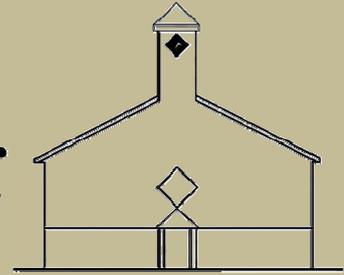


# The Clock Tower



*The Newsletter of the Friends of Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre*

Issue Number 21: February 2011  
£2.00; free to members



Pictured is the church of All Saints, Wouldham, the burial place of Walter Burke, Purser (or Supplies Officer) of HMS Victory at the Battle of Trafalgar. It is also the resting place of Major John Blackburn Hart of the 95<sup>th</sup> Regiment (the Rifles). Inside, John Lloyd, churchwarden and member of the church council at Burham and Wouldham, reveals some of his research on the lesser known Major J.B. Hart.

## **New!**

**Magnum Opus – a new feature by Catharina Clement reviewing the latest Medway books**

**Also inside, Keith Lambourne's fascinating work as a volunteer for the Medway on Screen project run by Screen Archive South East**

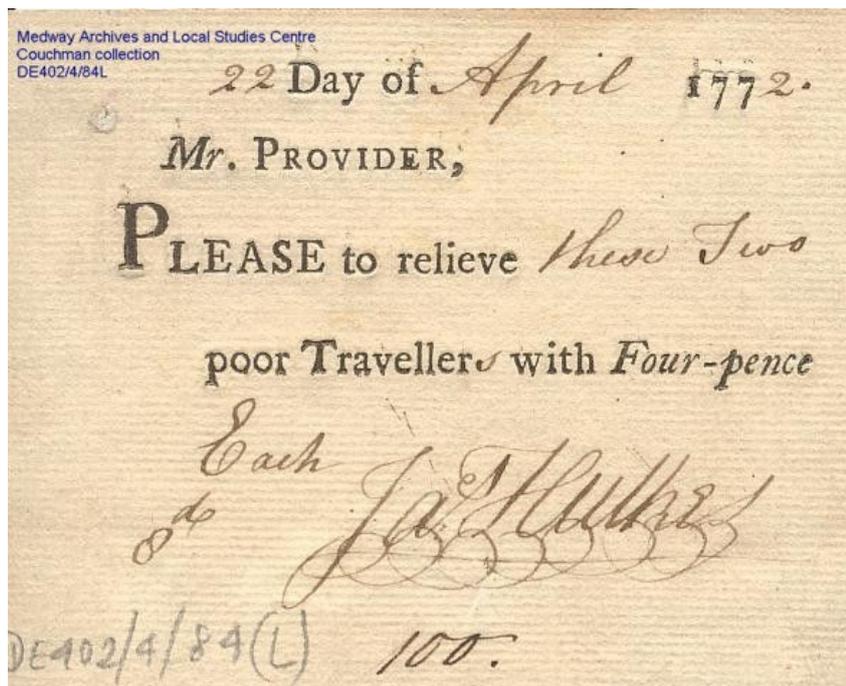
**AND the final part of Medway Memories of World War Two and the Battle of Britain**

*Also inside...*

In this issue of *The Clock Tower* in the first part of our popular series, *Edwin Harris – Recollections of Rochester*, Alison Thomas, Archive and Local Studies Assistant at MALSC finds out what Edwin had to say about Richard Watts:

‘The question which naturally arises is, “Who was this Watts?” The answer is that very little is known historically about this great man, and also that that little is so mixed with legend that it is somewhat difficult to divide reality from fiction.’

Read more on page 19.



DE402/4/84(L); Watts' Charity, Rochester. Printed docket or order from James Hulkes, mayor of Rochester to the city provider for the relief of two unnamed poor travellers with 4d. each, 22 April 1772 p.84 (L)

From The Couchman Collection for Edwin Harris: *Recollections of Rochester*: No 49  
Richard Watts and his famous charity

**Have you contributed to *The Clock Tower* yet?  
The Editor, Amanda Thomas, would like to hear from you!  
Please send articles for consideration to:  
Mrs Amanda Thomas  
Clock Tower Editor,  
72 Crabtree Lane,  
Harpenden,  
Hertfordshire, AL5 5NS  
Or email at [amanda @ajthomas.com](mailto:amanda@ajthomas.com)**

## *From the Chairman*

Tessa Towner, Chairman.



A belated Happy New Year to you all!

The FOMA committee has been busy putting together a programme of talks for the coming year which you can find in the News and Events section. I do hope more people will attend this year - we really do need your support to help achieve our aims.

You may recall in the last issue of *The Clock Tower* the sad news of the death of Michael de Caville. We promised him we would index all the work he had done on the men in World War One who lived, served, worked, or are buried in the Medway Towns. This project is now under way, and we have decided to extend its scope to all the Medway Authority area. My plea now is for all FOMA members to help track down World War One memorials in churches, chapels, businesses, schools, etc.. If you have any knowledge of a memorial anywhere in the Medway area then could you please make a note of where it is, all the names mentioned and forward them to me so that they can be researched and added to the growing list of names already indexed. To date we have some 2,000 names. This list will certainly grow when we add all those who died in the Drill Hall bombing, those who are buried in the cemeteries around the towns, and the names on the elusive memorials. It is a wonderful project, an important resource for our children and a fitting memorial to the life and work of Michael de Caville.

My contact details are [picketwitch@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:picketwitch@blueyonder.co.uk); 37 Ravenswood Avenue, Frindsbury, ME2 3BY, Kent.

## *News and Events*

Odette Buchanan, Friends' Secretary



Hullo! I do hope you all survived the seasonal weather without too much trouble.

You will see that there is a special FOMA Members Questionnaire inserted in this issue. Please do make sure you let Elaine Gardner know what you feel about the events we organize for you.

We continue to go through the Archives of Great Expectations and they are still holding our attention, if for no other reason than the old fashioned language used – the documents we are packaging at the moment are from the Twentieth Century and therefore within living memory of some of the more mature volunteers. It is amazing how much the language has changed even over fifty or sixty years. Nowadays we tend to address everyone by their first name. Then it was 'Dear Mr. So and so' or 'Mrs. So and so' with very formal closing remarks such as 'we beg to remain, dear sir, your humble servant, etc. etc.' And the kangaroo typewriters! How well I remember the ones I used being infested with the hiccups and the holes I used to finish up with when I tried to erase the offending letters. Happy Days.

On a more serious note, the AGM is coming up soon on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May. We have some vacancies on the committee. Would you like to join us? You will find a tear-off strip at the bottom of the AGM notice of meeting and Agenda enclosed with this *Clock Tower*, and you can even nominate yourself. All the work we do is split fairly evenly between all of us so you would not be committing yourself to too arduous a task and your input would be much valued.

***Stuck for a present?  
Why not give a year's subscription to FOMA?  
See page 9***

### **MALSC OPENING HOURS**

**Please note the following revised opening hours at the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre.**

**As of 1 April 2010, MALSC will no longer be open until 6pm on a Tuesday, and will close at 5pm. The following opening hours therefore now apply:**

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

## *Calendar of Forthcoming Events and Exhibitions*

### FOMA Events

Tues 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2011, 7.30 pm  
The Archive of Great Expectation Project

Sat 9<sup>th</sup> April, 7:30 pm start  
Quiz Night  
£5 for members and non-members.  
Tables of 6 – supper – bring your own drinks  
**BOOKING REQUIRED.**

Tues 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 7.30 pm  
FOMA AGM

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

### FOMA Events and Members' Questionnaire

Elaine Gardner, FOMA Vice Chairman



Over the past year the committee has organized two quiz nights and four talks – the fourth on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2011 will probably have taken place by the time you receive this edition – with varying success. Both quiz nights have made a profit for the society, but the talks have met with mixed response, a couple of them running at a loss.

This was an experiment to create more events for members and we hope to continue with talks again this year so we would really like your responses to the questionnaire included as a loose sheet with this edition. You should also be able to find it on the FOMA website which can be returned by e-mail if you prefer.

In the meantime we have booked the dates for **two quiz nights, the first being on Saturday April 9<sup>th</sup>**, and the **FOMA AGM on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May**. We hope to see you there!

## Calling all Photographers!

At the end of May 2010, Roger Smoothy and Roy Moore gave a talk to FOMA on the collection of glass plate negatives which have been digitalised and placed on line. They can be viewed at [www.kentphotoarchive.org.uk](http://www.kentphotoarchive.org.uk) and selecting the 'Medway Images'. They are hoping that enthusiastic photographers will go out and take digital images of the same views today. The idea is to try and take the image from the same place as previously, by printing a copy of the original and taking it with you. FOMA Vice Chairman, Elaine Gardner, has agreed to co-ordinate this for Roger and Roy in order to avoid duplication of effort with everyone taking the same photos!

If you are interested, take a look at the website then e-mail Elaine at [emgardner@fsmail.net](mailto:emgardner@fsmail.net) (or phone 01634 408595) saying what you plan to photograph and she will give you precise details of what is required.



### Friends of Broomhill Playbuilder Lottery Grant

Grand Launch Event - Sunday, 10th April, 2011 from 2.00 - 4.00 pm

Meet the Deputy Mayor and the Town Crier. Be taken on a guided walk around the park to view all the improvements this grant has paid for; including play equipment, interpretation boards for the newly opened up north and south views, the refurbished Trim Trail and marked Kilometre, new signage, etc. etc. There will be a children's entertainer under the marquee, music and refreshments as well as the announcement of the winning entry of the children's picture competition.

## MALSC Events

### Exhibitions

13<sup>th</sup> January 2011 to 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2011  
Sir Joseph Williamson – The Man behind the Name

24<sup>th</sup> February 2011 to 12<sup>th</sup> April 2011  
Winget's: At Work and Play

### Talks and Events

23 March 2011, 2.30 pm  
The Victoria County History (VCH) *England's Past for Everyone* (EPE) project.  
Sandra Dunster and Andrew Hann

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

**Please note: You may be aware that Medway Council has been relocated to Gun Wharf. This move does not include the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre and until further notice, we are still to be found in the Clock Tower building.**

### Exhibitions at Eastgate House

April 6<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup>  
Sir Joseph Williamson

May 4<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup>  
Royal Visits to Medway

June 15<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup>; July 20<sup>th</sup> - August 3<sup>rd</sup>,  
Family History, to include Beginners in Family History.  
Talks on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> and Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> July.

## Medway Museums and Library Service

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

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

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

## Request for Material

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

**Please contact Catharina Clement at MALSC on 01634 332714**

*From the Membership Secretary*

Betty Cole



**Subscriptions are now due from all FOMA members who joined before 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010.**

Please complete the renewal form enclosed with this journal and send it with a cheque for £10 (£12 for Family Membership) made payable to:  
Betty Cole, 25 Elm Avenue, Chatham, Kent ME4 6ER

Or, if you are planning to attend the **Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2011 at 7.30pm** the form and cheque/cash can be handed to me at the meeting.

Alternatively, you may prefer to pay via PayPal on the website at <http://www.foma-lsc.org/membership.html>. Arrangements have also now been made for annual payments to be made by Standing Order. The form for this is on the reverse of the renewal form.

**Don't forget, for just £100, you can become a Life Member!**

## **FORTHCOMING FOMA EVENTS**

**SATURDAY 9 APRIL 7:30 pm START**

**QUIZ NIGHT**

**TABLES OF 6 – SUPPER - £5 PER PERSON – BRING YOUR OWN DRINKS**

Please book for this event with Odette Buchanan

72 Jersey Rd, Strood, ME2 3BY

odette\_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk; 01634 718231

**TUESDAY 3 MAY 7:30 pm**

**AGM**

**FRINDBURY PARISH HALL, CHURCH GREEN**

## *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](http://www.foma-lsc.org/index.html). If you have any additional information for the following correspondents, please contact the Editor.*

24 Nov 2010

Dear Mrs Thomas,

While searching for some information on a 'Mr Arkoll' of Foley House in Maidstone, I came across the Clock Tower and picked your name as the editor.

My mother, 98 and sharp with it, was in service at Foley House for Mr A in the 1930's and I was looking for something to show her about the house and/or family. I would guess it would be in the area of Penenden Heath, although it could have been in town and long gone. She met my father when he was a chauffeur there.

Perhaps you could direct me to someone who could give me a lead or direction on this subject.

Many thanks,

Andy Millen.

**From:** michael fowler

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

**Sent:** Sun, 19 December, 2010 17:16:23

**Subject:** Quaker Schools Rochester / Bancroft Hitchin 1770-1801 / William Alexander / George Blaxland

Dear Sir / Madam

I am trying to find out about a relative from the 1850s. George Blaxland was the school master of a small school in Hitchin. A private Quaker school did exist in the town of Bancroft between 1789 and 1801 run by George Blaxland and appears to have been of good repute as it was patronised by prominent local families. George Blaxland was born about 1855, son of James and Ann Blaxland. He married Sarah Alexander, born on the 14th Sep 1762 in Strood, and daughter of William and Elizabeth (Day) Alexander, on the 5th September 1792 in Kent. Hitchin Quakers at this time expressed their educational concern by supporting the establishment of a Quaker school in Yorkshire. Ackworth was founded in 1779 and Hitchin Meeting made a generous donation of one hundred and eighty two pounds followed up by an annual subscription of eight guineas. This entitled them to place one local pupil free of charge to the parents, presumably Friends who had fallen on hard times.

George and Sarah Blaxland had three children, William circa 1795, Alexander Blaxland circa 1798 and George Blaxland circa 1801, all born in Hitchin. George Blaxland the school master died in 1801 at the young age of 46.

Who would have guessed that a small school in a small Hertfordshire town which was open for little more than ten years at the end of the 18th century would teach at least three people (Joseph Jackson Lister, Jeremiah Holmes Wiffen and Samuel Tuke) who would end up in the Dictionary of National Biography? The school would appear to have taken boarders and presumably day boys as well, the school may have acted as a prep school for children who later went to Ackworth and possibly elsewhere.

John Richardson, a tanner from Cleveland Sunderland, married Sarah widow of George Blaxland in 1808. I think it was quite likely the Quakers in those days disapproved of their fraternity marrying out. I don't know the exact date of Sarah's death though it was in 1834 I should imagine she's buried in Croydon where the widower was living in 1842, probably in the Friends' burying ground.

George Blaxland junior went on to become the Chief Superintendant engineer at H. M. Dockyard in Sheerness and died at Gillingham Kent at the age of 78. His claim to fame was that he was the inventor of the screw propeller. However, other claimants for that distinction were John Ericsson, the famous Swedish engineer, and Sir Francis Pettit-Smith. The government of the day recognised the efforts of each with money rewards. A lawsuit ensued between Smith and Blaxland which was won by the latter. The Little Jane, a lifeboat converted by Blaxland into a screw steamer, was probably the first screw steamer to cross the English Channel the first trip being made to Boulogne and back.

I would love to find out anything to do with this Blaxland family especially William and Alexander Blaxland and the Bancroft school.

Kind regards

Michael Fowler

**Readers will recall that we were contacted by a non-member seeking information on VIOLET ETHEL THOMAS, born circa 1896. In 1913 Violet gave birth in Faversham and then immediately afterwards returned to her work in service at 32 North Street, Strood. Any information to the Editor, as above, please.**

## *Did You Know...?*

### Ethel Alice Smith (née Wraight), 1894-1975

Ethel was born in Halling in the Medway valley, the only daughter of Frederick Wraight and Ellen Wraight (née Eversfield). Frederick (b. 1870) was the eldest child of James and Eliza Wraight, who had ten children over a period of 24 years, all of whom except one who survived into adulthood. Most of them fared well in a time of improving access to education and increasing prosperity and some became successful in business.

Frederick initially worked as a woodman, but by 1908 he was employed as an insurance agent and had moved his family to Reading in Berkshire. Four years later, Frederick left the family and disappeared from available records. Ellen, Ethel and her younger brother Jesse moved to Strood, in diminished circumstances. Over the next four years Ethel had two children while unmarried, with unnamed fathers. Lurid tales abound, but Ellen and Ethel seem to have maintained themselves without recourse to public charity, while Jesse left to serve in the Salonika campaign.

In 1917, Ethel married Ted Smith. They were relatively poor, but Ethel went on to have six more children before Ted died in 1938, when their youngest was four years old.

Despite the family's inauspicious beginnings, many of Ethel's descendants achieved considerable success in various fields. Ethel's second child was my mother, Nellie. I would like to know more about Frederick's life after leaving his family, the fathers of Ethel's two illegitimate children and, particularly, about a Percy Duckett, whose name has been linked to Ethel.

Philip Evans

**Any information to the Editor, as above, please.**

## *About The Clock Tower*

*The Clock Tower* is the quarterly journal produced and published by the Friends of Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre (FOMA), <http://www.foma-lsc.org/index.html>.

### Editorial deadlines

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

**The copy deadline for Issue 22 of *The Clock Tower* will be different to normal. The combined holidays for Easter, the Royal Wedding and the May Bank Holiday this year mean the deadline will be 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2011, the date of the FOMA AGM.**

### Publication date

The fourth Wednesday following the editorial deadline.

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

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### Front Cover Accreditations and Website Information

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

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

*The Clock Tower* is also available on: <http://www.foma-lsc.org/newsletter.html>

### Further Information

Further information on the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre can be obtained on the MALSC CityArk website <http://cityark.medway.gov.uk/> or by writing to Medway Archives Office, Civic Centre, Strood, Rochester, Kent ME2 4AU. Telephone +44 (0)1634 332714; fax +44 (0)1634 297060; email: [malsc@medway.gov.uk](mailto:malsc@medway.gov.uk)

General enquiries about the Friends can be obtained from the Secretary, Odette Buchanan:

72 Jersey Road, Rochester, ME2 3PE. Telephone: 01634 718231; email:

[odette\\_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:odette_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk)

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

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amanda@ajthomas.com

# Quaker Education and Schooling 1775-1840

Catharina Clement

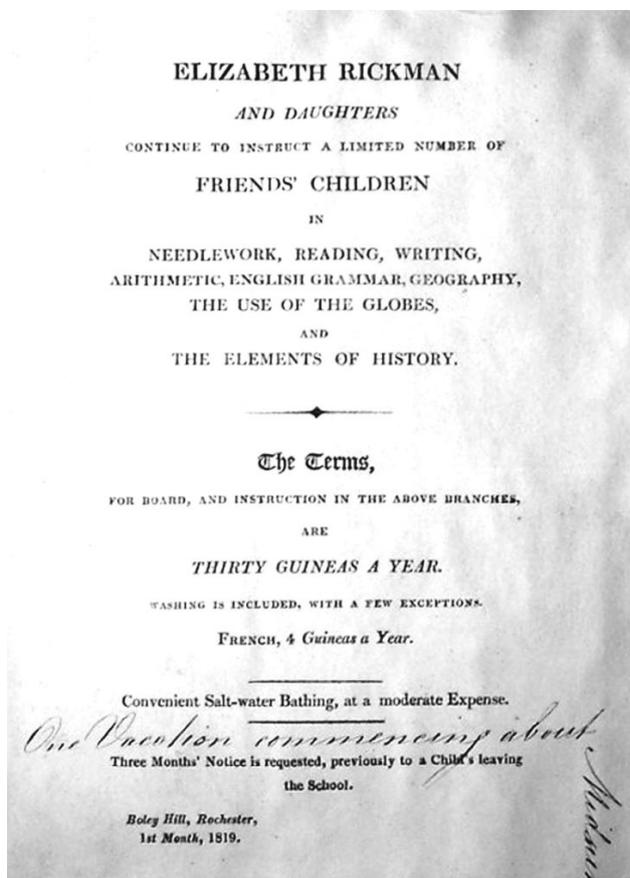


In 2005, Catharina completed a BA in history at Canterbury Christchurch University, and then began a part-time PhD in local history entitled *Reactions in the Medway Towns 1640-1660*. She has been involved in various local history groups and projects such as FOMA, CDHS, and the Victoria County History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

## Part Three

### Rochester Quaker Schooling: Rickmans' Girls School 1811-1843 and Robert Styles' Boys School 1813-1820

In 1811 Rickman considered retirement, but instead decided to open a school for girls to usefully employ his two daughters. It started with ten pupils and was run by Rickman's wife Elizabeth initially whilst he concentrated on the boys' school. Elizabeth and Ann Rickman both taught in the school and are described as schoolmistresses in the 1841 census. The girls' school appears to have been a successful enterprise. A prospectus was produced in 1819 advertising the curriculum and advantages of the school.



*Rickman Girls School, prospectus cover, 1819, Scrapbook Vol N f175; reproduced with permission of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain*

The Rickmans' establishment was focused on Quaker education for a select few girl boarders. Their capacity, as this was situated within the main Rickman living space, was ten boarders, but they also attracted a number of local children as day pupils. Ann and Susanna Horsnail, Friends from Rochester, left bequests to the 'Elizabeth Rickman Charity School in Rochester' of £5 each 'for clothing the poor' in 1818 to 1819. Indicating, that as well as boarders, the school catered for poorer local children in this period. Following their father's death in 1839 the Rickman sisters needed to promote the school under their own steam. *Pigot's Directory* for 1840 listed the establishment under schools and academies run by Ann and Elizabeth Rickman in Boley Hill, Rochester. By 1842 they were advertising in the *Irish Friend* for more pupils.

<p>Letters to be addressed to L. W., to the care of Illingworth and Hicks, Bookseller, Wakefield, Yorkshire.</p>	<p>Just Published, SOME ACCOUNT OF THE <i>Religious Experience of ANN CROWLEY.</i> Price 1s. 6d. London:—Darton &amp; Harvey; Charles Gilpin, and Friends' Depository, Houndsditch. The remembrance of her labours will be sufficient to recommend it to those Friends who knew her, whilst all may benefit by its perusal.—Editor.</p>
<p><b>A</b> FRIEND, who is educating her two little Boys at home, would like to receive a Child between the ages of five and seven years, to be educated with them. All the comforts of home will be blended with the advantages of School.</p>	<p><b>H. P. FOWLER &amp; M. JAMES</b> <b>R</b>ETURN their sincere thanks to their friends and the public, for the favours conferred on them during the ten years they have been in business, and inform them, that they have taken to the</p>
<p>TERMS—Ten Guineas per quarter. Address, B. D. care of the Editor of the Irish Friend.</p>	<p><b>STRAW HAT AND BONNET</b> MANUFACTORY, OF D. C. &amp; M. HALLAM (LATE NEYLER), No. 36, Bridge-street,</p>
<p>20, UPPER BARNBARY-STREET, Islington, London.</p>	<p>where, by strict personal attention, they hope to secure the patronage so liberally bestowed on their predecessors.</p>
<p><b>GEO. PILKINGTON</b></p>	<p>H. P. F. and M. J. continue to make Friends' BONNETS, CLOAKS, and SHAWLS, and also keep a good and well-selected Stock of Rich DUCAPES, SHAWLS, HANDKERCHIEFS, SCARFS, GLOVES, and BLONDS, which, they feel confident, will meet the approbation of those who may favour them with their orders.</p>
<p><b>D</b>ESIRES to inform his friends and acquaintances, that he has taken a house in the above-mentioned healthful situation, about 30 minutes' walk from Peel Meeting, and about 3 minutes from the line of Omnibusses, which go to and return from the city; and that his wife would be glad to receive any Female, or two Sisters, as inmates, who may desire accommodation in the Family; or she would receive 4 to 6 Boarders, to be educated at home with her own daughters: but such only as are willing to submit to the discipline of Friends, and whose parents are anxious that the doctrines of that Society should be a part of their instruction.</p>	<p>36, Bridge-street, Bristol, 3d mo. 1842.</p>
<p><b>A. AND E. RICKMAN,</b> DAUGHTERS OF THE LATE WILLIAM RICKMAN, OF Boley-hill, Rochester,</p>	<p><b>CHARLES GILPIN</b></p>
<p><b>P</b>ROPOSE to receive either permanent or temporary Boarders; and, at the same time, to continue to educate, in a plain and useful manner, a limited number of Pupils; especially such as, from delicate health and other circumstances, are not deemed suitable to be closely confined to School, but for whom it may appear desirable to combine some attention to learning, with relaxation and strict attention to health. The situation of Boley-hill is particularly dry, airy, and healthy, and in its immediate vicinity are commodious Salt Water Baths, of all descriptions. The scenery on the banks of the Medway is peculiarly interesting. Conveyances to and from London are frequent and commodious, either by land or water. Letters directed to A. &amp; E. Rickman, will receive prompt attention. Boley-hill, 3d mo. 19th, 1842.</p>	<p><b>R</b>ESPECTFULLY informs Friends, that he has taken the premises, No. 5, BISHOPGATE-STREET WITHOUT (Next door to those recently occupied by the late Edmund Fry), and has commenced business as a</p>
	<p><b>PUBLISHER,</b> <b>General Bookseller,</b> <b>AND STATIONER.</b></p>
	<p>Having taken the large Stock of Wright and Albright's very cheap Bristol Books, lately held by his friends Tamer, Brothers, C. G. is enabled to offer a large variety, on the lowest terms. Catalogues kept of the works of all the principal Publishers; Books promptly procured to</p>

From The Irish Friend, Vol. V, 1842, p. 64; reproduced with permission of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain

In 1819 the school promoted the new salt-water baths at Rochester and offered this as an enticement in 1842, especially to girls in 'delicate health and other circumstances...not deemed suitable to be closely confined to School, but for whom it may appear desirable to combine some attention to learning with relaxation and strict attention to health.' This would imply that education was a peripheral concern, but this was not the case as Friends expected their daughters to be well educated. The prospectus offered much the same curriculum as the boys received but with needlework thrown in for the girls.

By 1819 history was also part of the girls' timetable with French an extra. An annual charge of 30 guineas for board and education with an additional £5 for French was expensive for the time. In 1921, Elizabeth Thompson, wrote to the *Journal of the Friends Historical Society* indicating that her mother, Phebe Burne, had been a pupil at the school in 1812 and had in her possession a sampler worked by her mother whilst a pupil there. She also mentions a relative, Margaret Darton, who was at the school a little later and told her tales of being 'starved' at the school. Mary Ann Speciall (1814-1884) was a pupil at the school in the 1820s and went on to become governess (headmistress) of Ackworth from 1850 to 1867. Thompson recollects meeting Ann Rickman as a child and considered her 'a forbidding looking person'. The image provided below of Ann Rickman, courtesy of the Friends' Library, does portray a rather formidable figure.<sup>2</sup>

By 1840 Rochester had several schools for girls or young ladies and the Rickman sisters started to struggle. Hence their advert in 1842 (see above) appealing for 'permanent or temporary Boarders' as well as pupils in delicate health. Possibly the fees were too high for most Friends' pockets and with the death of William the school lost its high reputation. Also by then the education was in a 'plain and useful manner' suggesting that it had lost its quality as well as admitting non-Quakers, which may have put off many Friends. A year later the premises were offered up for sale in the *British Friend* as a potential boarding school with 'a good School Room, Dining Room, airy Chambers, and dry Play Ground'. It was alternatively recommended as suitable for conversion to a family home. The sisters retired after that and lodged in the High Street.<sup>3</sup>



*Ann Rickman,  
reproduced with permission of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain*

From 1813 Robert Styles acquired the boys' school and ran it for the next seven years. He was born in Chatham in 1780 to James and Sarah. Styles became a domestic servant in Rickman's household in 1797 and was promoted to usher around 1804. He applied for Quaker membership in 1805 and was accepted. However he already considered himself a Friend in 1803 when he refused to accept militia duties and 'produced a certificate of his being of the persuasion of the People called Quakers.' Although a pacifist, no penalty was imposed upon him, as he was considered: 'not of the ability to pay the sum of ten pounds and having no goods whereon a distress can be made.' In 1809 he married Rachael Speciall from Bishops Stortford. Rickman's premises were divided up in 1813 with part of the house and school wing purchased by Robert Styles then and further outbuildings in 1815. Both Frederick Wheeler and George Alexander's education must have extended into Styles' headship. John Ford became his usher (apprentice teacher) in 1815.

Styles 'retired' in 1820 and passed over the headship to Richard Weston. He retained ownership of the Boley Hill property as the 1841 census records him living there as does the 1840 highways' accounts. *Wrights* directory listed him as part of the gentry of Frindsbury in 1838, living at 'Blackland', a farm near Wainscott. This suggests that he owned property there as well. From humble beginnings he rapidly became established as a pillar of the community and was economically successful enough to retire as a schoolmaster at 40 years of age. Styles remarried in 1826 to Sarah Tatum and at that time still described his occupation as 'schoolmaster', but it is not clear if he still actively pursued his profession.<sup>4</sup>

In the period 1800 to 1820 Ackworth School appears to have been out of favour with local Friends' parents suggesting they were financially secure enough to pay for their children's education. The one exception to this was young George Robinson, son of George of Maidstone, who was at Ackworth from 1804 to 1806 due to his father's financial position. His mother came with four children into the Rochester Meeting in late 1802. Their father, George, had been disowned by the Brighthouse meeting in 1799 for debts and so his membership was not transferred until 1809. George junior went onto become apprenticed to the schoolmaster John Naish in Bath in 1808.<sup>5</sup>

The final part of the serial on Rochester Quaker education featuring Richard Weston and his ownership of the school from 1820 onwards will conclude in the next issue due to time constraints. Certain new information has also recently come to light on some aspects of the earlier articles and I will provide an update with the final instalment.

## Notes

1. LSF, Temp MS 128/22/118, Letter William Rickman to Thomas Wilkinson 24 March 1811; Scrapbook Vol N fl75, Rickman Prospectus 1819; 1841 Census; Carroll J & Goodbody O (ed), *Extracts from the letters of John Grubb (1766-1841) to Joseph Grubb (1768-1844)*, (Dublin, 1966) p28; TNA, PROB11/1601; PROB 11/1666; *Pigott's Directory* (1840); *Irish Friend*, Vol 5 (1842) p64.
2. Rickman Prospectus 1819; *Irish Friend*; 'Notes & Queries' JFHS Vol 18 (1921) p114; Milligan E H, *Biographical Dictionary of British Quakers in Commerce and Industry 1775-1920*, (York, 2007) pp413-4; [www.hitchinplus.com/Quakers/Chapter9](http://www.hitchinplus.com/Quakers/Chapter9) for Mary Ann Speciall information
3. *Irish Friend*; *British Friend*, Vol 12 (1843) p144; See *Wrights Directory* (1838) for list of Rochester schools; 1851 Census; 1861 Census
4. MALSC, DE0996, Title Deeds of Messuage in Boley Hill, Rochester 1784-1846; St Mary's Parish Records; St Nicholas Highways Accounts 1840; *Annual Monitor* (1859) pp181-2; CKS, N/FMr 1/1, Rochester Minutes of Monthly Meeting 1804-1814; PS/L/ M, North Kent Militia Records; Thompson S, *Memorials of John Ford*, (London, 1877) pp1-21; 1841 Census; *Wrights Directory*; TNA; Non-conformist registers (RG6)-available online
5. Olver A G, *Alphabetical List of Ackworth Scholars 1779-1979*, 5 vols; Pearce C, *Maidstone Quakers 1655-1976*, (Maidstone, 2000) Chapters 4 & 6, Appendix 1; CKS, N/FMc 1/3, Canterbury Minutes 1793-1804; N/FMr 1/1

## Editor's Note

Readers may be interested to see a letter from Mr. Michael Fowler (see page 10) commenting on Catharina Clement's articles.

## *Edwin Harris – Recollections of Rochester*

Alison Thomas

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



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

### Richard Watts and his Famous Charity

#### Part One

#### Watts Charity

The present street number of this well known building is 97, but the old street number was 59. The following lines occur in ‘Hogarth’s Frolic’, dated 1732: -

“Then Watts Hospital we see  
(No common curiosity);  
Endow’d (as on the front appears)  
In favour of poor Travellers  
Six such at every night receives  
Supper and lodging gratis gives,  
And to each man next morn does pay  
A groat, to keep him on his way;  
But the contagiously infected,  
And rogues and proctors are rejected.  
It gave us too some entertainment  
To find out whatr this bounteous man meant.”

The question which naturally arises is, “Who was this Watts?” The answer is that very little is known historically about this great man, and also that that little is so mixed with legend that it is somewhat difficult to divide reality from fiction.

Richard Watts, in conjunction with Edward Basshe, was purveyor to the King’s navy. He was appointed by Queen Elizabeth to be surveyor and clerk of works for the building of Upnor Castle; he was paymaster to the wardens of Rochester Bridge and he represented the city in Parliament from 1563-1571. In vol. vii of *Archaeologica Cantiana*, pp.322, it is stated: “Richard Watts of Bullihill, nere the city of Rochester, where he had then dwelled about 20 years – and before at Little Peckham where he was borne – a free man – and then about lix years of age – dated 1572.” In vol. xvii of the same series is the following letter from Richard Watts, paymaster of the Bridge Estates, applying to be retained in his office: -

“From Richard Watts of Rochester Paymaster of the Bridge to Sir Richard Sackville, 19<sup>th</sup> August, 1561.

“As hit maye stand with the good pleasure of your honor with my umble sarvice umbly desyrynge you that amonge all your offesars of the Bridge I may have one and yff it might stand with your good pleasure I wold be co'tent to remayne paymr. (and as for the Blockehouse\* the Surveyors hope to end before Hallowtide) and thus umblye I take my leave of your honor by besychinge our Lord to prosper you in long life healthe and Joye. From bulye-hyll beside Rochester the xixth of August, 1561.

At the commodement of your honor – devoting myself - my lyfe,  
RICD. WATTS

(Addressed)

“To the honourable Sir Rychard Sackfylde Knight.

(Endorsed Mr Watts, for Rochester Bridge – his sute to be paymaster”

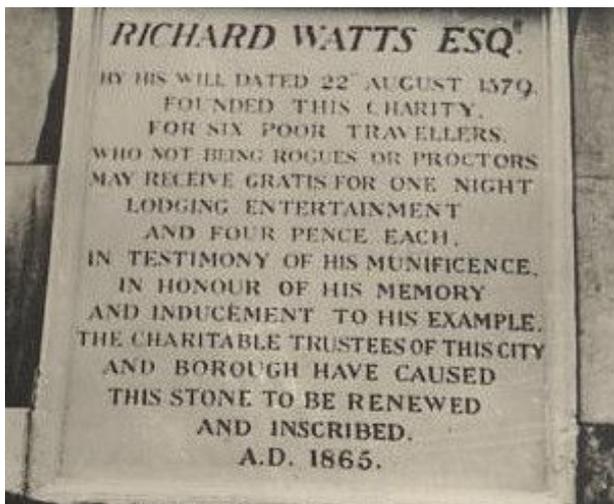
(\* This refers to Upnor Castle, on the building of which Watts was then engaged as clerk of works or in some such capacity.)

(The above extracts are taken from a long article written by A. A. Arnold).

The allusions to Watts in subsequent correspondence would appear to place him in a disadvantageous light. One would think from some of the passages that he was keeping back money belonging to the Trust; but when the account is fully examined there is found to be a balance due to him. His bundle of vouchers for the last of his accounts in 1561 is still at the Bridge Chamber, endorsed and docketed methodically.

## Legendary

The foregoing is authentic history; now for the legend which was current when I was a boy. It was stated that Richard Watts was a poor boy and came into Rochester in search of employment. He was looking for shelter in which to pass the night when a kindly citizen noticed him and took him into his house, gave him supper, a bed, and, in the morning, a groat to help him on his way. (A groat was the old silver fourpenny -piece) This relief was so welcome to him that he vowed that if ever he had sufficient money he would found a charity for six poor wayfarers who would each receive similar benefits to those given him when he first came to Rochester....



DE402/4/80(L right); photograph of stone tablet commemorating Richard Watts Esq., founder of Watts' Charity, Rochester, erected on the street frontage of Watts' Charity Six Poor Travellers' House, High Street, Rochester. 3 ¼" x 2 ½" (82mm x 64mm) c.1920 p.80 (L) (right).

From *The Couchman Collection for Edwin Harris: Recollections of Rochester: No 49 Richard Watts and his famous charity*

*In the next issue of The Clock Tower, find out what Edwin Harris has to say about the prohibition of the proctors from Watts Charity.*

## *Archives Update*

Alison Cable, Borough Archivist



### Quarterly Report for the Archives of Great Expectations September to December 2010

#### Rochester City Archive (RCA) Cataloguing

Valerie Rouland, the project archivist, has completed the cataloguing of the four main series of records in the Rochester City Council collection:

- **Title (RCA/T)**
  - RCA/T1 Title deeds relating to Rochester
  - RCA/T2 Title deeds relating to Strood and Frindsbury
  - RCA/T3 Abstracts of title
  - RCA/T4 Miscellaneous
  
- **Legal (RCA/L)**
  - RCA/L1 Local acts and byelaws
  - RCA/L2 Litigation cases and related documents
  - RCA/L3 Contracts and agreements
  - RCA/L4 Legal documents relating to the Corporation borrowing
  - RCA/L5 Recorder's opinions
  - RCA/L6 Miscellaneous legal documents
  
- **Judicial (RCA/J)**
  - There have been some amendments compared to the current catalogue. Under this section, Valerie will make a list of the coroners' indictments (when the documents return from conservation).
  
- **Official (RCA/O)**
  - There are also six new series:
    - Charities (RCA/Q)
    - Library (RCA/LB)
    - Pavement commissioners (RCA/PC)
    - Weight and measures (RCA/WM)
    - Health Department (RCA/H)
    - Education (RCA/E)

#### Volunteer Work

Since mid-September, a team of volunteers has been going through the Town Clerk's files, renumbering and improving the packaging. The next stage of the process will be to deal with the City Surveyor's files, in the same way.

## Conservation

The first batch of records have been sent for conservation, the cost of which will be born by Medway Council as part of its contribution to this project

Some items which *might* be suitable for digitisation:

- Coroner's inquests
- Reports of the Medical Officer of Health
- Extracts from three volumes of documents (1577 to 1810), which were removed from the Town Clerk's offices. They include chamberlain's documents; indictment for slander and assault 1582; information regarding theft of a time of pump rod and assault ; chamberlains' accounts of money paid by order; accounts of the late Mayor; letters regarding tithes; names of officers chosen at Court Leet; presentments of various boroughs; view of frankpledge; draft chamberlain accounts; list of victuallers; lists of inhabitants of various boroughs; bills for prisoners expenses with names; lists of tradesmen with amounts; rentals, etc.
- Council minutes (RCA/A1/4)
- Minutes of the Estates and General Purpose Committee (I think they would be the most interesting ones).]

Work on cataloguing the RCA collection is on target, so during January to April 2011, Valerie will be cataloguing the deposited records of the Sir Joseph Williamson Mathematical School (collection ref: C/ES/306/4).

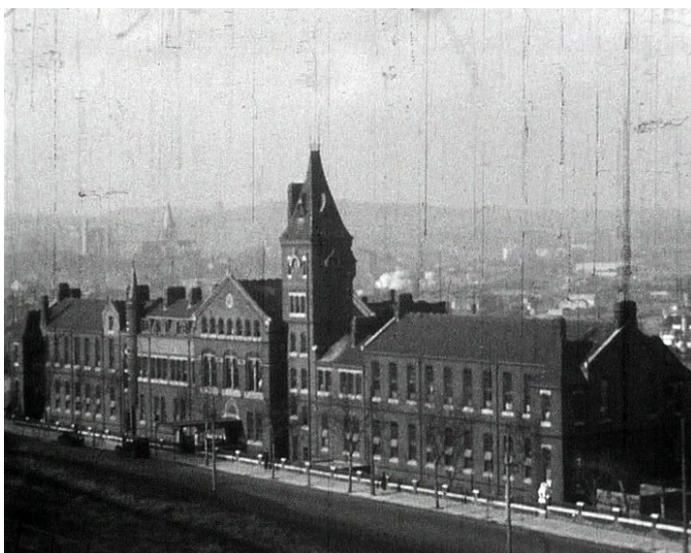
## *A Day in the Life of St. Bart's (produced 1930)*



*Keith Lambourne is a volunteer in the Medway On Screen project. He has lived in the Medway Towns since he was ten years old and is now retired after a life working mainly for Independent Television News as first, a despatch clerk, then film and video librarian, progressing to researching and finally producing many documentaries in the broadcast and corporate fields. A varied portfolio included Sport Gone Crazy (awarded Best Compilation of the Year by Video Business Magazine), Tears of a Princess about the travails of Diana Princess of Wales and Kuwait Recaptured about the first Gulf War. For a couple of years, Keith had his own production company, which produced the home-videos for the 24 Hours Race at Le Mans. He also spent many days at the Imperial War Museum looking at every frame of film they held on World War 1, researching for an American documentary series. Keith later returned to ITN Archive (now ITN Source) as a product developer and content manager, making The Collection, a selective theme-based showcase of the best of ITN, Gaumont, Paramount and Reuters and helped make this material accessible for all via ITN's website. Keith is passionate about the conservation of our nation's visual heritage.*

*To follow are Keith Lambourne's research notes on St. Bart's Hospital made at Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre as a volunteer for the Medway On Screen project currently being run by Screen Archive South East. These are also online on their website (<http://community.brighton.ac.uk/medway>). See below for more details.*

The film, *A Day In The Life Of St. Bart's*, was produced in the latter half of 1930 for St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Rochester, in order to raise funds to clear their crippling overdraft. The film shows the viewer round the hospital, as well as including shots of local streets and industry. It also features the work of The Association of Friends of St. Bart's who commissioned the film. The Friends were a body of volunteers, with branches throughout the area, who were committed to raise large sums for the hospital through small contributions from the local population, usually by the installation and collection of *penny-boxes*. The driving force behind the film was a leading Friend, Alderman Alfred Ernest John Price. Also featured are The Ladies Of Linen, a body of volunteers led by Florence, Lady Darnley, who supplied bed linen and garments to the hospital.



*St. Bartholomew's Hospital, Rochester.  
Courtesy of Screen Archive South East*

St. Bartholomew's lays claim to being the oldest existing hospital in England, founded in 1078 by Bishop Gundulph 'for the poor and leprous.' It was originally funded by rents from lands that it owned, grants and private contributions and remained funded that way right up to the twentieth century, despite several disputes over the ownership of the hospital's lands (sometimes involving the Crown) and tales of corrupt administration of grants. None of the original hospital exists anymore, apart from its chapel. The current main hospital building is mid-nineteenth century, largely funded by a donation from the Watts' Charity. By the late 1920s, though, the hospital was in the red - and something had to be done.

The Association of Friends was founded in 1928 as a scheme specifically set up to eliminate St. Bartholomew's deficit. The President was The Dean of Rochester, Dr. R.T. Talbot. The hospital's annual report states that their purpose was 'to raise each year pennies enough to DESTROY our present debt and CREATE an adequate income, so that the debt shall never come to life again.' Committees were quickly established throughout the local area in 1929, and results were instant. The 1929 foreword to their annual report states that 'God has raised up to the hospital 10,000 friends....these friends, these box holders, by the power of the weekly penny have made £1000 new money...it was so dull when all we could say was "the hospital was in a bad way."' Well now we have got a new song in our mouths.'

In 1929, there were 500 volunteer collectors, going door-to-door picking up boxes of pennies saved up by the local people. In 1930, there were 650 volunteers and in 1931, there were 1000. The Friends Committee described them as 'the living bridge between thousands of homes and the hospital' and advertised for 'friends not acquaintances.' The Dean's Foreword of 1930 reported that, 'when this plan was broached, faces were dark with doubt. Now you are making those same faces smile. Now some doubt whether you can go on, but thousands of voices swell the chorus "By God's Grace, we will".' By the end of 1931, there were 17,200 box-holders, and £5000 had been raised, 'contributed largely out of the pence of the poor.'

The local paper of 1<sup>st</sup> August 1930 features a poem written by *Aunt Marigold*:

When I have sixpence given me,  
(Of course, I don't get many)  
I knew St. 'tholomew's will be  
Pleased to accept a penny.

For here, it is that little mites,  
In pain, perhaps, and sickly,  
The good, kind doctors 'put to rights',  
Be that they grow strong quickly.

It seems a lovely thought,  
A little, sick child mended,  
The nicest sweets a penny bought,  
Could never be so splendid.

Not only were there contributions from local house-holders. Businesses were encouraged to put penny-boxes in their workplaces and among notable contributors in 1930 included HM Dockyard (£1,054 4/7d), Aveling & Porter (£133 19/-), Edward Lloyd, Sittingbourne (£534

6/8d), Short Brothers (£336 6/4d), Southern Railway (£144 4/1d) and The Canning Town Glassworks, Queenborough (£118 2/7d).

The hospital's overdraft was £15,567 17/1d in 1930.  
It had been reduced to £10,844 12/10d in 1931.

The *Chatham, Rochester & Gillingham News* reported on the quarterly meeting of the trustees in their edition of 1<sup>st</sup> August 1930 and introduces us to the driving force behind the film, Alderman Alfred Ernest John Price, J.P., known to all as *Ernest*.

'Alderman Price remarked upon the anxiety which money matters gave the trustees and urged everyone to do their best to secure increased support for making the household box scheme more widely known''.

There was also some concerned discussion about confusion with St. Bart's, London, who had placed automatic *lottery* machines to raise funds in railway stations. The meeting was closed with a film demonstration by Messrs. Kodak Ltd., featuring 'all phases of hospital life and work' at the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford. This may well have been at the instigation of Alderman Price as 'it was decided that the House & Finance Committee, together with the Association of Friends, should take steps towards arranging for a similar film, illustrating the work of the hospital, to be made. The cost of such a film, together with apparatus was given at approximately £100. Alderman Price said he thought he knew of a friend of the hospital who would help to provide the apparatus.'

Consequently, from the annual report of the Association of Friends 1930:

'The Committee have the pleasure to report that a portable cinema has been placed at the service of the Association through the munificence of a friend who wishes to remain anonymous. A comprehensive and interesting film picturing the hospital at work has been produced and will be shown at meetings during the coming months. In this connection, the generous and untiring assistance given by their Vice-Chairman A.E.J. Price JP, to whom they tender their heartfelt thanks.'

There is no reference to any payments regarding the film in either the Association of Friends or the hospital accounts.

The local paper of 24<sup>th</sup> October 1930 reports that 'the film of the local hospital and its work was complete and had only to be approved for showing' and Ernest Price was quoted he 'hoped the showing of the hospital film in the country districts would help to raise enthusiasm there.'

There must have been some delay on the approval as the *Chatham, Rochester & Gillingham News* reported the film as 'nearly ready' in its issue of 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1931.

From the 1931 annual report:-

'The hospital film has proved to be of the greatest value in our work and we acknowledge with deep gratitude the generous help Alderman A.E.J. Price JP has given in connection with it. Mr. Price not only conveyed the apparatus, but acted as operator and spoke on behalf of the hospital at 33 public meetings.'

Sadly, the Alderman's involvement with the film would be short-lived.

The Alderman was a man who seemed to work tirelessly for the good of the Medway Towns. He not only contributed time to St. Bart's, but was on sundry other committees, including the Fire Brigade, the Waterworks, Foord Almshouses and many more, as well as being on the board of governors of both Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School and Rochester Grammar School For Girls. He was mayor of Rochester from 1921 to 1923, and not, as has been previously stated in the Screen South East shotlist, when the film was being made. The mayor in 1930 was S.J. Brice.

Alderman Price's selfless workload may have proved too much for him, for he was taken ill unexpectedly whilst on a short holiday in Wales. He was transported back to St. Bart's, where he died after an unsuccessful operation in April 1932. His funeral was a grand affair, taking place in Rochester Cathedral. His obituary from the *Chatham, Rochester & Gillingham News* of 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1932 states the service at the Cathedral was 'followed by procession through Rochester and thousands of people lined the route.' The obituary also remarks on his work with the film, 'Price travelled far and wide addressing meetings...and educating village people in the outlying districts upon the hospital's work and its needs for funds,' and that Price had died in Bart's 'in the hospital for which he had worked so hard and done so much.'

Canon MacKean's tribute at the funeral adds a post-script to the funding of the film for he states, 'he went to many places with the film he had purchased.' Price was obviously the man behind the making of the film, and from this, it would appear he may well have personally funded it too. It is, however, not clear who he employed to make it. The film show at the end of trustees meeting may well be a clue, for it mentions Kodak. There may have been other donations towards its making, especially from the anonymous contributor of the portable cinema. The film may give one more clue, though this is no more than conjecture. It features extensive coverage of Edward Lloyd's Paper Mill in Sittingbourne. Lloyd had already donated £10,000 in 1926 to have a ward named after his wife, Helen. He made further yearly donations to the hospital. Lloyd was obviously a wealthy benefactor and surely Price would have known him well. Finally, the 1932 report of the Association of Friends said of the death of Price, 'he left us with a lasting memory of a valued friend and benefactor. Mr. Price was a man of action, this was exemplified by the long journeys he took throughout the area served by the hospital to exhibit his film at meetings of the Friends'.

Also featured in the film is the Annual General Meeting of The Ladies of Linen. This voluntary organisation had been set up in 1910 with the object of providing the supply of garments, linen, blankets etc. required for the in-patients of the hospital. The President in 1910 was Florence, Lady Darnley and she still held that position in 1930.

The 1930 report states that these redoubtable ladies had to subscribe 2/6d annually and contribute two or more garments or two articles of ward linen. It was 5/- if you didn't supply any garments! In 1929, they provided 4,449 articles and in 1930, 2,629, but only because they had been asked to slacken their efforts as the hospital had too much! By 1931, it was stated they had supplied 23,000 garments in 21 years.

The 1930 report also states under the charming title, *Stitches Of Hope*, that the annual meeting ‘differed from its predecessors in that the proceedings were filmed and will ultimately be incorporated in the film which is being taken in connection with all branches of the hospital and which is intended for public exhibition.’ This part of the film, therefore, can be precisely dated as taking place on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1930, flying in the face of the newspaper report above that the film was complete in October!

As the intertitle says, the ‘happy bunch of workers’ are addressed by Florence, Countess of Darnley, DBE. What is not mentioned is that it is followed by Alderman Price himself offering thanks. The Mayoress of Rochester, Mrs. Brice, then seconds the vote of thanks. The meeting took place in the new out-patients department, which was brought into service for the first time on the following day. A new X-Ray department was also opened on that day.

The Darnleys were very much the local aristocrats, living at Cobham Hall since the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century. However, Florence and her husband the 8<sup>th</sup> Earl were forced to leave the mansion in 1924 to live at Puckle Hill. The Hall had become too expensive to run. It did, however, stay in the family till 1955, when it was sold to Westwood Educational Trust who turned it into a private school for girls.

An interesting footnote. The 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Darnley’s name was Ivo Bligh. He was England’s cricket captain in 1882 to 1883 in the first ever series where The Ashes were at stake. The previous tour had ended in defeat and was declared ‘the death of English cricket’ and hence the burning of, possibly, a bail. Bligh was presented with the urn containing these Ashes when he emerged victorious, beating the Australians 2-1. The Countess presented the urn to the House Of Lords after Ivo’s death in 1927.

## The Film

The first intertitle is an introductory ‘The Hospital Of St. Bartholomew, Rochester, Kent. Founded by Bishop Gundulf, 1078. The oldest hospital in England.’ The film was, however, referred to in the local press as ‘A Day In The Life Of St. Bart’s.’ Maybe that title has been lost.

A long top shot pans slowly left to right past St Bartholomew’s Hospital, revealing the River Medway behind and Chatham Dockyard is in the far distance.

The hospital’s patron (and the Friends of St. Bart’s President) The Very Reverend The Dean of Rochester, Dr. R.T. Talbot, walks toward the camera.

The 15<sup>th</sup> Century Seal of the hospital carved in a wall.

‘Our hospital serves a population of a quarter of a million’ followed by top shot of hospital with buses passing it along New Road.

The chapel of St. Bartholomew – very quick exterior - followed by shot of the interior showing the Norman apse.

Dr. Ludford Cooper, Chairman of the Extensions Committee, speaking in mid-shot (no shots of the meeting). Cooper was also the honorary consulting physician of the hospital and sat on the board of management. He also had a ward named after him.

The hospital's chaplain leads a dedication service for the new casualty and outpatients departments. Nurses and doctors gathered. Hospital exterior. The Reverend continues.

'The Hospital At Work' – ambulances past camera – first is St. John's Ambulance, Sheerness, followed by two more unidentified, then a Chatham & District Ambulance, then a Borough Of Gillingham ambulance. The five ambulances drive up a street and turn R-L, then follow each other toward us in Rochester High Street past a temperance café, with Rochester Bridge in background, then past Rochester Guildhall.

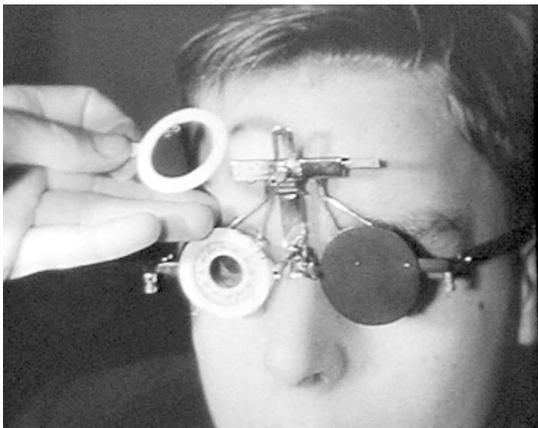
A staged interlude charts the admission of a child who has been involved in a street accident – a City of Rochester ambulance arrives, the boy is carried from its back into the hospital main entrance (a donations box is hanging at the entrance); 'casualty' sign; the patient is carried to a bed and examined by a doctor; chest x-ray is taken; operation in progress; the patient examined in ward; the patient eating – 'well on the way to recovery.'

Nurses in uniform walking towards from nursing home

'The wards. Where 2000 patients are treated annually': nurses at work in wards – three top shots panning left to right – all beds occupied. Visitors with patients, including boy with leg suspended in sling. Nurses with children in the children's ward, close-up of young girl, nurse feeding baby as other children eat, close-up baby.

A round-up of Special Departments follows starting with Pathological, 'where 'science plays its part,' lab technicians at work with test-tubes and microscope.

The Ophthalmic Department – man having eyes tested.



*Courtesy of Screen Archive South East*

The Orthopaedic Department 'where the cripple can be made to walk' – girl with very thin legs walking toward camera and back to bed; 'orthopaedic students in training' – schoolgirls going through physical exercise and walking along a beam. 'Sunlight is harnessed to fight disease' – man having heel treated by sunlamp. 'Electricity costs money but works wonders' – man having leg massage, other leg is attached to electrodes.

The Ear, Nose & Throat Department – man having his throat examined

The Dental Department – man being given gas in the dentist's chair and undergoing dental surgery.

'The Out-Patients Department, where 70,000 attendances are made annually' – full to bursting! '15,000 yards of bandages and 39,000 yards of surgical dressing, costing £750, are used in a year' – boy with injured finger being attended to by nurses, administrator stamps patient's book, doctor examined boy in surgery, woman doctor with female patient.

The Dispensary – pharmacist pouring out measure of liquid, many bottles on shelves in front of her.



*Courtesy of Screen Archive South East*

‘Feeding a family of two hundred and fifty’ – milk churn carried to creamery van; meals being prepared in kitchen

‘Boiler House. Furnaces have appetites and cost over £1000 a year to feed’ – furnace stoked with coal

‘The Laundry. Three thousand articles are washed weekly’ – clean linen being sorted

‘Sewing Room’ – two women at work at foot-powered sewing machines making sheets

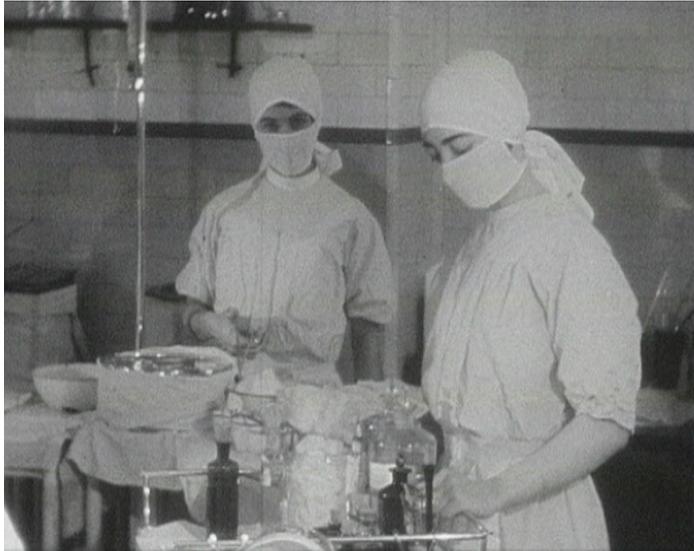
‘Peace... which passeth all understanding’ – two shots of horse-drawn ploughing

‘The Ladies Linen League. A Happy Band of Workers. Florence, Countess of Darnley, D.B.E. addressing the annual meeting’ - This part of the film took place on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1930. The Countess enters, followed by The Dean R.T. Talbot, and examines articles of linen that have been supplied by The Ladies. The meeting in progress in the new out-patients department (it was to be opened the following day). The Countess speaking. Alderman Ernest Price offering thanks, followed by The Mayoress of Rochester, Mrs. Brice, seconding.

‘Our patients come from field & factory’ – livestock sale at market (probably Maidstone), schoolchildren walking in line with teachers along street, traffic including buses in Military Road, Chatham (tramlines also showing); the Dockyard gates; workers boarding buses outside HM Dockyard; traffic in shopping street that is possibly Luton Road, Chatham; Style & Winch pub – The George Inn; train pulling truck of paper bales; list of accidents at the mill; ambulance leaving the mill; factory interiors and exteriors; steam rollers along street (possibly at top of end of Railway Street, Chatham); plane under construction at Short Brothers; woman worker sanding wing; shots of the River Medway showing factories; heavy plant work; crane unloading barge; gasworks across river; sacks along conveyor.

‘£ S. D. IS A DAILY PROBLEM. Our hospital needs 9d every minute. Voluntary workers render valuable assistance’ – volunteers belonging to the Friends of St. Bart’s collecting donation boxes; volunteers walking along New Road carrying boxes. ‘Love. Sacrifice. Devotion’ – volunteers with boxes in office. ‘£20,000 is required every year for maintenance’ – poster proclaiming ‘The Power of the Penny’ tilt down to four cheques for £1,000 each – ‘£4,000. The Friends First Year’s Gift to St. Bart’s’.

The film ends with the seal of St. Bart’s.



*Courtesy of Screen Archive South East*

#### References

UID: 1186

AN: K 990525 / 1

Date: 1930

Length 31mins 40 secs

Mute with Intertitles.

Our thanks to Screen Archive South East Project Organiser Catherine Walsh who writes:

The *Medway on Screen* project has been gathering stories and memories related to the 20th century history of the River Medway and West Kent throughout 2010. The project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and delivered by Screen Archive South East using archive films of the local area from their collection. We would love to hear your own memories and responses to the films. You can view these unique films and leave comments on the project website: <http://community.brighton.ac.uk/medway>

Alternatively you can view the films on a DVD at Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre. For more information, please contact project officer Catherine Walsh at Screen Archive South East, University of Brighton, Grand Parade, Brighton, BN2 0JY; Tel: 01273 643214; Email: [wmailhtml:screenarchive@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:wmailhtml:screenarchive@brighton.ac.uk)



Supported by  
**The National Lottery**<sup>®</sup>  
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



## *Major John Blackburn Hart and the Church of All Saints, Wouldham*

John Lloyd



*John Lloyd has been a churchwarden and member of the church council at Burham and Wouldham for over 25 years. His interest in Major John Blackburn Hart came from watching the series of Sharpe and the 95th Rifles on television and he then started researching and reading about that period of the Peninsular Wars. He is going to visit the San Sebastian area in the Basque area this summer to check out some of the key sites!*

I suppose most people are well aware that the Purser (or Supplies Officer) of HMS Victory at the Battle of Trafalgar, Walter Burke, is buried in the Churchyard of All Saints, Wouldham. However, it is likely that fewer people will know that in the centre aisle of the church, (and walked over by hundreds of people, including clergy, choirs, wedding parties, etc. for about 190 years) lie the remains of someone with a life history at least as colourful as that of Walter Burke. The flat tombstone, forming part of the floor, indicates that buried here are the mortal remains of

Major John Blackburn Hart of the 95<sup>th</sup> Regiment (*the Rifles*)

Anyone who saw the television series, or read the books about Richard Sharpe by Bernard Cornwell, will recognise this regiment, which was the first to carry rifles (not muskets) and were crack shots, using the tactics of modern infantry; an original Band of Brothers, different from all other regiments. The tombstone lists many of the battles of the Peninsular War in which Major Hart was engaged, and even one in South America. The Peninsular War took place shortly after the Battle of Trafalgar and the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte at sea, and lasted another eight years or so.

The Curator of the Museum of the Royal Green Jackets at Winchester has kindly done some research into Major Blackburn Hart, which has produced the following interesting information:

1. Notes on the Officers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 95<sup>th</sup> relating to the Battles at Corunna 1808/9. (Corunna was like Dunkirk, an heroic evacuation rather than a victory – J.B. Hart then a lieutenant)

<u>Company No.</u>	<u>Captain</u>	<u>Lieutenant</u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant</u>
	<u>Worth Acklands Force</u> <u>Sir John Moore's Force</u>		
No. 1 Company	Major Norcot Hon. J. Stewart	J. Ward	J.C.Hope
No. 2 Company	John Ross	<b>J.B. Hart</b> Hon.D. Arbuthnot W. Pemberton	



“The arms are those of the City of Canterbury conjoined with those of the recipient.

Sold with the lot is the Grant of the Freedom of the City to Captain Blackburn Hart, on vellum, and two other documents relating to the ceremony”.

Major Hart was gazetted to the 95<sup>th</sup> Rifles as a Lieutenant from the half-pay list of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Light Infantry on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1803.

He served in the Walcheren Expedition and was promoted Captain 1<sup>st</sup> February 1809 and Brevet-Major, 21<sup>st</sup> December 1815. In May 1816 he was again placed on half pay, this time with the Glengarry Fencibles, who were disbanded that year.

He died on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1824.’

5. From the Curator of the Royal Green Jackets (Rifles) Museum, Mrs. Pullen:

‘We also have in our reserve collection a large wooden chest that once belonged to Captain J.B. Hart.’

I have a feeling that this will be of interest to some parishioners and may serve to help us remember that the tombstones in the church relate to real people who had some very interesting lives. I would be pleased to know of any other information relating to Major Hart and/or his descendants.

## *A Clock Tower Special Feature*

### *Medway Memories of World War Two and the Battle of Britain*

#### Part Three

#### *Broomhill and the Battle of Britain*

Odette Buchanan



*To follow, and adapted for The Clock Tower, is the second part of Odette's talk to the Friends of Broomhill on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2010 at Strood Library, to commemorate (to the day) the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Messerschmitt 109 crash on Broomhill.*

#### Part Two

#### Fallen Eagle

Let's go back to the 30<sup>th</sup> September. Remember there were three major attacks on London with the loss of 47 enemy aircraft. A German fighter squadron usually had 12 planes. The Messerschmitt that crashed on Broomhill belonged to Jg 53. That squadron lost 4 planes – a third of their compliment – on that one day.

A couple of years ago I read an anecdote in *West Kent Within Living Memory*. This set me and another committee member on a remarkable journey of discovery. I quote:

‘One day, when I was about 11, a German plane came down in the allotments near our house in Broomhill. The pilot was unharmed and was apprehended by the police as he stepped out of the plane. They had to march him through the allotments and all the local women turned out with brooms and sticks ready to assist in case he escaped.’

A trawl through the local newspapers found a report of the actual incident that did not quite match the above memory and also contained inaccuracies. The crash happened on Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1940, exactly 70 years ago to today [the date of Odette Buchanan's talk] and as I told you earlier, at the height of the battle. According to the paper, the plane was a Messerschmitt 109 and came out of the clouds very low; it had already been hit by a British fighter. The ack ack barrage caught it again. It banked, dived and eventually landed on a potato field. The report says the pilot ‘resorted to machine gunning, but no one was hurt.’ The field workers were incensed by this shooting and armed themselves with sticks and assumed a threatening attitude towards the pilot. Swift intervention from the police and military averted any attack on him. He was slightly injured and taken away in an ambulance. The report concludes with the information that the tail, fuselage and other parts of the machine were holed or damaged.

Version three refutes this. A member of the Friends' father told him that the Land Army girls had been strafed by machine gun fire earlier in the day and vented their anger on this pilot. Before the police or army arrived, a Scots Land Army girl fought them off and kept them at bay until the police arrived.



*The Messerschmitt 109 crash on Broomhill, 30<sup>th</sup> September 1940.  
With thanks to the Friends of Broomhill.*

Yet a fourth version is that as the plane flew low overhead a Friend of Broomhill's father shot at it with his Lee Enfield from the door of his Anderson shelter in the back garden of his house in Gordon Road. When the plane was inspected after it crashed, it was noticed that there were three bullet holes in it. The gentleman went to his grave firmly convinced that he had shot it down.

Recently yet more versions have crawled out the woodwork: One person remembers his father (who was in the Home Guard and also worked at Shorts in the war) telling him that as the plane came down it was firing at children. The women were incensed and would not let the ambulance onto the hill. The pilot, despite being injured, had to walk to it in Brompton Lane. Another person recalls that the plane did a *pancake* landing after flying lower and lower from the direction of the dockyard. He and two friends raced to the crash and when no one was watching, pinched one of the wing tips. They cut it in three – a piece each. Sadly, his piece was thrown away by his mother when he moved out. He does not know the whereabouts of the other two pieces. So there are all these different reports of the same incident. What really happened? To follow is a fifth version of the crash.

In the autumn of 2008 our researcher discovered that the pilot was at that time still alive, aged 96 and living in Stuttgart; he was born on the 4<sup>th</sup> May, 1911. Sadly, he died in a car crash on 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2009, aged 98. The curator of a small museum in Shoreham was very friendly with him and we are indebted to the curator for the questions he was able to ask Unteroffizier Ernst Poschenrieder, the pilot. From this we learnt that Ernst flew a Messerschmitt Bf 109E-1 werk Nr. 5157, with 7/jg53, (the German squadron number) based at le Touquet-Etaples airfield in Nord-pas-de-Calais.

This squadron is also known for another reason. It was a fighter squadron of Messerschmitts and its nick-name was Pik-As (Ace of Clubs) Geschwader. It was formed in 1937 and was one of the oldest German fighter units. It had seen action in most of the blitzkrieg attacks and most recently, before the Battle of Britain, in the French invasion. It had several ace pilots who had clocked up many kills. We now know that Ernst was not one of these ace pilots, however the plane he was flying when he crashed belonged to another pilot who had recorded many kills and the plane had been damaged when he crash-landed at Boulogne just ten 10 days before, after having being involved with Spitfires over the Channel. The ace fighter had been given a new plane and Ernst, as an Unteroffizier, was given the hastily repaired one. This may well account for it breaking so easily when he crashed.

While JG 53 was covering itself in glory during the early part of the Battle of Britain, Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering was told that the Kommodore, Major Jurgen von Cramon-Taubadel's wife was Jewish. Goering ordered the Squadron to remove the Pik As emblem from their planes and replace it with a red stripe around the engine cowling as punishment. The Squadron did this but in retaliation and support of their Kommodore, they also removed the swastikas from the tails. Coincidentally, it was on 30<sup>th</sup> September that Major Gunther Freiherr von Maltzahn was appointed Kommodore and the squadron was allowed to paint the Pik As back on their Bf 109s and remove the red band.

On 30<sup>th</sup> September, the squadron was on bomber escort duty. His wing man had radio problems and had to turn back over the Channel. Ernst then became engaged with British fighters which damaged his plane and caused him to ditch on Broomhill. Ernst remembers that as he brought the plane down 'everything was being thrown at him.' One of the Land Army girls had a shotgun and was threatening his life. Sarah Kortwright, another Land Army girl, stepped in and protected him until the police arrived, in the form of PC 28 Jack Matthews of Rochester Police, who happened to live nearby at 51 Brompton Lane. Mitch Peake, his grandson, tells us that Sarah was still on the aircraft's buckled wing when Jack arrived. He took control by formally arresting Ernst and then telling the mob that anyone trying to get at the pilot would be either obstructing a police officer or having to assault one. Suddenly the mob was not so keen and Ernst was carefully extracted from his cockpit. The father of another Friend was also in the small police force stationed in the house that used to stand on this site. She thinks that before the war it was an orphanage, commandeered for the duration and became a library after the war. He was also involved in the rescue party and the daughter remembers her father telling her what a charming man Ernst was and what a beautiful silk scarf he had. She assumes this was because her father would not have seen such luxury at that time. Other Friends also confirm how charming and handsome he was. Some women who were picking plums filled their aprons with plums and set off to pelt Ernst with them. When they saw how handsome and charming he was, they offered him cups of tea instead!

We now have a copy of the official, secret report that recorded locations and information of enemy aircraft brought down during the 24 hours ending at 0600 on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1940. The report records that the pilot was taken prisoner. The crash occurred at 14.10 and gives the map reference as R.1788. It gives the plane description and engine specification and then says, 'Aircraft said to have been hit by AA fire and later in fighter action. The Pilot made a crashed landing and was wounded.' Attached to this is a secret report of Squadron Leader Felkin's interview with Ernst shortly after his capture. It confirms Ernst's account and

records his radio transmission words for the day. It then continues with Ernst asking after several friends of his who had been already identified as belonging to the same Staffel. The report also records that his morale was very good and said, 'Germany is so strong, he does not know why England prolongs the struggle.'



*PC 28, Jack Matthews, back row third from right, courtesy of the Friends of Broomhill*

During the forced landing Ernst sustained serious back injuries. After hospital treatment at the Naval Hospital (now The Medway Maritime Hospital, Gillingham) he spent the rest of the war as a prisoner. He thinks the first prison may have been at Oldham, Lancashire, but he ended his war years in Canada. It is understood he was actually in the same camp as the only German POW who ever managed to escape, about whom the film was made entitled, *The One that Got Away*.

At the Shoreham Museum they have a display case devoted to Ernst and his exploits. On one of the photographs we have, you will see a home guard person standing in front of the tail fin. This is because whereas the Americans and British recorded their hits on the fuselage, the German custom was to record them on the tail fin. The man is hiding the hits record for the photo in the interest of keeping up morale.

A few years ago, the curator of the museum brought Ernst to Broomhill and Ernst was able to identify the spot where he crashed but we have no record of where he indicated. Also, in the display case are items salvaged from the site and donated to the museum. The surnames of

those donators are Mr. Evans, Mr. Sutton and Mr. Norman Rose. One souvenir is the silk scarf he was wearing when he crashed. Perhaps readers may know of these gentlemen or their descendants – are any still living in Medway?

A Friend remembers as a boy visiting the site soon after the crash and a soldier offering to sell him bullets from the plane for 1/- each. Was this a member of the Home Guard? Another Friend had an uncle who was one of the Home Guard involved in guarding the plane. Ernst surrendered his gun and binoculars voluntarily to the uncle. Yet another Friend, who lived in Lynette Avenue at the time, remembers a loud, intermittent banging noise as a German plane flew low across the top of their houses and then out of sight to crash on Broom Hill. His mother at first refused to let him go and look so that by the time he arrived older boys were swarming all over the plane and had taken any obvious souvenirs. His sister had run off earlier and she had been in time to see Ernst helped away.



*A painting depicting Ernst and the crash, courtesy of Shoreham Museum*

There is a poignant sequel to the crash. In 1955 Ernst, now a prosperous timber merchant living in Stuttgart, made a sentimental journey back to Strood to identify the actual site of the crash and to try and find the pretty young lady who had helped him. In the newspaper report of the journey, he is quoted as saying that through the years he had treasured the memory of the woman who showed him kindness. He just wanted to find her and buy her the biggest bunch of flowers her arms could hold. By coincidence, the taxi driver he hired at Chatham Station remembered the crash, as he had lived in Broomhill Road at the time, and took him to Broomhill where Ernst identified the site of the crash. According to the newspaper, they then spent the rest of the weekend trying unsuccessfully to trace the young lady.

As part of his visit, Ernst traced the specialist who treated him when he was taken to the Naval Hospital, and visited him on the Saturday night to thank him. Again the newspaper was partially wrong. One of our Friends of Broomhill lived next door to Leslie Mason, the taxi driver, who brought Ernst to their house. The girl they were searching for was Scots and had been billeted with the Main family, also in Broomhill Road. In 1955, the member's family were still in touch with the Mains, who now lived at Hythe. Through them, Ernst was able to contact the girl, Sarah Kortwright, and visit her in Scotland where he presented his saviour with a large bouquet and took her out to dinner.

## Sources and Acknowledgements

Aircraft Identification	Temple Press 1940
Battle Over Kent	Anthony Webb
Daily Sketch Newspaper	
Front Line Kent	Victor Smith
Hell's Corner 1940	H. R. P. Boorman, MA
Mike Hearne	
Hurricane and Messerschmitt	Chaz Boyer + Armand Van Ishoven
Imperial War Museum	
Kent and the Battle of Britain	Robin J. Brooks
Kent Messenger Group Newspapers	
MALSC picture archives	
Mitch Peake	
Picasso	Elizabeth Ripley
Prelude to War	Kent Aviation Hist. Research Soc.
Shoreham Aircraft Museum	
The Battle of Britain	Richard Hough + Denis Richards
The War in Pictures	
West Kent Within Living Memory	

And especially the friends of Broomhill who shared their memories of the war and allowed the inclusion of their memories in this talk.

**Do you have any memories or anecdotes of Broomhill, Strood or Medway in the war or the Battle of Britain that you would like to share with others? Contact Odette Buchanan on 01634 718231 or email [odette\\_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:odette_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk)**

## *Medway Memories*

JL Keys



### A Teenager in the War Part Two

*FOMA member John Keys shares some more of his Medway memories to complete the second part of this moving special feature.*

As we had not occupied our house in Gillingham since early in the war, it had been used, temporarily to house unfortunate people who had been bombed out. However in 1942, we were able to move back in and I joined the Warden's Post in the grounds of Gillingham Museum (Brennan the inventor's old house) about four hundred yards up Woodlands Road from our house. Although in August 1940, when a stick of bombs had fallen across the town and many houses in Beatty Avenue and Fourth Avenue had been badly damaged and with many casualties, the Warden's Post had been very busy. By 1942 things were fairly quiet in the area and our duties consisted mainly of patrolling, looking for any unduly exposed lights. If there was an air raid we all congregated at the post in the event of an emergency. One of my abiding memories is of cycling up the road from my house after the air raid warning had gone, with German planes overhead on their way to bomb London, the ack-ack guns firing and shrapnel from the exploding shells falling and hitting the ground, sending up little sparks. One tried to make oneself as small as possible under one's tin hat.

On reaching the age of 18, I was promoted to Air Raid Warden and had to attend courses on dealing with such things as entering a smoke-filled building, a gas attack, first aid, and helping to evacuate victims from damaged buildings.

In 1941, my sister had joined the WAAF (she is two years older than me), and we saw her only when she came home on leave. My father had joined the Home Guard at its inception, and from 1942 was helping to man the Z-battery which was sited on Gillingham golf course. The battery consisted of 65 rocket projectors, the theory of which was, if all fired at once, the air above would be filled with flying metal, making it difficult for any aircraft caught in it to survive. I do not think it ever fulfilled that promise. But, despite the claims of the so-called experts, the Home Guard, by manning AA batteries at nights and weekends, did help to release regular soldiers to frontline duties, of that I am sure.

Scattered around the towns were a lot of smoke generators, as mentioned by Bob Ratcliffe in his interesting article (See *The Clock Tower*, Issue 19, August 2010; *1939 to 1945, A Little Lad Remembers*. by Bob Ratcliffe.). They were a bit like tar babies and there was one almost outside our house. Like Bob, I do not remember that they were tested on one occasion, I hope not on washing day.

What with cycling to Maidstone every week day, two ATC parades a week and (as the ARP was then known) Civil Defence duties, one did not get bored. I had been lucky enough to be placed in the Internal Audit Section of the County Treasurer's Department and spent about three days a week travelling around the county auditing the books of various county

hospitals, public assistance institutions and relieving officers. It meant that I saw the county at war, so to speak, and going to places such as Folkestone, Dover and Margate, which seemed to be quite sparsely populated and with beaches barred off, and mined, there was little to attract visitors. Dover, of course, was a dangerous place to visit anyway, what with the constant threat of German shelling. When auditing the books of the Royal Victoria Hospital in Folkestone, we usually went to Bobby's Restaurant for lunch. One could get a good meal there for about 3/- (our daily subsistence allowance), whilst listening to the strains of a string trio – all ladies – who never seemed to be able to raise a smile. The music tended to match their mournful looks. Still it was a brave effort, considering the serious times we were going through.

One day, walking around after lunch at Bobby's, we spotted a plane, very high up and remarked on it. We were told it was a German reconnaissance Heinkel 177 that came over most days at about the same time. Apparently it flew too high to be intercepted or shot down by fire from the ground and not even the sirens bothered to announce its coming. The locals had got used to it knowing that it had come not to bomb, but merely take a few photographs.

It was as well the family had relocated from Canterbury because the Germans took the heart out of that lovely old city in a terror raid that made no pretence of bombing a military target. I cycled there one day soon after it happened to visit a relative and could hardly recognise the town centre. It was just piles of rubble. Luckily my aunt was not hurt and her house was undamaged.

A friend and myself, knowing that we would soon be receiving our call up papers, decided to pre-empt that situation by volunteering, my friend for the Royal Navy and myself for the Royal Air Force. This led to a rather exhaustive medical examination on the second floor of the Burtons Tailors building in Chatham, followed, in my case, by a colour blindness test at an RAF medical centre on the Great Lines in Gillingham. Subsequently I received a letter informing me that I had been accepted for air crew training and to report to Air Crew Reception centre at St. John's Wood in London. As a cricket fan, I was thrilled to discover that this was partly based at Lord's Cricket Ground and that the pavilion was used for some of the tests and medical inoculations that we had to undergo. I do not know whether it was to test our general fitness, but we were billeted on the fifth floor of a block of flats for the three weeks that we spent at the A.C.R.C. and the lifts did not work. We were up and down those stairs several times a day at the double, of course. I think the corporal in charge of us was a sadist.

That was the start of a four year adventure in the RAF which is another story entirely, and by the time I was demobbed in 1947, the war had been over for two years and I was quite different to that callow youth of those earlier years. Sadly my friend who joined the Royal Navy did not return, his ship having been torpedoed on his first voyage and he was lost at sea. His name appears on the Navy War Memorial on the Great Lines.

## *Cindy's Little Gems*

Cindy O'Halloran



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

Many of our older readers may remember Jane and her wartime exploits in the *Daily Mirror*, but did you know that *Winget Life*, the in-house magazine of Winget of Strood, also had their own version? Their cartoon heroine was named Miss Swinget. She appeared in the early editions of the magazine in 1939, illustrated by Emilio Coia.

Coia was a Scot of Italian ancestry, who worked for Winget as an Assistant Advertising Manager and later as Personnel Manager. He was a former student of the Glasgow School of Art and he produced cartoons and caricatures for several major newspapers. *Winget Life* also featured many of his caricatures of Winget staff at the Strood site.

Miss Swinget's adventures were typical of the wartime era. Like Jane she had escapades in the blackout and encounters with amorous admirers. Her exploits however were short lived and once the Phoney War was over, *Winget Life* abandoned her to concentrate on news of war work. Coia turned his talent to producing cartoons about wartime events and began his series of staff caricatures.

## **ADVENTURES OF MISS SWINGET**



*An original illustration of Miss Swinget from Winget Life; Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre.*

## *The Victoria County History*

Dr Sandra Dunster



*Dr Sandra Dunster was appointed by the University of Greenwich as Kent Team Leader for the Victoria County History's England's Past for Everyone (EPE) in October 2007. With the help of volunteers, she is researching and writing a history of the Medway Towns. She previously taught local and regional history at the University of Kent. Sandra was born and raised in Whitstable and, after 25 years absence, returned to live there in 1999.*

At the risk of being accused of shameless self-promotion, I would say that 23 March 2011 promises to be a good day for the history of the Medway Towns. In the afternoon, at the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre, Andrew Hann and I will be giving a talk to round up all the work done by us and the invaluable volunteers on the Victoria County History (VCH) *England's Past for Everyone* (EPE) project.

The national project has now ended but this is not the end of VCH in Kent. As a result of the work done over the past six years, two new books have been produced. Andrew Hann's *The Medway Valley: a Kent landscape transformed* (2009) has thrown new light on eight parishes in the lower Medway valley. The second of the EPE paperbacks for the Medway area *The Medway Towns: River, Docks and Urban Life* will be published this summer and will reveal new and interesting material about Rochester, Chatham Gillingham and Strood.

In addition the VCH Explore website continues to offer access to much of the research material uncovered by the hard-working and ever-resourceful volunteers on this project (you know who you are!). As I am sure many of you are aware any research always generates more data than can be used and the website is a fantastic outlet for much of this interesting information. Recently updated, and with new material added all the time, the website is a wonderful resource for those interested in local history, I encourage you to look for yourself at:-

<http://www.history.ac.uk/projects/vch-explore>

The site holds much more than just the Medway material as projects throughout England continue to add material on a regular basis. You can search by place or theme and will find many gems of local history tucked away.

But to return to the afternoon of 23 March 2011, both Andrew and I are pleased to be returning to the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre to share some of the material that formed the basis of our books. It won't just be an afternoon of talking as we have plenty of illustrations to show, including a marvellous fully-coloured map of the area made in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century which I think will be new to many of you.

I hope that as many of you as possible are able to come along and share the afternoon with us. I know we are both looking forward to the event and to having this opportunity to share the fruits of this research, so much of which was done by local volunteers.

*The Medway Valley: a Kent landscape transformed* (Phillimore, 2009) ISBN 13 : 978-1-86077-600-7

Available at all good booksellers and

[http://www.phillimore.co.uk/acatalog/England\\_s\\_Past\\_For\\_Everyone.html](http://www.phillimore.co.uk/acatalog/England_s_Past_For_Everyone.html)

### *A Reminder of News from Snodland Millennium Museum*

FOMA member and curator of the Snodland Millennium Museum, Dr Andrew Ashbee, has advised us of an addition to their collection. Dr. Andrew Hann has deposited 19 box-files of material from the Victoria County History's England's Past for Everyone project collected for his book *The Medway Valley: A Kent Landscape Transformed*. A sample is also held at MASLC. The catalogue can be found at [www.snodlandhistory.org.uk](http://www.snodlandhistory.org.uk) under *catalogues*. The museum is open on Wednesdays and Sundays from 2.00 to 5.00 p.m. further information is available from Andrew Ashbee at [aa0060962@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:aa0060962@blueyonder.co.uk) .

## *Editor's Footnotes*



*Amanda Thomas is a freelance writer and public relations consultant. Born in Chatham, but now based in Hertfordshire, she belongs to several historical organisations, including the Kent Family History Society, the North West Kent Family History Society, and The Council for British Archaeology; she has a degree in Italian from the University of Kent and is a member of their alumni association. Amanda was made a full member of the Society of Women Writers and Journalists in 2008.*

Loyal Clock Tower readers will recall my article in November 2006 when I talked about family history coincidences. Over four years on, I feel an update on this intriguing phenomenon is in order.

The recent publication of my book about the 1840s cholera outbreak in Lambeth created some interest in the south London borough, and as a result, I have been working with Lambeth Council on an exciting project, the wording for a heritage plaque which will be erected on the river bank in part as a memorial to those who died in the outbreak. The plaque will be erected on the newly refurbished White Hart Dock and my first meeting there with the council's representative was on a bitterly cold day in December. At the end of the discussion my contact took a sharp intake of breath and began to talk about how it was from here he had watched the Millennium fireworks. This moment had been a turning point in his life as he had subsequently decided to investigate his family history. As he had been adopted at birth, he knew it would not be straight forward, however, the process had been remarkably easy. Nevertheless, he had not expected to discover that his biological mother had lived right here in the building overlooking White Hart Dock. Quite clearly, our project was meant to be, and sometimes when researching family history I do wonder if 'someone is trying to tell me something.'

At the Who Do You Think You Are exhibition last year I helped on the Kent Family History stand and had many fascinating conversations with people researching into their family history. All of us encountered distant family members, and some more distant than others! However, I did not expect to meet a descendant of a liaison between a slave in the West Indies and a plantation owner with links to my own family in the Medway Towns. Further coincidences were to come.

I may have already mentioned in this column that my father hails from Melbourne, Australia. Some time ago, we established that his sister had married a Coulter, a descendant of Edwin Coulter who had been tried at Maidstone and transported to Australia in 1836 'for stealing a copper fixture' aged 17 years old. This meant that my mother's brother-in-law was also her second cousin twice removed. Such coincidences would not seem strange if they occurred within the same geographical area, but on the other side of the world?

I decided to delve deeper into the history of Victoria, fascinated by emigration and what it must have been like for the early pioneers to leave everything behind in the hope of a new life. I have been investigating my father's grandfather who, with a group of some of the younger members of the Jones family, left South Wales in the middle of the nineteenth century to look for gold in the United States. A few remained in the Great Lakes area, but at least one intrepid pioneer, encouraged by reports from California, pushed on. By the mid 1850s, California was awash with prospectors, so he decided to sail for Australia and headed for one of the popular gold fields in Victoria at Castlemaine. Here the family flourished and thanks to the internet I have been able to talk to cousins I never knew existed, an experience many of us investigating our family history have enjoyed. However, imagine my shock, browsing through some of the Ancestry.co.uk trees, to discover that one of these very cousins is descended on the other side of his family from the Simmons in Gillingham. However, perhaps this should not be so surprising. The Simmons seem to have been a very busy lot and very many of us in the Medway Towns can claim to have one of the many Lance Simmons in our family tree.

**Come and meet the Kent Family History Society Team!  
Who Do You Think You Are Live, The National History Show, 25 to 27 February 2011,  
Olympia, London. Details at [www.whodoyouthinkyouarelive.co.uk/](http://www.whodoyouthinkyouarelive.co.uk/)**

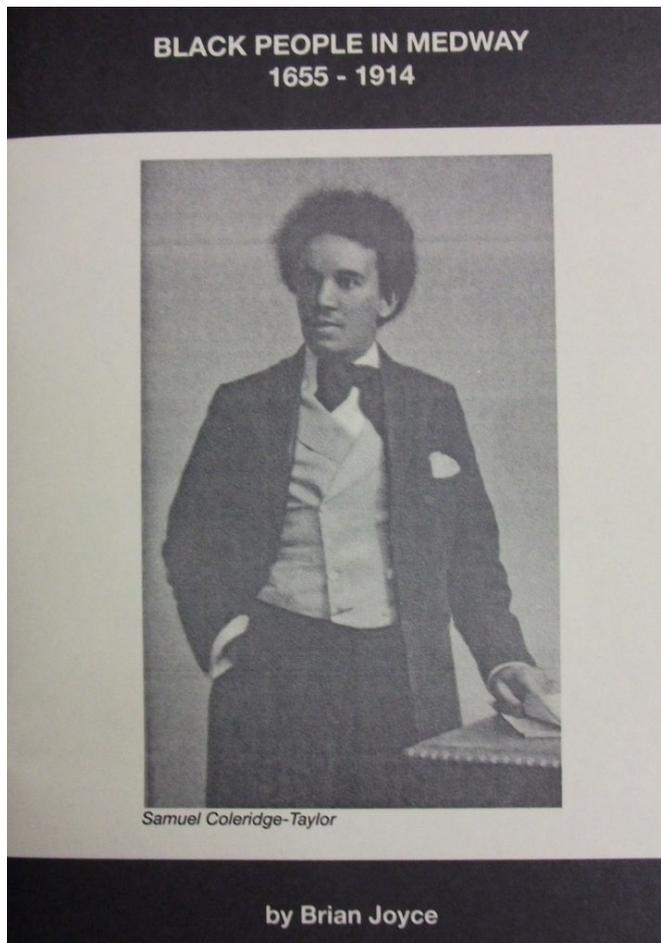
## Magnum Opus

Catharina Clement

A review of the latest Medway titles.



### *Black People in Medway 1655-1914* by Brian Joyce



Brian Joyce's years of trawling through the newspaper collection at Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre has resulted in his latest book, *Black People in Medway 1655-1914*. A book on one of Medway's prominent ethnic groups was long overdue and hopefully may inspire others to write about their presence and history in the local community. Brian's book has established a long historic black presence in the Medway Towns spanning over three hundred and fifty years. Coverage is in a biographic style with some subjects having a few lines and others several pages. The booklet is divided up by subject matter and covers a diverse range of people, classes and occupations. Featured are well-known personalities such as Samuel Coleridge Taylor, local characters like William Cuffay, the clergymen Reverend Schon and the Francis family.

The attraction of this book is that it is topical and therefore has broad appeal. Anyone interested in local, family, or ethnic history as well as biographies will find Brian Joyce's book a worthwhile read. In booklet form, it has a good balance of text and illustrations. His work is well sourced, properly referenced and at £4 an affordable price. Perhaps a small criticism is that there is no index, but then the author has highlighted the subjects in the main text.

*Black People in Medway 1655-1914*, Brian Joyce, ISBN 0-9545785-7-0; £4.00.  
Also available to buy at the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre.

## Betty's Postcards



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

The postcards in my favourite collection are usually found under *Artist Signed* in the dealers' lists. I collect artists who were children's illustrators of whom there were many of the same period: Margaret Tarrant, Margaret Tempest, Beatrix Potter, Mabel Lucie Attwell, Jessie Wilcox Smith and Sybil Barham to name a few. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, drawing and painting in watercolour were considered suitable accomplishments for young middle class women. Although there were famous male illustrators of children's books of the period such as Arthur Rackham and Edmund Dulac, I have not found a single postcard of their illustrations.

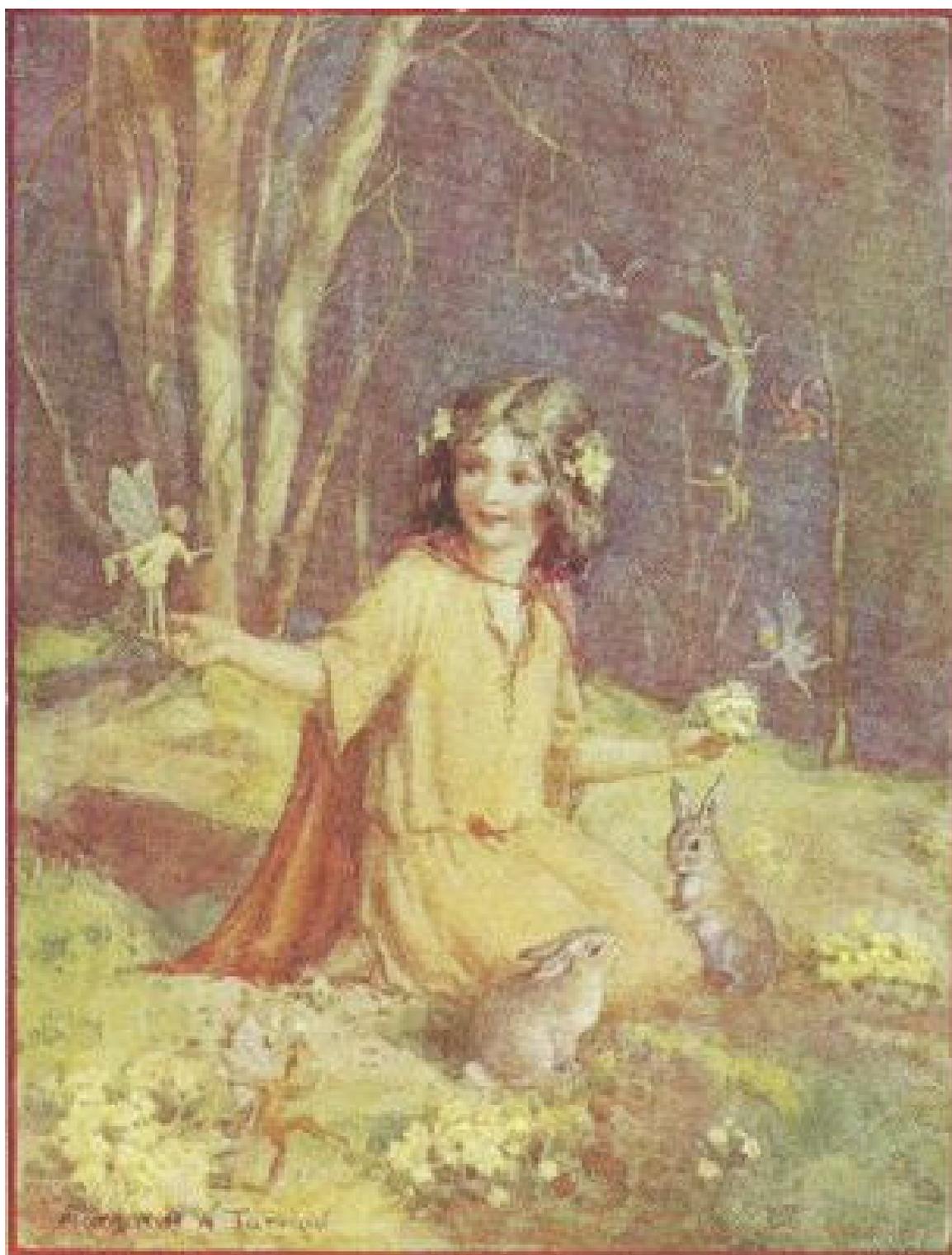
The postcard illustrated is entitled *In Arcady* by Margaret Tarrant. Margaret was born in 1888 in London, the daughter of Percy Tarrant who was also an artist. Educated at Clapham High School where she won awards for her art, Margaret thought of becoming an art teacher. However she decided to further her studies at Heatherley's Art School in Chelsea and at 19, had her first commission to illustrate Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies*. In 1916 she illustrated *Alice in Wonderland!* for Ward Locke publishers. Early editions of both books often appear on the internet auction sites but always reach prices well above my pocket. This is one of the reasons for collecting postcards and owning, in a small way, some of this artwork. This type of card can usually be bought for around £5.

In 1920 Margaret Tarrant started working for The Medici Society which was to be the publisher of most of her work in postcard form. The subject is often the fantasy world of Fairyland with a background of fields and woodlands which enabled her to use her talent for painting wild flowers. Medici also issued a range of religious themed cards by her.

The card illustrated was posted in May 1928 from The Royal Surrey County Hospital to Miss Betty Macdougall, Leeches, Henfield, Sussex. The diagonal creases at the top and bottom show that it has been in somebody's postcard album for many a year. The message on the back reads:

Dearest Betty, It is a great strain for Daddy to write but I felt I must write and wish you many Happy Returns of the Day. I hope you will have a very enjoyable day and that Daddy will be able to join in it next year xxxxxxxx from your loving Daddy.

I felt that during this long period of winter this postcard would cheer us up and make us think of spring, which is hopefully just around the corner. And remember, if you are planning a walk in the woods, look around you carefully. You might see more than you are expecting!



**IN ARCADY**

by

**Margaret W. Tarrant**