicate marriages conducted with any lower deck seamen.

During that two-year period, the Russian ships undertook active patrols in the North Sea, releasing British warships for more distant water, while in the closing months of the war, 4,000 Russian seamen from the ships moored in the Medway were drafted into the Russian army, supporting a siege on Antwerp that had begun in mid- January 1814 and was to continue until the first week of May. Upon the defeat of Napoleon and the war being brought to a conclusion,

Medway Welcomes the Russian Navy

Philip MacDougall



On leaving university during the early 1970s, Philip moved to the Isle of Grain, taking up a teaching post at Hoo and writing his first book, *The Story of the Hoo Peninsula*. Over time his interests broadened, taking a particular interest in the dockyard, and of course witnessing the effects of the closure, and the slow revival that followed. Among his recent books are a three-part *Secret* series, each book focussing little known aspects of the three towns. He has written several books on Chatham Dockyard, a history of Short Brothers of Rochester and one focussing primarily on the one-time experimental air station on the Isle of Grain. His next book will look at the important alliance that once existed with Russia and which brought so many Russian seamen to Medway. While Philip no longer lives within the Medway area, his daughter and grandchildren live in Rochester.

When the Emperor Napoleon invaded Russia during the summer of 1812, immediate precautions were taken to ensure that the sizeable Russian fleet should not fall into French hands. With the help of ships of the British navy, serving as both escort and providing navigational help, a force of more than twenty battleships was removed from the several Russian naval ports of northern Russia, sailing into the North Sea. Their destination, because of its geographical suitability, was Chatham. Not surprisingly, the arrival of so many Russian ships was widely reported in both regional and London newspapers, a report by an officer serving on *Podargus*, a brig-sloop that had accompanied the second division, appearing in the 15 December edition of the *Kentish Gazette*:

This ship [Podargus] arrived here yesterday from the Baltic, with six sail the Russian line battle ships company. We left Gothenburg on 3d Dec. in company with 26 sail of men of war, English and Russians. The squadron brought by us are commanded Admiral Crown, who has brought his lady and family with him; the remaining part the fleet we left off Orfordness. Admiral Hope landed here last night, and immediately set off express to London, with the intelligence of our arrival. The Podargus is the first vessel arrived belonging to this large fleet.

In March 1918 the company, based near Villers-Bretonneux, was in the path of Operation Michael, the huge German surprise offensive launched that spring in an attempt to defeat the Allied Forces prior to the arrival of the American forces. On the 24/25 March as the Germans pushed forward towards Amiens, George's company was ordered to destroy bridges and a massive RE ammunition dump at Chauny to prevent the Germans capturing it.

George was awarded the Military Cross (MC), and as the citation for the award reads:

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty when entrusted with the destruction of a RE dump. Assisted by NCOs and sappers he worked so effectively that the large quantity of valuable stores, explosives, etc were completely destroyed. He continued this work under heavy shell fire, and with the knowledge of the proximity of the enemy and that bridges behind him were being destroyed. His services were invaluable, and his courage and tenacity set a grand example to his men.

George's friend and fellow officer in the company, Milton Harvey, writing to George's aunt, described his last couple of days in April, when they were in their billet at Villers-Bretonneux. On the night of the 14/15 he and his men were wiring with the Australians, then on the night of 15/16 he - along with a large party digging under his directions - went out after 8pm. George never returned. His body was found later on the 16th in a deep railway cutting. He and his runner Spr. Siebert had been hit by a bursting shell as they returned home and were killed instantly. He was 21 years old and was buried nearby in the cemetery at Boves.

The collection of some 30 letters sent to his parents was extraordinary. Researching the newspapers for the WWI exhibitions revealed a number of letters which families had received from their son's commanding officer. These were always very complimentary, saying how well liked they were etc and sometimes the cynic in me thought, 'well they would hardly say anything else in that situation would they?' In George's case I think the kind and complimentary words were all meant, especially as the comments from all the various correspondents were so consistent.

Major Bywater, the company commander, wrote to George's parents in glowing terms, while a number of Colonels higher up the Divisional Command who had come into contact with George wrote to Bywater consoling him for the loss of one of his most outstanding officers. All said how stunned they were and that they would have been proud to have George as a son. He had been Acting Adjutant at Divisional Headquarters prior to his death and the Colonel was waiting for his Adjutant to be promoted before appointing George in his place.

George's close officer colleagues, Miles Canning and Milton Harvey, with whom he had been since signing up, not only wrote to his parents but also to friends they had been billeted with while in Essex. This resulted in three letters to Mrs Lyon from complete strangers offering their condolences and saying what lovely memories they had of this delightful young man.

The letter from the headmaster of Colchester Grammar school, Harry J. Cape, who had taught at the Math from 1910 to 1916 confirmed the glowing obituary in the *Williamsonian*

magazine as did another teacher, E Jenkinson. Even his tutor-to-be at Downing College, J Viddecombe wrote saying what a loss it was of a young man with great promise and engaging character and reported that his name would be inscribed on the Downing College Roll of Honour.²

He seems indeed to have been a remarkable young man.

Notes

1. The Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School, Rochester.
2. George never attended Downing College but he had been up for an interview and met his tutors when he was awarded the Open Scholarship.

With thanks to:

Dan Lyon for his notes and the article in *Medal News*, November 2020, and Token Publishing, publishers of *Medal News*.

Sharon Corke, George's great niece who supplied Dan with the letters and photograph.

The Launch of the FOMA De Caville Index

After many years of preparation, the FOMA De Caville Index was launched on the FOMA website on 4 August 2014 to coincide with the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War. Prior to the launch FOMA Webmaster, Alex Thomas (now Dr Thomas – see page 11), attended a FOMA Committee Meeting to give the first demonstration, as pictured opposite.

The Index can be accessed at <http://foma-lsc.org/wwi/index.html>

Right: the poster advertising the launch which was sent to museums and heritage centres; a press release was also issued to national and specialist publications.

DO YOU HAVE A WORLD WAR ONE ANCESTOR?



Major **NEW** Historical Index Launched of Medway Men in World War One

The Friends of Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre (FOMA) announces the launch of

The De Caville Index

at

www.foma-lsc.org

OVER 4,000 NAMES OF MEDWAY MEN KILLED IN WORLD WAR ONE

NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	DATE OF DEATH	BURIAL PLACE
RECORD NUMBER	ADDRESS	RANK	
PHOTOGRAPHS	CROSS-REFERENCED BY FAMILY		
FACILITY FOR RELATIVES AND RESEARCHERS TO ADD INFORMATION			



The demonstration of the FOMA De Caville Index prior to the launch in August 2014. Above from left to right: Jean Skilling, Brian Joyce, Odette Buchanan, Betty Cole, Alex Thomas, Bob Ratcliffe, Tessa Towner, Elaine Gardner. Photograph, Amanda Thomas.