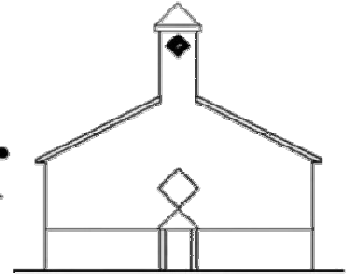


The Clock Tower



Issue Number 26: May 2012
£2.00; free to members

In Celebration of Charles Dickens



To commemorate the 200th birthday of local author Charles Dickens (1812–1870), *The Clock Tower* looks at some lesser known aspects of his association with the Medway Towns.

Photograph from the Percy Fitzgerald Collection at the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre.



Chatham Dockyard in Dickens' day. Seen from Fort Pitt, Published 1 November 1828 by G. Virtue, 26 Ivy Lane, drawn by G. Shepherd and engraved by R. Roffe; from the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre collections.



Guess who sat in this chair?
Sue Haydock reveals all on
pages 32-33.



From the Chairman

Tessa Towner, Chairman.



How time flies, it seems only yesterday that I was putting together my February letter and now it's May! However, I have to say, with the awful weather we have been having it certainly doesn't feel like spring. As I write I have been watching a hopeful pair of collared doves attempting to build a nest in my magnolia tree. It is very fragile and scruffy, just twigs laid on top of one another and doesn't look too secure, in fact there are just as many twigs on the patio underneath as they have put in the nest. Whether it will get finished and any eggs are laid remains to be seen, but maybe this is an indication that spring is on the way!

We have just held our seventh Annual General Meeting and the members who attended were entertained with an interesting talk on local people who were on the Titanic by new committee member Brian Joyce. At the AGM we also elected another new committee member, Robert Flood. We hope Brian and Robert will help to take FOMA forward with new ideas. Welcome to them both.

Finally I wish to extend to Amanda and her family our sincere condolences on the loss last month of her mother, Dulcie Jones, a FOMA member, and supporter of all we do. Dulcie's obituary is on page 7.

STOP PRESS!

Our relationship with *Your Family History* magazine goes from strength to strength. We were delighted to meet their team again at this year's *Who Do you Think You Are? Live* exhibition, though sadly MALSC did not win any awards this time. However, please look out for the June issue of *Your Family History* magazine and Amanda Thomas' *Casebook* feature on Lambeth and the Osmotherly family from Cliffe. Amanda's research was originally published in *The Clock Tower*, Issue 5, February 2007.

Old Photographs

Do you have any photographs which need identifying and you would like to be published in future issues of *The Clock Tower*? If so, please send them to the Editor, Amanda Thomas, amanda@ajthomas.com or to 72 Crabtree Lane, Harpenden, AL5 5NS, Hertfordshire.

Calendar of Forthcoming Events and Exhibitions

FOMA Events

12th June, 7.30 pm
In celebration of Dickens' 200th birthday
Dickens, Man of Kent/Man of Medway
A talk by Thelma Groves

11th September, 7.30 pm
Heritage of The Vines
A talk by Odette Buchanan

Sat 20th October, 7.30 pm start
Quiz Night
£5 for members and non-members.
BOOKING REQUIRED.

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

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

MALSC Events

Exhibitions

26th April .04.12 – 3rd July
Ship Repairs at Sheerness by Martin Verrier

5th July – 4th September
Sporting Life (popular clubs and hobbies) - to be confirmed

6th September – 3rd November
Defence of Kent Project by Keith Gulvin and Mick Smith

19th November – 29th January 2013
These we have Loved (shops, stores and emporia of Medway)

MALSC OPENING HOURS

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

13th June, 2.30 pm
Sheerness
Martin Verrier

July
Creative Writing Workshop
Sam Hall
To be confirmed

August/September
Defence of Kent
Victor Smith
To be confirmed

2nd December, 2.30 pm
Window Shopping in Kent
Jean Lear

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

Exhibitions at Eastgate House

16th -29th May
Winget's at work and play

18th July - 1st August
Metal Men of Medway: statues, plaques and street furniture

6th – 9th September
Heritage Weekend

17th October – 31st October
Archives of Great Expectation

25th October, 7.30 pm
A talk on the Archives of Great Expectation
Elaine Gardner

Some MALSC talks and events also take place at Eastgate House – see above under *MALSC Talks and Events*.

The City of Rochester Society

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

The next event is as follows:
13 June 2012
Annual General Meeting
Medway Visitor Centre, 95 High Street, Rochester.

The Royal Engineers Museum, Library and Archive

Prince Arthur Road, Gillingham, Kent, ME4 4UG; www.re-museum.co.uk/events

Brompton 200: This year the Royal Engineers Museum celebrates the 200th Anniversary of the Royal School of Military Engineering in Brompton. The Royal Engineers Museum is Kent's largest military museum, and holds its only Designated Collection of historical and international importance. The many galleries tell the story of Britain's military engineers from the Roman period to the modern Corps of Royal Engineers. The millions of items in its collection tell a sweeping epic of courage, creativity and innovation and the stories of individuals of great renown (General Gordon, Lord Kitchener, John Chard VC) and the average Sapper who has helped the British Army move, fight and survive for over 200 years.



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

Events

The Royal Engineers Museum and Library open day:
Fri 8th June 10.30am-3pm (free – please bring photo ID)

Guided tours of Brompton Village:
Dates TBC (free – please see www.re-museum.co.uk/events)

Brompton 200 exhibition and website:
Opens June 30th at the Royal Engineers Museum

We are also offering free schools outreach sessions and will be running website outreach sessions at local libraries over the summer.

In June the Museum will be offering FREE entry over the Jubilee weekend; afternoon tea will be available on 2-4 June (Saturday-Tuesday).

News from The Royal Engineers Museum, Library and Archive
Amy Adams, Project Coordinator

Brompton 200: Civilian Life in a Military Village a new project at the Royal Engineers Museum, Library and Archive wins Heritage Lottery Fund Support

On 30 March 2012, the Royal Engineers Museum, Library and Archive (REMLA) received £9,700 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for an exciting community led project, Brompton 200: Civilian Life in a Military Village. 2012 celebrates the bicentenary of the Royal School of Military Engineering (RSME) in Brompton. The project, which is led by volunteers from the local community, will explore the impact the military, in particular the Royal Engineers, has had on the community of Brompton. The project includes a community run historical website and touring exhibition; guided tours will start at the end of April with the exhibition and website launch planned for the end of June 2012.

Brompton 200: Civilian Life in a Military Village is a project organised by REMLA to increase local participation in and awareness of the history of Brompton Village covering the period 1812-2012. Members of the Brompton History Research Group and other local volunteers will be researching and collating information which will be disseminated through a number of different means. A touring exhibition will start at REMLA before transferring to local libraries and the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre. A number of guided tours of Brompton and its historic sites will be run by members of the local community over the summer months. An interactive website will allow all members of the local community to share stories of the area; upload photographs as well as browse through the historical research that has been collated, and listen to oral histories which record local memories of the village. These activities will be supported by local history schools sessions and a teachers pack developed by REMLA's education department to aid Primary Schools in the delivery of local history sessions. REMLA will run a number of outreach sessions linked to the project and will be offering free training for all the volunteers involved.

In 1812 the Royal Engineers set up the School of Military Engineering (later the Royal School of Military Engineering-RSME) in Brompton. For 200 years the RSME and the Corps of Royal Engineers have had an effect on the village of Brompton, shaping its history and even its landscape. Brompton is at the centre of a potential World Heritage Site in Chatham and is part of what is known as The Great Lines Park [see *The Clock Tower*, Issue 22, May 2011]. Despite this little is known about the history of the village, a civilian enclave in the heart of a military world, which is surrounded by the Dockyard to the north, the Royal School of Military Engineering to the east and the Great Lines to the south and west. The village has been identified as a key area whose story is inextricably linked with the development of the Medway Towns. It is a story that needs researching and retelling and the grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund will enable this to happen.

The Will Adams Festival – Volunteers Needed!

The Arts Team has invited MALSC to get involved and have a display of information on local history, Will Adams, Tudor Medway. The event is on Saturday 15 September at Gillingham Park. Volunteers will need to arrive by 9.30am to set up and can be away by 5pm. If enough people offer to help we can of course have a rota of helpers. Our stall will be in the same marquee as the Guildhall Museum so that we can cover each other's stall during breaks. For the last two years representatives of the Guildhall Museum have been at the Festival, with a display of artefacts and weaponry. Can you help? Names please to Norma Crowe, on 01634 332714 or email norma.crowe@medway.gov.uk

New Members

A warm welcome to new FOMA member:
Mrs Jennifer Partington.

Obituary

Dulcie Jones



It is with immense sadness that we report the death on 13 April 2012 of Mrs Dulcie Jones (née Wraight), mother of the Editor, Amanda Thomas. Dulcie had been a member of FOMA since the group's inception and always supported the Friends' work; understandably she was probably the keenest reader of *The Clock Tower*. Her article, *My Memories of Evacuation* was published in *The Clock Tower* special feature *The Great Evacuation*, Issue 17, February 2010.

Dulcie was born in Chatham in 1932; she grew up in Strood where she spent most of her adult life. She began researching her Wraight and Brenchley family history some 20 years ago and was particularly good at spotting connections and solving mysteries. Dulcie was well known in the Medway Towns in her youth as she won a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) and worked as an actress. She also ran the drama group at the Good Companions Club in the 1960s. It is particularly sad that she had arranged to return to RADA to record her memories after the heart operation she so bravely elected to have, but from which she did not recover. In Dulcie's memory, Amanda is working with RADA to raise money for their endowment fund to help support students and also to sponsor a seat in Dulcie's name at RADA's Jerwood Vanbrugh Theatre. Please contact Amanda Thomas on amanda@ajthomas.com for further details. Dulcie was an inspiration to all who knew her and her wonderful laugh will be greatly missed.

Eastgate House

Eastgate House is one of Rochester's landmarks. Built in the 1590s by Sir Peter Buck, the most senior member of staff at Chatham Dockyard, its structure has been adapted considerably over the years, but research has indicated that the original building may be Medieval or earlier. A Heritage Lottery Grant awarded in January 2011 has enabled Medway Council to begin planning conservation work on the house and to start opening its doors once more to visitors. In the autumn, the Friends of Eastgate House was set up and on 28 January 2012 a very successful open day was held to raise awareness of the work at Eastgate House.

If you are interested in the project and would like information or to be put on the mailing list, please email Tracy Stringfellow, Eastgate House Project Manager, at eastgate.house@medway.gov.uk

Readers' Letters

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

Old Strood Photographs

From: Maurice Friend
To: odette_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk
Sent: Monday, 20 February 2012,

Hello Odette, from Brisbane Australia,

I have a couple of old photos from my grandfather's era c. 1913-14 of young men on the "Beresford-Margate Walla Walla" and also a large group after the Sunday service at St Mary's, Strood c. 1925 which you may be interested in. My grandfather William Jackson 1890 -1988 appears in both photos and lived at 25 Cross St, Strood, along with his parents. My mother was born at Frindsbury. When I was staying with a cousin in Rochester last June I wandered around Strood one morning and was fortunate in seeing inside St. Nicholas Church where the Jacksons, going back to 1850, were christened and married. It had certainly changed a bit from what I remember as a boy when I visited relatives during and after the war from Sittingbourne where I lived. I am now 73 yrs old so doubt that I will get to UK again.

Kind regards, Maurice Friend.

PS I got your address from the Friends of Medway web site which I enjoyed looking at.



Chatham Town Crier and Mace Bearer .c. 1928 shows Arthur F. Frost (great grandfather of Maurice Friend) and other civic dignitaries.



Thumbs up at the Beresford-Margate Walla Walla c1914. Shows William J Jackson of Strood (grandfather of Maurice Friend) in centre with cigarette in mouth and others unknown.



Smaller group at same event; William J Jackson centre of next to front row. Interestingly with his 'thumbs up' his left thumb is seen shorter than the right because it was chopped off in a coffee grinder when 14 yrs old. He later enlisted in the Royal Marines but was given a full discharge after only 2 weeks when they discovered half of his thumb missing. He died in 1988 aged 98.



Church group of St Mary's Strood c. 1925

Anne Pratt

From: Jacky Bower
Sent: 13 March 2012
To: Amanda Thomas

Hi,

I recently read an online version of *The Clock Tower* issue number 5, Spring 2007, in which there was an article about Anne Pratt by Barbara Marchant. This lady asks for any information about Anne Pratt to be passed on to her via the Editor which is why I am contacting you. I have a copy of a will in which Anne Pratt is mentioned. I don't know if Mrs Marchant would be interested in this, or whether she already has it, but I would be very happy for you to pass my email address on to her.

Many thanks,
Jacky Bower.

We were delighted to put Jacky in contact with Barbara Marchant.

Tilghman Family

From: Andrew Ashbee
To: odette_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk
Sent: Tuesday, 13 March 2012

Dear Odette,

The Clock Tower arrived today and I saw the message from Peggy Jentgens. There were two Tilghmans who emigrated to America: Christopher (from whom she is descended) and Richard (originating from the Snodland family). Her evidence as presented seems confused and somewhat inaccurate. (e.g. there were no Thomas Tilghmans in Snodland) and Joan Newman (d.1548) was the second wife of William (d.1541.) I suggest she looks at the Snodland Historical Society website: www.snodlandhistory.org.uk where there is a

summary of the Snodland Tilghmans (shown on the home page). More important it refers to Elizabeth Tilghman's book (published in America) which is a family record of astounding comprehensibility. I was in touch with her regularly during her work on it (she died a few years ago) and the three volumes (1179 pages) are largely transcripts of documents, many in ancient and abbreviated latin, often needing ultra-violet light to read them. All source references are shown. I can't help with her being unable to download pages.

All best wishes,
Andrew Ashbee.

We were delighted to be able to forward this information to Peggy Jentgens.

Lily Victoria Parker (née Laker)

From: Leah Merrett
To: odette_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk
Sent: Wednesday, 14 March 2012

Dear Sir/Madam,

I was told by my grandmother yesterday that her mother Lily Victoria Parker (nee Laker) married to William Parker were involved in some sort of scandal and it made the *News Of The World*. It would have been around the 1940/50 time and they lived in the Rainham/Gillingham area of Kent, no one is quite sure as it was all hushed up. Is there any way I can find the local newspaper if they reported on this also or any articles on this. Thank you very much.

Best wishes,
Leah Merrett

From: Odette Buchanan [odette_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk]
Sent: 15 March 2012
To: Leah Merrett

Dear Ms. Merrett,

Local newspapers are available to view at the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre which is in Strood. Where do you live? The papers are catalogued by year so it would take you some time to trawl through all the 50s and 40s. As far as I know, there is no facility for accessing local papers on line. You could try the *News of the World* via the British Library newspaper archives. Sorry I can't be of more help.

Good luck,
Odette Buchanan.

The Bearblock Family and the Medway Towns

From: Simon Shreeve
Sent: 21 March 2012/23 March 2012 (emails amalgamated)
To: Amanda Thomas

Dear Amanda

(21/03) As a follow-up to an item I have just read in the February 2012 issue of *The Clock Tower*, I attach a few notes which might be of interest.

(23/03) There is also a strictly provisional Family Tree Maker tree for the (recent) Bearblock family should anyone be interested in it. It might be worth adding that the name of C H Bearblock can of course be seen on our memorial by anyone visiting the Cathedral.

Best wishes,
Simon Shreeve,
Hon Editor, *The Old Roffensian* (King's Rochester).

In her article, *A Token in Time* (Newsletter 25), Catharina Clement mentions Edward Berblocke. Unusual though this surname is (as Catharina says) it does appear in the records of King's School, Rochester, after allowing for some variations in spelling.

From the School's Register: John Bereblock was at the School c 1550. He became Dean of Exeter College, Oxford and a copy of his publication, *Topographical Delineation of Oxford*, was presented to Queen Elizabeth in 1565; William Bearblock was a Governors' Exhibitioner at the School c 1550; and Henry Bearblock (as mentioned by Catharina) was Second Master at the School from 1614 to 1621.

In more recent times, Charles Henry Bearblock, born in 1893, was at King's School, Rochester from 1903 to 1904 before going on to Dover College. He was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the Essex Regiment in 1914 and died on the last day of the Battle of Loos, 20 October 1915. His name had originally been omitted from the School's stone Great War memorial in the Lady Chapel of Rochester Cathedral. March 2007 saw the name added to the memorial which was re-dedicated at the School's Service of Remembrance on 12 November 2007 attended by Christopher Bearblock, the son of Dr Charles Bearblock of Cornwall, a nephew of Lt C H Bearblock. An article on this Bearblock family appeared in *The Old Roffensian* for December 2007, pages 74-77.

Please note that Part Two of Catharina Clement's *A Token in Time* will appear in the next issue of *The Clock Tower*.

The Winkworth Family

From: Ian Winkworth
To: odette_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk
Sent: Friday, 27 April 2012

Hello Odette,

I hope you can help with my family research? My name is Ian Winkworth and I am currently researching the Winkworth family. Your website mentions a Lawrence Holker Winkworth. He is my 4th great grand uncle (according to Ancestry). It would be wonderful if you could put me in touch with anyone who has also researched the Winkworths in the Medway area. It would be great to exchange any research notes / history. I would also be very interested in any old photos of Welling (which is where the Winkworths once lived). Hope to hear from you soon.

Kind regards,
Ian Winkworth

From: Odette Buchanan [odette_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk]

Sent: 27 April 2012

To: Ian Winkworth

Ian - Hi -

Yes, I think FOMA can help you - I've copied in committee members who are also active with Kent Family History and were instrumental in sourcing the Winkworth info. recently.[See *The Clock Tower*, Issue 24, November 2011] One of them will contact you soon. Meanwhile, I don't think we can help with the Welling photos/pictures - they are more likely to be with Kent Archives or whoever keeps archives for Welling. (It is now part of Greater London).

Good luck,
Odette.

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 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@virginmedia.com so that we can add you to the list and contact you before the next exhibition. Thank you!

About The Clock Tower

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

Editorial deadlines

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

The copy deadline for Issue 27 of *The Clock Tower* is Monday 30 July 2012, with publication on Wednesday 22 August 2012.

Publication date

The fourth Wednesday following the editorial deadline.

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

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Front Cover Accreditations and Website Information

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

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

The Clock Tower is also available at www.foma-lsc.org/newsletter.html

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

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

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

William Bartholomew - A Man of Probity

Pauline Weeds



In 2005 FOMA member Pauline Weeds was awarded the Higher Certificate in Genealogy by The Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies. She was a researcher for the England's Past for Everyone projects and has also transcribed for a Kent Archaeological Society project. Pauline is a volunteer at MALSC and a volunteer custodian at Eastgate House. Recently she has started training to be a City of Rochester Society guide; she is also a member of the Users' Forum at the Centre for Kentish Studies at Maidstone.

Part Two:

Political Life in Early Victorian Rochester

By the 1840s William had become involved in the political life of the city in the Liberal cause, at a time when it was often in uproar, mainly due to various malpractices on the part of some of the city's leading political figures. William had first obtained the Parliamentary franchise after the Great Reform Act of 1832. The Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 meant he was now also able to vote in local elections as a burgess of the City. Although there were several ways of qualifying as a burgess, the most usual were six months' enjoyment of a 40 shilling (£2) freehold or twelve months' occupation of a property at a rental of £50 per annum. All poor rates and other assessed taxes had to be paid on time or the defaulting electors would be disenfranchised.¹ As far as is known William supported the Liberal cause throughout his life, probably as a result of his Wesleyan beliefs. Nonconformists strongly objected to paying church rates to the established church and the Liberal Party was in favour of the abolition of church rates.

The first elections under the new Municipal Corporations Act were held in Rochester in December 1835. After a close contest the Conservatives and Liberals found that they had nine councillors each, resulting in an impasse in the Council. For the next eighteen months no Mayor or Aldermen were elected because each side always rejected the other's proposals. Clearly in the eyes of the Conservatives and the Town Clerk, D B Lewis, some cunning was called for if the situation were to be resolved. A meeting of the Corporation was called for on 5 August 1837 at only twenty-two hours' notice, at a time when the Conservatives knew that one Liberal Councillor would be unable to attend. With a majority of one the Conservatives were then able to elect a Mayor and six Aldermen, a decision which the Liberals were unable to reverse, despite vigorous protests. The outcome of this underhandedness was that the Conservatives held power in Rochester for the next twenty years over a largely demoralised opposition. The Liberals were excluded from the committees which gradually took over the main business of the Council and they increasingly failed to attend Council meetings which tended to destroy their credibility with the public as active councillors.

The 1840s witnessed a long political and legal squabble with the Conservatives over the legality of the coal dues. The coal dues were a major part of the city's revenue. The Corporation claimed a prescriptive right, which had been subsequently confirmed by a charter of Henry III to a toll of 3³/₄d (1½p) per ton on all coals brought into the port of Rochester from all ship owners, masters and consignees.² As was to be expected, merchants and tradesmen were not happy with this, especially those such as William Lee, a lime burner, who used coal in his business rather than selling it. Mr Lee, a Liberal, refused to pay the dues and the Council Minutes of 29 July 1845 record that a Bill in Chancery was to be filed against him to compel an account of such dues and payment of the amount owing.³ The case dragged on for several years in different courts, but eventually ended in favour of the corporation and the legality of the dues, although at great expense to the Council and hence to the ratepayers. As a political issue, the dispute had divided on party grounds, the Conservative Council against the Liberals who supported Mr Lee, an unsuccessful Liberal candidate in St Margaret's ward in 1847 and 1848. The Liberals accused the Corporation of bias in whom they prosecuted, choosing Liberals rather than Conservatives. The Council's claim, however, that the coal dues resulted in a lower rate bill for the local citizens, was always going to be a vote-winning argument.

In 1847, just as the political situation in the City was beginning to simmer, there is the first definite evidence of William Bartholomew's participation in Liberal affairs. The report of a meeting of the Liberal Party held at the King's Head in July, to decide whether to put up a second Liberal candidate at the forthcoming general election, mentions him by name and a week later, when the meeting was resumed, he was chosen as one of the seven members for St Margaret's Ward to sit on a committee.⁴ Two candidates were indeed selected for the Liberal Party, Ralph Bernal and Thomas Twisden Hodges. The nominations for the election took place at the Guildhall on Friday, 30 July, and following the speeches the Mayor called for a show of hands. This was declared in favour of the two Liberal men, but the Conservative candidates, Messrs. Douglas and Bodkin, demanded a poll, which took place the following day, the polling booths opening at 8 o'clock. At 2 o'clock the Conservatives conceded defeat and left the city. The polling, however, continued until 4 o'clock in accordance with the law when, amidst much excitement, the result was declared in favour of the two Liberals. Two hours later members of the party began to assemble around the Crown Inn in Rochester for the purpose of *chairing* the Members through the towns. Shortly afterwards a splendid carriage decorated with laurel, preceded by the band playing *See the Conquering Hero Comes* and followed by a numerous cavalcade, proceeded first through Strood and, returning over the bridge, paraded through the city and the town of Chatham, returning about 9 o'clock by torchlight.⁵

However, for many of the citizens of Rochester, the municipal elections were more meaningful than the Parliamentary elections. At a meeting of Liberal electors held on 22 October 1847, Captain Baker, having referred to their success in the Parliamentary election, said that they had "now assembled to exercise their franchise in a more important duty." He said more important, because they were "called upon to elect persons to watch their local interests, and as such, affected more their individual interests." This meeting had been called,

not only to select the candidates for the several wards at the ensuing local election, but also "to take into consideration the best means of preventing for the future, the recurrence of those illegal, unjust and partial acts perpetrated by the Tory Assessors at the Municipal Revising Court on the 11th inst.." Each year the parties had to submit lists of their burgesses to the Revising Court by a stipulated date for their approval. The Court, headed by the Mayor, then met to consider any objections which had been raised against particular burgesses. At this time, it appears, the conservative Mayor, Mr William Webb Hayward, was in some disfavour with his party for his conduct during the Parliamentary election and may have been seeking to redeem himself. The Liberals, already complaining bitterly about the Mayor's alleged partiality in awarding corporation contracts, were now howling in anger at his conduct in the Revising Court. The Conservatives had raised objections against 227 Liberal voters. As the lists of those eligible to vote had been compiled in the first place by the parish overseers, it was felt that most of the objections were frivolous. At the outset the Mayor had declared that he would hear no one but the solicitors for either side. He also said that he would be guided by no one, but the decision would be his alone. By the end of the proceedings 84 of the objections had been upheld. The Liberals were calling for a change in the law so that in future Revision Court proceedings would be conducted by a barrister, who would be impartial. However, this did not happen and over the ensuing years the situation in Rochester was set to deteriorate further. When the election took place on 1 November 1847 the Conservatives retained a majority on the Council.

MALSC Ref MTC.EL/LEI/LIMS Doc
GM/6/16- 128

THE ROCHESTER Municipal Revision Court.

We yesterday witnessed, at this court, some scenes, which we had believed could not possibly have taken place in England. We must defer the details till our next; but one or two points of the proceedings ought not to be permitted to pass one day without public animadversion.

It ought to be mentioned that the borough lists of burgesses is revised by the Mayor and two Assessors, one of the latter being elected from each party. From this court there is no appeal, except, we believe by *Mandamus*, and as the dominant party in a corporation always have two of the three members of the court, should these two members happen to be unscrupulous partisans, the Municipal Registration is converted into a contrivance for effecting and perpetrating the grossest injustice. Then, again, the Town-clerk is the legal adviser of the court, he also being dependent for his office on the will of the dominant party. Now, let the reader imagine a case in which the Town-clerk's son is the legal agent of this party, and that one of the principal witnesses, the collector of the borough-rate, is altogether dependent on his patrons of the corporation for continuance in his place, and an organization will have been conceived, which, allowing for the natural tendencies of men to follow out their own ideas of self-interest, is the most effective possible for defeating the ends of justice.

In the Rochester Court yesterday, Mr. Lewis (son of the Town-clerk, the legal adviser of this court,) appeared for the Conservatives; Mr. Sydney Smith, the barrister, attending on the part of the Liberals. The presiding assessors were the Mayor (R. Winch, Esq.) Phillip Harrow, Esq., assessor for the Liberal party, and W. Wood, Esq., assessor for the Tory party.

We have passed years in courts of justice, but we must say that we were utterly astounded at what we saw here. No proposition seemed too outrageous, no argument too absurd, to be addressed to this court by the Conservative agent; and when the court at last appeared to grow tired of monstrous decisions, the gravity with which the Mayor appealed to the Town-clerk for his solution of law, and the systematic manner in which that venerable functionary invariably came to the rescue of his son, the agent, might have excited laughter, had not the scene been too painful for levity. The borough-rate collector, Dorrett, displayed a wonderful memory as to the period in which every Tory had paid his rates; but his utter obliviousness of any date of payment by a Liberal, called for and deserved the severe animadversion of Mr. Smith.

To describe the disorder which prevailed throughout the proceedings, is almost impossible; people would never credit that the spectators in a court of justice could possibly be permitted, at this time, to indulge in all the boisterous ebullitions of the bear garden; cheers, clapping of hands, stamping of feet, and frantic shouts of laughter, hailed every unusually intemperate expression of the Tory agent, while the Liberal agent and witnesses were subjected to the most indecorous interruptions. Hooting, hissing, yelling, and threats of personal violence, were aimed at Page, the Liberal objector, and at some moments the Guildhall more resembled the arena of a prize fight, than a calm, orderly English court of justice. The members of the court seemed utterly helpless, and unequal to the slightest effort to preserve order or decorum. They would, doubtless, have been laughed to scorn by their own party if they had attempted it. A more disgraceful course of proceedings than those of yesterday, it has never been our lot to see; and for the sake of public morality, and public confidence in the justice seat, we hope it may never be witnessed again; yet as the court is to sit day by day, we fear that there is too great a probability of its daily repetition.—*Maidstone Gazette*, Oct. 10, 1848.

H. BURCH, PRINTER, 1 . STREET.

The following year William seems to have been becoming increasingly involved with the local Liberal Association and in a newspaper report of 8 August mention was made that he would be standing for the party in St Margaret's Ward at the next municipal election in November. Before the election could take place, however, the Revision Court had to meet, as in the previous year, to deal with any objections that had been raised against the burgess lists. The Court met on the 9 October and once again appears to have descended into corruption and chaos. The *Maidstone Gazette* took up the cudgels against the Rochester Conservative Council in a poster that appeared the following day.

The uproar continued and two weeks later the *Maidstone Gazette* produced another poster headed *Corporate Iniquities* which detailed, as the heading suggested, the iniquities of the Corporation. Having gone in to great length again regarding the corrupt proceedings in the Revision Court, it then listed a catalogue of other misdeeds which, in their opinion, had been perpetrated by the Corporation. The Tory majority kept every Liberal councillor off the committees and they appointed every officer, not on account of fitness so much as of partisanship. No corporation accounts were printed for the public use and nobody was even allowed to look at the rate book. Then followed a list of officers described as "under the patronage of the corporation" and the amounts they had received during the previous year. It claimed that "every man employed in these offices must first be prepared to go through the thick and thin of Toryism. Scarcely a Liberal cat is permitted to mew in the precincts of the Guildhall, Rochester. The Tory dependants perform their duty, not to the public, but to their patrons." The poster then condemned the "notorious case of the city coal dues," claiming this to be an illegal tax and that the Corporation had spent huge sums in taking Mr Lee to the Court of Chancery, with the result that they had recently had to make an extra rate of 2s.5d. (12p) in the £1 to defray "these reckless law expenses." The final scathing remarks were for the "Law Committee", described as "an inquisitorial institution" which the newspaper believed to be "peculiar to Rochester." The poster ended with an exhortation to both the Corporation and to the Citizens of Rochester:

"Corporators of Rochester – Are you not ashamed that such doings as these should become known to the public of Kent? Can you walk along your streets without feeling that suspicion greets you in every eye, contempt on every lip, save alone those of the miserable minions of your corporation? Your public misconduct is the theme of reproach even amongst Conservatives of other borough towns, and forms the subject of deprecation at our public dinners. Citizens of Rochester – You who at the last election stood in the very foremost of spirited and patriotic constituencies, shall it be said that you will tamely submit to be the first to permit municipal corruption and injustice to exist with impunity. Public opinion is everywhere with you, and against your oppressors, and public opinion (whatever the Mayor of Rochester may think) cannot long be sneered at, nor defied. The first of November is at hand. Let it be seen that you have courage to right yourselves. Try now - and impartial justice and cheap government will yet be yours."

However, when the poll took place on 1 November the Conservatives kept control of the Council. With many of their supporters barred from exercising the franchise, William Bartholomew, along with his two fellow Liberals in St Margaret's Ward, William Lee and James Edwards, was defeated. The three men stood again the following year, but with even less Liberal burgesses able to vote this time, they lost again. Due to the situation in the Revision Court, no Liberal candidates considered it worth standing in the years 1850-1854, so in each of those years the Conservative candidates were returned unopposed.

Notes

1. Rochester Gazette 15 July 1856
2. Rochester Gazette 11 Nov 1845
3. Ref RCA/A1/8
4. Rochester Gazette 13 July 1847, 20 July 1847
5. Rochester Gazette 3 Aug 1847

The final part of William Bartholomew-A Man of Probity will appear in the next issue of The Clock Tower.

The Outings and Excursions of the People of the Medway Towns in the Nineteenth Century

Peter Lyons



Peter Lyons is a volunteer at MALSC and has worked on local history research for the Victoria County History with Dr. Andrew Hann and Dr. Sandra Dunster. Peter is retired after a career 'spent mostly in banking.'

Part Two:

Where They Went

Judging by newspaper reports for August 1859 the Star Inn, Gillingham and the Hook and Hatchet, Walderslade were popular local destinations. The Star appears always to have been an Inn and has a long history. It was a centre for entertainment with a bowling green and the adjoining meadow was used for recreation.

In an advertisement in July 1864 headed *Our Country House*, the landlord described all the attractions:

"Bless me, five hundred had their tea at the favourite retreat, Bro' Deano's Star Hotel during the week, an easy distance two miles from the Sun, Chatham. Finest views in Kent with the management of our old friend who has not spared expense, time and labour to promote the happiness of those who patronised him, old and young.

Cricket, Quoits, Skittles, Bowls, Games, Trap, Bat and Ball and Archery.

Persons requiring a green meadow or large room can have it, three days notice required, n.b. a large glass house for photography all quite new. Groups of fifty upwards. Horses and carriages taken daily weather permitting. No photography on Sunday. To invalids and those who study their health, come and dine at the Star. The finest view of the Great Eastern from the Star Inn. Powerful glasses of use of visitors free."¹

The river was utilised for trips to places such as Snodland, Aylesford and Watlington. The Rosherville Pleasure Gardens at Gravesend were within easy reach and these were also a favourite resort for Londoners who came by steamer in their tens of thousands. The Hook and Hatchet is two miles or so from Chatham on the road to Walderslade and old maps show it to be in a wooded area. Clearly, as sports and games featured largely as activities an excursion venue had to have fields nearby which could accommodate them. Over the years horizons broadened and The Rochester Book Society that used to go annually to The Hook and Hatchet had the following destinations later in the century:

1870: To Sevenoaks and Knole
1872: Herne Bay by train
1873: By barge down the Medway
1874: Windsor
1875: Sevenoaks
1876: Greenwich
1877: Wrotham
1878: Sutton Valence
1880: Westgate on Sea
1881: Westgate on Sea
1882: By barge down the Medway
1883: Farningham
1884: Westgate on Sea
1885: Farningham

Round trips by road of 40 miles or more were not uncommon and Tonbridge, Sutton Valence and Headcorn were within reach of horse drawn transport. Indeed it was not just a case of getting to a destination and taking part in the activities there, but the drive through the countryside was also to be savoured. Coachmen were compelled to stop at intervals to bait the horses and so for those on an excursion the facilities of public houses could also be enjoyed. Travellers from more rural areas would not have been so impressed by the greenery en route as someone from London, and a child brought up in Wapping who commented:

"You cannot imagine what a day in the country meant. When we arrived we were let loose in a large field. We always made one wild rush to pick up the buttercups and daisies which grew there in abundance. We would fill our hands with great bunches of them, but before very long we threw them away because we had so many other things to do and explore."²

The Queenborough Choir Outing in 1885 to Boxley first took the train to Sittingbourne. Then on to Maidstone via Tunstall, Hollingbourne and Leeds Castle. The trip home went via the Chiltern Hundreds and The Squirrel Inn. All with one consent said that they had never enjoyed any excursion more than this, and went home which they reached about 9pm full of the fragrance of a glorious day in Kent in the leafy month of June.³

The Rochester Naturalists Club cast a more detailed but no less admiring eye on our hinterland:

"The popular summer excursions of this club were very successfully commenced on Saturday last by a drive to Boxley. The route selected lay through Luton and Bredhurst out and via Sandling and Blue Bell-hill return. Members and friends to the number of 40 were

conveyed in excellent style by Mr Pilcher, a four-in-hand, and a two horse brake being comfortably filled...the sun shone the whole day with great brilliancy...the late abundant rains had given to the fields, lanes, woods and hedgerows a mantle of green of marvellous purity, rarely, if ever, surpassed in its bright loveliness. The fields were rendered surprisingly beautiful by the multitude of golden butter-cups and dandelions intermixed with the 'wee crimson-tipped flower,' the daisy, the hedges were gay with the nodding star-like stillaria, the lovely blue speedwell and the purple vetches. But gayest of all were the woods, the blue hyacinth covering the open tracts with dazzling brilliancy and the trees wearing their softest and sweetest feathery green garments. The music of the birds was exquisite, the nightingale, the skylark, the thrush and the white-throat appearing to vie with each other in friendly rivalry, each trying to outdo the other in the volume and richness of its song."⁴

Outings were good business for those establishments that could cater for parties and the Chatham News of 6th July 1889 had the following vying for custom from the Medway Towns:

For Excursion Parties, Bean Feasts etc
New Inn and Railway Hotel, Maidstone
The Squirrels Stockbury Valley
Harrow Inn, Lidsing
Swan Inn, Sutton Valence
Bell Inn, Bredhurst
Rose and Crown, Town Malling
The George Hotel, Town Malling
George Inn, Singlewell, Ifield

Not that this is by any means an exclusive list. Amongst the most popular towards the end of the nineteenth century was the Chiltern Hundreds at Maidstone, with nearby Pennenden Heath for outdoor activities and a perennial favourite was the King's Arms at Boxley with its beautiful gardens, "a little Eden".

Mind you, not everyone saw them as an unmixed blessing:

"Sutton Valence

Every summer the village was invaded by the *Scurtionists*. It was a popular place of call with people on a day's outing with their clubs or from their place of work. Large horse drawn brakes turned down the High St. and stopped in the Square where the somewhat beery crowds alighted. As Sutton Valence was so well supplied with pubs, things often became uproarious. The *brickies* from Faversham were a particularly rowdy group and when they arrived my mother and her sisters were kept indoors."⁵

Day trips could even include a foreign element. In 1876 some employees of Messrs. Lee, Son and Co.'s lime and cement manufactory at Halling crossed the channel by the morning mail boat.⁶ Snodland Paper Mills annual excursion of 1880 had some of their number cross over in "a rapid run of 81 minutes". They explored Calais and observed "the quaint people and the quainter dresses".⁷ A repeat trip in 1881 was not very successful as a very low tide delayed entrance into the harbour and it was announced that the return journey would commence in half an hour. However, French dress was again to receive comment:

"Some of the women from the country wore very picturesque dresses, and the short skirts of the fish women did not appear to be in strict accordance with some of the English ladies ideas upon the subject of female costumes; one of the lady visitors observed, with no small amount of indignation, that they were vulgar in the extreme."⁸

Notes

1. *The Gillingham Chronicles*, Ronald A Baldwin, pp. 338-339
2. *Between High Walls*, Grace Foakes, p. 33
3. *Bygone Kent*, Vol 2, No. 3, p.188
4. Newspaper report pasted in minute book, 1880/1903
5. *Bygone Kent*, Vol 1, No. 3, p. 139
6. *Kent Messenger*, 29 June 1876
7. *Kent Messenger*, 19 June 1880
8. *Kent Messenger*, 18 June 1881

Part Three of The Outings and Excursions of the People of the Medway Towns in the Nineteenth Century will appear in the next issue of The Clock Tower

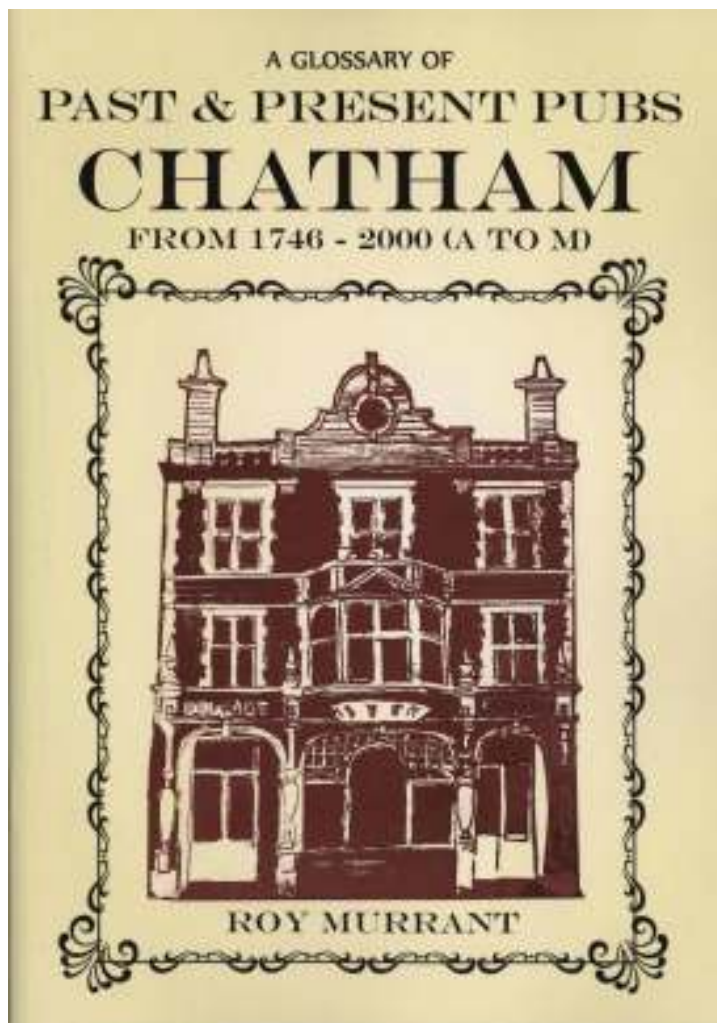
Magnum Opus

Catharina Clement

A review of the latest Medway titles.



A Glossary of Past & Present Pubs: Chatham from 1746-2000 (A to M) by Roy Murrant



Roy Murrant's years of hard work and research have produced a handy reference work on Chatham public houses. There are so many of them in Chatham that Roy has had to cover the pubs in two volumes. This book is alphabetically arranged, covering the location and giving a brief background to the various alehouses. Many of the pubs also include anecdotal evidence and unique illustrations and the cover of the book is smartly presented on a cream background.

This is the first in a series of volumes on Medway pubs that are selling faster than Roy Murrant can get them dispatched. A good book to buy for pub *anoraks* or those with an interest in the history of local hostelries. The book can be purchased directly from Bluewasp Media at www.bluewaspmedia.com for £5.00 or at the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre for £5.50; please note there is no ISBN as it is privately published. Get your copy while stocks last! Many people have already asked when the next volume will be out, so we await it with bated breath.

Please note that to make space for the Charles Dickens Special Feature, Part Two of Catharina Clement's *A Token in Time*, The Victoria County History and Editors' Footnotes will all return in the next issue of *The Clock Tower*.

Archives Update

Alison Cable, Borough Archivist



Report to the FOMA AGM, 17 April 2012

HLF Project

During 2011, our project archivist- Valerie Rouland- continued to catalogue the Rochester City Archives. This included going through all our accession records to locate material that had become detached from the main collection, having found its way to MALSC via different routes (eg from the Guildhall Museum). Valerie had to work out the provenance and custodial history of these records and reintegrate them into the main Rochester City Archives collection where necessary. At the same time, I worked with Valerie identifying material that needed to be conserved before it could be made available for public use. A number of C18th court rolls were identified as being very fragile and I arranged for them to be treated by professional conservators. The work is very time-consuming and the second batch is still being worked on.

Another major component of the project was the production of an exhibition to show the breadth of material held in the Rochester City collection. FOMA volunteers researched key subjects and located documents that would be suitable to illustrate the work of the City Council. The added challenge for the volunteers was the format of the material, which often required some palaeographical skill. A number of FOMA members attended a training course given by Dr Sheila Sweetinburgh at MALSC. The course gave our volunteers the starter skills to read C16th and C17th handwriting.

At the start of January 2012, the FOMA Committee arranged the HLF Project launch event. This was to mark the start of the exhibition, and to publicise the new catalogue (which is available on hard copy as well as on-line on Cityark). The event was also an opportunity to present Valerie with a leaving gift from FOMA, just prior to the end of her contract on 31 January. [See *The Clock Tower*, Issue 25, February 2012].

HLF: Outreach

In this final year of the Archives of Great Expectations HLF project, we are working on our outreach targets. In particular, this means strengthening links with local schools and colleges. Last autumn, we held an open day for history teachers from local secondary schools. As a result of this meeting we are producing resource packs on WW1 (Home Front), Public Health and Crime and Punishment. FOMA volunteers (Elaine Gardner, Odette Buchanan and Brian Joyce) are working with Irina Fridman and me to put together packs of facsimile documents that can be used when school groups visit. We will also compile a DVD of resources, for those schools that are unable to arrange visits to MALSC.

In February Dr. Sandra Dunster brought a group of her University of Greenwich history students to MALSC. They were given an introduction to our service by me and Irina and then given time to view the Rochester City Archives exhibition. In the afternoon, the students took a guided tour of Rochester, led by Elaine Gardner. Elaine has given two talks publicising the project, both took place at the Rochester Hub (Library). Elaine has also just installed the exhibition at the Maths school; it will be circulated to other venues during the year.

Working with the media

We had a TV crew visit us in order to film Michael Wood looking at some of the Cathedral records. The sequence will form part of his new TV series: *The Great British Story*. The series will be aired later this year. We also supplied material relating to the transport of foodstuffs on the River Medway, for the current BBC 2 series: *Our Food*. The episode aired on 18th April was all about Kentish food.

Newly Catalogued collections (2011)

New catalogues produced during last year include:

DE1224: Rogers family and the Jezreelite church. (diaries and journals recording 'missionary work' around the UK, 1873-C1962

C/ES/153/9: Brompton C o E school (log books), 1863-1984

PM150B: Strood Extra Parish Meeting (minutes etc), 1894-1934

P252B: Milton Holy Trinity church: re-catalogue and integration of new accessions to the original parish collection

C/ES/153/11 : Robert Napier School (mainly log books and photos, including log books particularly relating to the evacuation of pupils to Wales, 1905-2004

PC350 : Stoke Parish council, 1903-2002

C/ES/85/1 : All Saints primary Chatham, 1895-1969

C/ES/153/9/ : Brompton C o E school (log books), 1863-1984

DE1226 : Rochester Probus Club, 1973-2009

My thanks to everyone for all your support, hard work and enthusiasm. We are really looking forward to working with FOMA during 2012, to ensure that the HLF project has a lasting effect, both in terms of getting local people to use and enjoy the collections and in raising (and maintaining) our own profile.

Charles Dickens
(7 February 1812 – 9 June 1870)

A Clock Tower Special Feature



Photograph from the Percy Fitzgerald Collection at the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre.

It is hard to believe that this year people all over the world are celebrating the two hundredth anniversary of this great author's birth. It is hard to believe because for us in the Medway Towns, Charles Dickens is a constant presence – and for some of us a perennial inspiration. Here is just a taste of some of the events happening up to the end of this year. For further information, visit www.dickens2012.org/

Charles Dickens: A Southwark Childhood, 22 May 2012 - 27 Oct 2012, Cuming Museum, London.

The Dickens Churches - The Churches Conservation Trust's Historic Church Tours 2012, 24 May 2012, St Mary's Church, Higham.

The Mystery of Edwin Drood, 18 May 2012 - 17 Jun 2012, Arts Theatre, London WC2H 7JB

Great Expectations at Cooling Church, 06 Jun 2012, St James Church, Cooling.

Dickens and London Fri, 9th December 2011 - Sun, 10th June 2012, Museum of London
(<http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/London-Wall/Whats-on/Exhibitions-Displays/Dickens-London/Default.htm>)

Medway Dickens Festival, 08 Jun 2012 - 10 Jun 2012.

Dickens Guided Walks in Medway, 10 Jun 2012 - 15 Jun 2012.

Dickens and the Artists, 19 Jun 2012 - 28 Oct 2012, Watts Gallery, Guildford.

Chalk Church Tour and Readings, 24 Jun 2012, Chalk Church.

Dickensian Christmas Experience, 01 Dec 2012 - 21 Dec 2012, Trowbridge Museum and town centre.

The Sea Rises at Aspex Gallery, May 2012, Aspex Gallery, Portsmouth.

Textus Dickensis:

An (almost) comprehensive analysis of resources on Charles John Huffam Dickens (1812-1870) at the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre

Irina Fridman

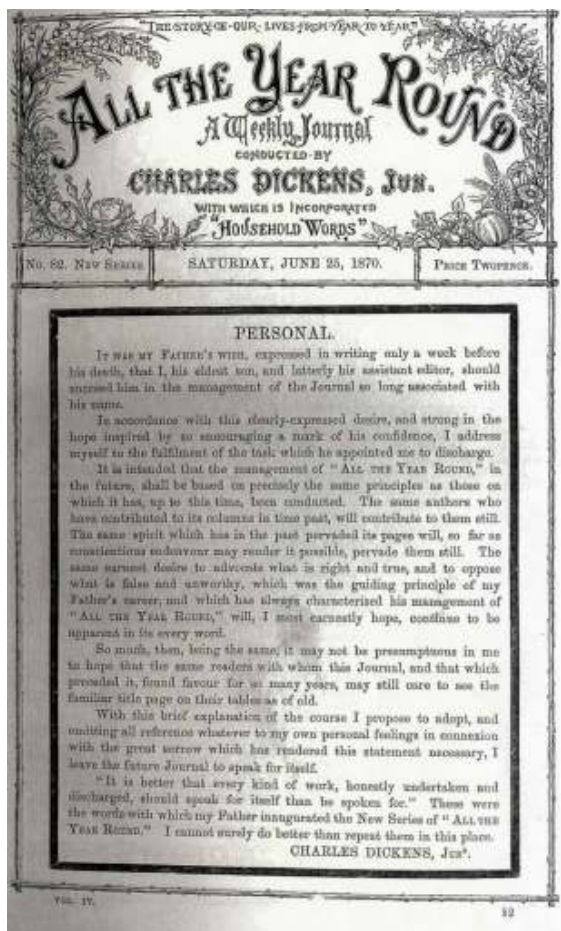


Irina joined the MALSC team in 2005 as a Local Studies Librarian. Her responsibilities include looking after the Local Studies collections at MALSC and the 16 libraries in the Medway authority, taking particular care of the collections' maintenance. Reflecting Irina's love for literature, she is responsible for the Local Authors' collection and Dickens' resources at MALSC; her other responsibilities include work with local schools and various ethnic communities of Medway. She is also looking after online Medway Images database.

It is 2012, and the whole world is celebrating the bicentenary of the birth of one of the greatest English writers – Charles Dickens (well, if you ignore the Olympic celebrations, the Diamond Jubilee, the Titanic tragedy and all the others, which have jumped on the bandwagon, of course!). It is common knowledge that apart from London, where he was based for 34 years, Medway has a special connection, a particular bond with the author. Again, ignore Portsmouth, which claims its own importance for it was a mere fluke of fate that Dickens was born there. It was Chatham where his happy childhood was later recalled in his writings; those were the memories of Rochester's Theatre Royal and country walks which were important to him – so important that in 1856 Dickens came back to the area to buy a place here, and where he would live until his death in 1870.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre (MALSC) has become a place steeped in resources related to Dickens. To paraphrase the Master himself, MALSC is (as everybody knows without being told) the most important Department under Medway Council. No research of any kind can possibly be done at any time without the *acquiescence* of MALSC! Some of these resources are on the open shelves free for browsing; others are hidden away from sight and need to be specially requested. So, what are they? Let's start with the open shelves.

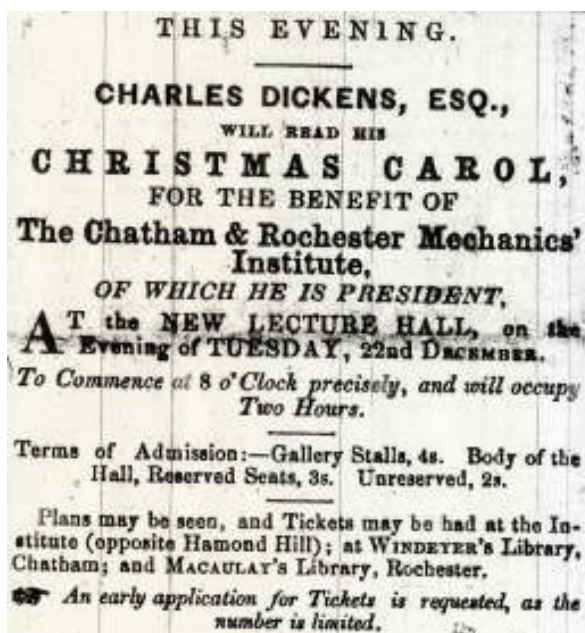
The **Books Collection** presents a rich tapestry of volumes on various points, angles and perspectives on Dickens' novels, plays, his life and relationships to name a few. There are books about Dickens on education, Dickens on religion, Dickens on society; books about illustrators, books with illustrations. If you wish to find out *Who was Who* in his works, discover the places connected to Dickens and his characters around the country, you'll find them in this collection. Alternatively, you may wish to try out some Dickensian recipes, and if you do, please, share your results with us.



Moving along the shelves you will come across the **Periodicals**: a beautifully bound run of volumes of the weekly magazine, *Household Words* (1850 – 1859), of which Dickens was co-founder and editor. The magazine published topical features, essays, short fiction and poetry by various writers, including Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Wilkie Collins and Mrs Gaskell. In 1859, following a dispute between Dickens and the publishers, the publication ceased. It will come as a surprise, that despite the “departure” of the publication, MALSC has two more volumes of *Household Words* dated 1881 and 1882, both of which, according to their title page were edited by Charles Dickens. As there is no indication that it was Charles Dickens Junior, the presumption is then that the editor in question was Charles John Huffam. How the author managed to edit those volumes, having died in 1870, is a mystery waiting to be investigated.

Another set in exquisite 19th century binding is *All The Year Round*, dating from April 1859 to March 1874 (please, note the volume for 1866 is missing). Dickens' new weekly magazine was similar to the scope of *Household Words*. Among the novels published in *All The Year Round* were Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone*, and Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Great Expectations* and *Bleak House*. The most poignant issue in the series is No. 82, published on Saturday, 25 June 1870 (pictured), with a personal message to all readers by Charles Dickens, Junior, the eldest son of the deceased author.

Then there is *The Dickensian*, a 96-page journal, published three times a year, with articles on all aspects of Dickens' life, works and characters. MALSC prides itself on holding the entire collection of this periodical, starting from the first volume in 1905. However, if you really want to cover everything on articles related to Dickens, then it is also worth consulting some of the various issues of *Bygone Kent*, *Kent Today* and others.



Do not forget the local newspapers, the *Rochester Gazette* and the *Chatham News*, circulated in the area when Dickens resided here, with some of the earliest advertisements announcing the upcoming readings of the writer in the local Lecture Hall and reports on the readings themselves. In 1870 the above newspapers were joined by the *Chatham Observer*. Throughout the years one may find many references related to the esteemed writer – reminiscences from people who knew him, descriptions of various celebrations, commemorations, libations and other various -ations in his honour.

From the Rochester Gazette

Do you like auctions, or do you watch *Antiques Roadshow* and *Cash in the Attic*? The sale of household furniture and the effects of Gad's Hill Place, which took place in November 1878, a copy of an article relating to Dickens' illegitimate son, copies of his will, his marriage licence, his father's release from Marshalsea prison and many other treasures are all in the MALSC **Ephemera** collection.

But The Star of MALSC and the diamond of our Dickens resources is **The Fitzgerald Collection** of Dickens memorabilia, very generously donated to Rochester Museum in 1912 by Percy Fitzgerald, a life-long friend of Dickens and his great fan. It consists of about 400 items and includes a wide range of materials relating to Dickens biography, a

number of different 19th and early 20th century Dickens editions and an incredibly rich material on Dickens topography – the tracking down of originals for the fictional places in Dickens's novels.

According to Prof. M. Andrews, the editor of *The Dickensian*, "...in The Fitzgerald Collection's extraordinary amassing of 'fanzine' material of every kind – magazine cuttings, playbills, sheet-music, Christmas cards, and so on – are the foundations of the modern Dickens industry, testifying to the huge impact he has made as an iconic English writer... It offers a vital resource to scholars, to literary and cultural historians, and to Dickens biographers."

What about the hidden gems of the **Cityark** treasure trove?

Insert the word *Dickens* in the search box and you get 142 results, all in some way related to the writer and his name. They will inspire and satisfy any creative thinker and researcher. I will bring up just some of the examples, as it is impractical to discuss every single item with the space restrictions of *The Clock Tower*.

Pinn family collection. The William Pinn Commonplace Book

This collection comprises a commonplace book probably mainly compiled by William Pinn Junior of Chatham, a tailor who formerly served in the Royal Marines, during the period 1804-1817 and partly by his father also of Chatham, a tailor and a former Royal Marine sergeant. The subject matter, provenance and usefulness of the contents of the volume are very diverse and throw much light on domestic, parochial and national life in early 19th century in Medway.

The commonplace book contains a concentrated record of the history of the Medway Towns during the period circa 1795 to circa 1817, detailing events and people for whom little other information exists. Many entries in the volume relate to the activities of organisations whose records are also held at MALSC.

The volume establishes the Pinns as the first in a long line of local historians, collectors, antiquarians and enthusiasts who have dedicated themselves to preserving the history of Chatham. The entire contents of the Pinn commonplace book set the scene for the arrival of the Dickens family in Chatham from London in April 1817, when Charles Dickens, the future author, was entering his impressionable years.

Specific references to Dickens' time in Chatham are an MS Song critical of the 1812 Chatham Poor Bill stating, "*the clerks in the Dockyard this Bill do oppose*," as John Dickens was a clerk at Sheerness and Chatham Dockyards (c1816-c1822). There are also printed regulations for the *Ebenezer Savings Bank*, Ebenezer Chapel, Chatham (p.132) and a printed notice for the setting of the assize of bread by Uriah Allchin (p.106).

A certain Dr. Tribe features in the song mentioned above: "*the bald headed doctor....*" Tribe (c.1812) may have been a relation of Alderman John Tribe who according to Robert Langton in *The Childhood and Youth of Charles Dickens* possessed the earliest specimen of Dickens' handwriting.

A possible influence on Dickens' future writings based on the Medway Towns was the profusion of self-improvement societies, e.g. the Rochester Book Society, the Royal Owl Club, the Chatham and Rochester Philosophical and Literary Institution which were meeting by 1828 and two organisations mentioned in the Pinn commonplace book, the *Pinndarian Society for Blending Improvement with Amusement*, obviously originated and controlled by Pinn (p.7), and the more distant *Pokerian Society of Maidstone* (p. 76), making an interesting comparison with the personified Pickwick Club.

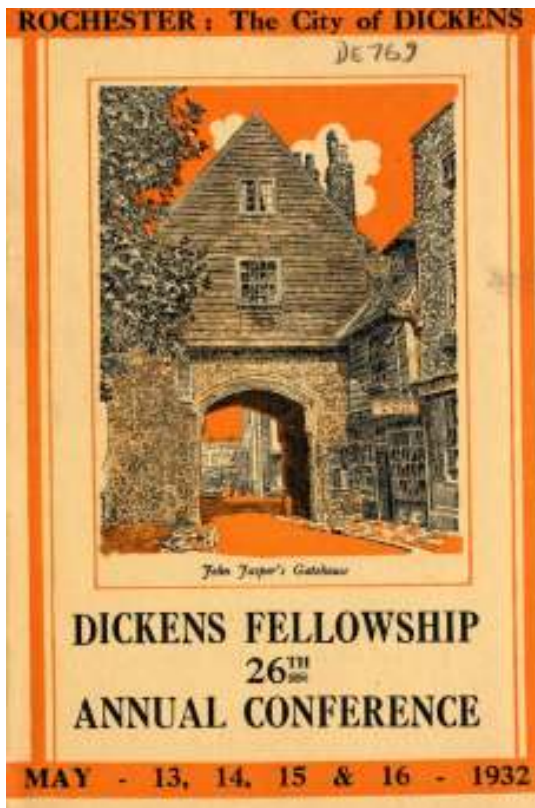
The open air amusements and theatres recorded throughout the collection had no doubt produced deep impressions on young Dickens and played a significant part in the development of his literary imagination.

Records of the Hospital of Sir John Hawkins, Kt. of Chatham (1594-1987)

This collection mentions a first cousin of Charles Dickens, Arthur George Dickens. The hospital records also frequently refer to Sheerness and Chatham Dockyards where John Dickens worked.

Then there are records relating to *The Dickens Chalet*, presented to the writer in 1865 by a French actor Charles Fechter– and which is currently in need of £100,000 for its restoration. Dickens was writing *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* in the chalet overlooking the river and countryside the day he died. (See Odette Buchanan’s article, page 24).

If you are interested to learn about Westgate House from *Pickwick Papers* or the Nun’s House from *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, check the records of Rochester’s famous *Eastgate House*, built in 1590s by Sir Peter Buck, Clerk of the Cheque at Chatham Dockyard. In the late 19th century the house was bought by the Corporation of Rochester and turned into the city museum. In the 1970s the building became the Charles Dickens’s Centre, which closed in 2004. Today the house is used for various cultural activities.



Dickens Fellowship, Chatham and Rochester Branch.

This branch was founded on the 26th of May 1903 and became the 13th branch of the Fellowship; it is now one of the oldest and one of the most respected branches in the Dickens Fellowship.

This is probably the most interesting collection, if you are keen on pursuing the Dickens fan club’s activities per se. This vast collection includes, to name a few: the Fellowship minutes (1913 – 2004), the register of members; but also *The Rochester Dickens Fellowship Magazine: Conference Number May 1914*, correspondence about the proposed demolition of Ordnance Terrace, Chatham 1971-1980, leaflets and various papers on annual conferences, a notebook containing poems by Charles Dickens transcribed by Miss Amy Butler of Rochester, c.1938; photographs of statues of Charles Dickens and Little Nell at Clark’s Park, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA c.1980, and photocopies of newspaper articles on Dickensian associations of St. Andrew’s Parish, Holborn, London (1933), records relating to Edwin Harris of Rochester, honorary official guide to the Rochester branch and the vice-president of the Fellowship for more than 20 years, Dickens Fellowship (1927), items connecting the local branch to the American, Australian and other fans of Dickens, etc., etc., etc..

City of Rochester Society

Records include various publications, for example: *Charles Dickens and Rochester*, *Charles Dickens and The Medway Towns*, drafts of Dickensian leaflets and numerous items of the above mentioned Miss Amy Butler and Edwin Harris.

You may also find images of Dickens Festivals, Dickens Pageants, Dickens Trails, and Dickens attractions. If you like a challenge and fancy yourself a detective, there is an item, which claims to be a letter written by the Master himself, but may be a forgery. Straying from the main path of Dickens research, there are many records which carry his name or allude to the author,

such as the following:

Records of the Dickens Country Protection Society, which gathers information on plans for building on, or which might significantly alter, any aspect of the countryside, and if appropriate, opposes those plans. The records available may be subject to the closure period, and will require permission to consult from the Society.

Charters. Grant of Arms from the College of Arms to Strood Rural District (1953). The blazoning is: *Vert two Quill Pens in saltire points downward Or between in chief a Port between two Towers Argent and in base a Cornucopia Gold the Fruit proper two Flaunches barry wavy of six also Argent and Azure And for the Crest On a Wreath of the Colours Issuant from a Saxon Crown Or a Ship's Mast proper the sail Gules charged with a Horse rampant Argent Pennon flying also Gules.*

The shield is a heraldic map of the Rural District. The green central portion of the shield, representing the rich agricultural area of the Rural District, particularly the Hoo Peninsula, is placed between blue and white waves representing the [Rivers] Thames and Medway. On the green portion is depicted the main entrance to Cooling Castle, two quill pens crossed refer to the literary associations with Charles Dickens, whilst the Horn of Plenty (Cornucopia) stands for the principal industry, agriculture.

There are also records of Dickens Estate, Dickens Court and Dickens Terrace, and even records of Dickens House in Highfield School, which was operating in Chatham from 1874 and closed its gates in 1990.

To conclude my analysis of Dickens resources available at MALSC it only remains for me to say the following. When you decide you are ready to ramble in the Dickens-land of MALSC, please make sure that you know whether you need to book a table, a microfilm or microfiche reader and you have a valid CARN ticket. What is more, and of this I am certain, your dealings with MALSC will be somewhat different from your dealings with the Circumlocution Office.



Dickensian Anecdotes

Odette Buchanan



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

Unless you've been camping up an Andean mountain or in the wasteland of Outer Mongolia you're probably aware that 2012 celebrates 200 years since Dickens was born. World Dickens Experts have been crawling out the woodwork from all the English-speaking countries in the world and every place with which he had some tenuous connection. Rochester has more than its fair share of world experts so it was with some reluctance that I agreed to write something about him. However, if you are not one of these erudite Dickens hot shots, there are some anecdotes of which you may not be aware.

For example, when he lived as a boy at Chatham, he and his father used to walk from their house in Ordnance Terrace to the Leather Bottle public house in Cobham. They used to go through Rochester and Strood before continuing to Cobham along what we know as Watling Street but which was at that time merely a cart track leading to Cobham Hall and village. 'A delightful walk it was ... through a deep and shady wood, cooled by the light wind which gently rustled the thick foliage, and enlivened by the songs of the birds that perched upon the boughs. The ivy and the moss crept in thick clusters over the old trees, and the soft green turf overspread the ground like a silken mat.' (His description of it in *Pickwick Papers*).

He was an imaginative boy and as they passed under the great clock that Sir Cloudsley Shovel had fitted over the front of the Corn Exchange in Rochester High Street, he was always afeared that it would fall on him.

He and his father were prodigious walkers. Other times they would follow the coach road out of Strood and through Higham. He admired the house known as Gad's Hill Place that stood opposite the Falstaff Inn. His father told him 'if you were to be very persevering and were to work hard you might someday come to live in it.'

By the way, the Falstaff is named after the character in Shakespeare's *Henry IV Part 1* because it is here he is supposed to have rested and viewed Rochester before continuing there. Another claim to fame it has is a highwayman legend: A highwayman held up a coach on the Dover road just here and rode his horse to York so fast that it established an alibi for him and he was acquitted of the crime.

Anyway, I digress: back to Dickens. Eventually, as we all know, he did earn enough money to buy Gad's Hill Place and lived there for the last 14 years of his life. He maintained his love of walking. Friends who came to stay used to complain of the manic speed with which he tramped around the Hoo Peninsula and the North Kent countryside. He told his biographer and friend John Forster that 'I have discovered that the seven miles between Maidstone and Rochester is one of the most beautiful walks in England.' J. A. Nicklen wrote, 'The master of Gad's Hill his lithe, upright figure, clad in loose-fitting garments, and rather dilapidated shoes was a familiar sight to all his country neighbours, as he swung along the shady lanes, banked high with hedges that were full of violets purple and white, ferns, lichens and mosses.'

He would often eschew taking the train at Higham in favour of walking to Gravesend before catching it to go to London. This would have taken him not only past the old forge at Chalk where he spent his honeymoon (and is believed to be Joe Gargery's forge in *Great*) but also Chalk Parish Church. Over the door of the church is the statue of a monk and as he passed, Dickens would tip his hat to the statue.

Just a short walk (for him) was Broom Hill, one of the highest points in north-west Kent. During Dickens' lifetime a pair of windmills dominated the skyline atop the hill. One was called Killick's Mill. This was curious because it had six instead of the usual eight sides and the other was Field's Mill. Mr. Field was an amateur musician who kept a piano, a harp and a barrel organ in his sitting room. It is said that he bought the organ from Loose Church and so fixed it that the power from the mill turned the organ's handle. Dickens would often visit to listen to it playing.

Many of the places and buildings he knew from his perambulations found their way into his books: The prison hulks familiar to those living back then on the Hoo Peninsula are key to the plot of *Great Expectations*. The action opens with Pip sitting in the churchyard of St. James' Church, Cooling when Magwich jumps out on him. There are the lozenge graves of a whole family who died of the *marsh fever* and malaria was not finally routed from the Hoo Peninsula until the middle 1930s. In this scene from *Great Expectations* he probably combined St. James' Church with St. Mary's at Lower Higham because when Magwich turns Pip upside down, Pip can see the steeple and there is no steeple on St. James' but there is on St. Mary's.

Dickens envisaged Higham Station as the setting for his short story *The Signalman* and, of course, many buildings in Rochester in several books and short stories, including *Great Expectations*, *Pickwick Papers* and the unfinished *Edwin Drood*. Rochester itself appears under many names including Dullborough Town and Cloisterham.

Most of all, he either kept the name of the building or invented one for it. For example, the Royal Victoria and Bull Hotel become the Blue Boar in *Great Expectations*. Also in *Great Expectations* he used Restoration House as the place where Miss Havisham lived, but instead of making up a name for it, he used the name of Richard Watts' house round the back of the castle in Boley Hill – Satis House. The story goes that Richard Watts, Provinder of the Dockyard in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, had to entertain her and her retinue to

lunch one day. As they were leaving, Mr. Watts asked her if everything had been all right. Now most people would have said, "Oh yes, it was good, thank you very much." Not Good Queen Bess. She replied, "Satis," Latin for satisfactory and so Watts gave this name to his house.



From the Medway Archives and Local studies Centre Couchman Collection. Postcard photograph entitled "Great Expectations", Charles Dickens comprising view of group of gravestones in south-west corner of Cooling churchyard looking west, showing in foreground grassy area and group of mummy stones and upright stone, in middle ground buttress of church tower, in middle distance second group of gravestones and in distance wall abutting Cooling Road and trees. Couchman's accompanying notes identify gravestones in foreground as belonging to Comport family of Cooling Castle, refer to graves of Pip's five little brothers at Lower Higham in Charles Dickens' novel Great Expectations and cite The Great Expectations Country by W.L. Dadd, 1929. c.1910 DE402/24/p.14 (L)

The last public sighting of Dickens was on the 6th June, 1870, three days before he died. He had walked with his dogs from home to Rochester and was seen leaning over the fence of the Vines, at that time a field used by the King's School, staring intensely at Restoration House.

Dickens was always very fond of the theatre. As a young man, he seriously considered becoming an actor but eventually chose journalism. This love of the theatre was nurtured during his childhood by his father taking him to London in 1819 and 1820 for the pantomime at Sadler's Wells and frequent visits to the Theatre Royal, Rochester, where he saw the great Edmund Kean. It is thought he may also have seen the clown Grimaldi perform at the Theatre Royal but it is more likely he saw him at Sadler's Wells. Also as a child his father coached him to perform comic poems and songs, as well as being presented with a toy theatre by his cousin.

When not striding out across the marshes, Dickens often relaxed and observed people by sitting quietly in the corner of the settle opposite the fireplace in the Crispian and Crispianus, enjoying a glass of ale or a little cold brandy and water. Sadly, this ancient Strood hostelry was badly burnt and is now carefully parcelled up awaiting repairs or demolition. It is quite likely he was gathering material for his novels and short stories. The public house is mentioned in a collection of short stories called *The Young Commercial Traveller*. On one occasion, Dickens noticed a woman with a baby in her arms sheltering outside from a thunderstorm. He told the landlady to call her in. After buying her a brandy he gave her a shilling and sent her on her way rejoicing. (The North Aylesford Union Workhouse was just round the corner from the Crispin and Crispianus. Was she on her way there?)

One of my favourite anecdotes concerns Dickens' chalet which is now in the garden behind Eastgate House in Rochester High Street. It was a Christmas present from Charles Fechter, a French actor friend and arrived by canal at Higham Station at Christmas, 1864. It was snowing and the road up from the station to Gad's Hill was icy. Nevertheless, the carter eventually managed to get it up the hill. It arrived *flat packed*: 94 parts packed in 58 crates, and the assembly instructions were written in French. The Christmas party were very merry and assembly was impossible so a French scenery builder from the Lyceum Theatre in London was sent for. It foxed him, too. However, home for the holidays was one of Dickens' sons who boarded at a school in Boulogne. A carpenter from Strood was employed with the son translating the instructions for him. Success! Dickens had it erected in the garden over the road from Gad's Hill, called The Wilderness and he decided to use it as his study. It had windows and mirrors all around the top floor where he set up his desk, so he had a panoramic view of the Kent countryside while he was writing. To get to it across what was even then a busy main road, he had a tunnel built. You can still see the entrance and steps down to it today in The Wilderness which is the garden next to the Falstaff.

The last anecdote is rather sad. In the 19th century, the Castle Moat at Rochester was a grave yard and Dickens had expressed a strong wish to be buried there but the authorities intervened. Such a world-famous writer did not belong in a moat in Kent. He was put in Poets' Corner at Westminster Abbey. Later, the graveyard was deconsecrated and the tomb stones lined up against a wall in the moat. There are some who reckon they have seen him gazing intently at these tomb stones searching for his. Have you seen him there?

Harriet Dickens

Brenda Paternoster



Brenda was born and grew up in Gravesend and moved to Strood when she married in 1969; she went to live in Allhallows nine years later. After leaving Gravesend Grammar School, Brenda worked at the Ministry of Defence laboratories in Woolwich Arsenal for five years and then had ten years as a full time mother during which time she learned bobbin lace making and developed an interest in family history. When the younger two (twins) were about to start school she was offered the opportunity to teach lace making in Adult Education and spent the rest of her career in various roles within Adult Ed. Family history became more important as she got older and since retiring two years ago Brenda has been able to take on more commitments with the Kent Family History Society and is now a committee member and one of the team of KFHS volunteers on the helpdesk at MALSC.

Having agreed to write something connected with family history I was asked if I knew anything about Charles Dickens' family and descendants. Well the short answer was "no" other than recalling as a child, about fifty years ago, my Grandma told me that her father Richard (Dick) Munn who lived all of his life in Milton-next-Gravesend remembered seeing Dickens driving between Chalk and Gravesend on several occasions, and that he wore a top hat and a cape with a red lining which looked very dashing as he went past. Dick Munn lived in Botany Cottages just behind Milton church and below is a postcard purchased from Gravesend Library some years ago, including one of Milton church c1860. As it is of the right date and shows exactly the spot where my great grandfather would have seen Charles Dickens.



Milton Church and school Gravesend c 1860. Published with the kind permission of Gravesend Library, (Kent County Library, Gravesham Division), Local History Series No 29

As for Dickens' family, it didn't take long with Google to find the information about his parents and grandparents, children, grandchildren and younger generations of descendants. However one of the most informative websites is the Dickens page of Tracing Ancestors in the UK (<http://tracingancestors-uk.com/genealogies-of-the-famous/charles-dickens-genealogy-are-you-connected>) which includes information on his siblings. Charles was the second of ten children born to John and Elizabeth Dickens, although two died in infancy. It was his youngest brother Augustus who caught my eye on that web page where it states, 'Augustus (1827-1866) Married Harriet Lovell but he left her and emigrated to Chicago, USA, where he had three children by Bertha Phillips, the daughter of an English solicitor.'

My great grandmother, wife of Dick Munn who recalled seeing Charles Dickens, was Helen Lovel and so I decided to see if there might be any connection between Harriet and my family.

FreeBMD confirmed the marriage of Augustus Newnham Dickens and Harriet Lovel in 1848: GRO Ref: Marylebone Registration District, December Quarter 1848 Vol 1 page 256. Augustus and Harriet Dickens were recorded together in the 1851 census at 5 St John's Terrace Lewisham (HO107 1591 page 35). Augustus Newnham was also enumerated along with numerous other family members, including Charles, as visitors in the household of Dr Robert Davey in Bloomsbury (HO107 1507 page 16). They were there because their father John Dickens had died the previous day but it would appear that Harriet did not accompany her husband to the gathering.

I do not have a worldwide subscription to Ancestry so cannot check on the children born to Augustus Dickens in the USA*, but I decided to trace Harriet forward through the censuses. In 1861 32 year old Harriett Dickens was at 34 Chepstow Place, Kensington with her widowed mother Elizth Lovell, three Pertt grandchildren and two servants. Harriett was described as married and a 'Fundholder in Trust.' She was also recorded as being 'Blind from Birth,' there was no mention of that in 1851. (RG09 19 Folio 4 Page 16).

In 1871 42 year old Harriette Dickens was still with Elizabeth Lovell, two of the Frith grandchildren, two servants and a visitor Letitia M Austin** at 90 Ledbury Road, Paddington. She was described as a widow and her profession was 'Money in Funds.' She was still 'Blind.' 56 year old widow Letitia Austin had been present at the Dickens' family gathering in 1851 together with her husband Henry, she was Charles Dickens' sister. (RG10 5 Folio 44 page 18). Harriet's mother, Elizabeth Lovell's, death is recorded in 1882 (GRO Ref: Kensington Registration District Vol 1a Page 13).

In 1881 Harriett was still at 90 Ledbury Road, Paddington, as sister-in-law to widow Mary Austin. They were both 'Annituants' and Harriett was 'Blind.' Also in the house were a niece, Katherine Dickens, and two servants. I think that probably 64 year old Mary Austin was actually Letitia Mary Austin, widow of Henry (RG11 13 Folio 12 Page 20).

In 1891 Harriet Dickens was living at 8 Campden Grove Kensington with eleven other people although her relationship to the head was not stated. They were mostly single or widowed and several had musical occupations. Harriet was a widow living on own means and was 'Blind' (RG12 20 Folio 82 Page 85). There is a death of a 78 year old Harriet Dickens recorded in 1895. GRO Ref: Barnet Registration District, March Quarter, Vol 3a page 187.

Throughout the censuses Harriet had stated that she was born in Chelsea and the parish registers for Chelsea St Luke show her baptism at St Luke's Chelsea in 19th December 1828, born 10th November 1828, daughter of Francis and Elizabeth Lovell.

In total there were eleven children of Francis ('Gent' or 'Esq.') and Elizabeth Lovell of Sloan (sic) Street Chelsea baptized at St Luke's Chelsea:

Elizabeth baptised 16 March 1812 (married Hugh William Gordon in 1832)

Francis baptised 23 June 1813

MaryAnn baptised bap 19 Oct 1814 (married John William Henry Stewart Esq. in 1838)

Charles baptised 27 March 1816, buried 29 Nov 1816

Jane born 20 June, baptised 28 July 1819, buried 6 February 1824

George born 9 September, baptised 25 October 1820

Emma born 18 August, baptised 18 September 1822

Edward born 9 March, baptised 7 July 1824

William Cecil born 13 October, baptised 29 December 1826,

Harriet born 10 November, baptised 19 December 1828

Julia Mary born 20 June, baptised 26 July 1833.

The St Luke parish registers show the marriage by licence at St George, Hanover Square of Francis Lovell bachelor of St. Pancras and Elizabeth Ottley spinster of St. George Hanover Square on 8 December 1810. The registers also show the burial of Elizabeth Lovell on 13 July 1816, three and a half months after Charles' baptism, and then on 6 August 1818 Francis Lovell, widower of St Luke, was married to Elizabeth Walkers of the same parish by licence. So, the three eldest children had a different mother to their younger siblings, but both were named Elizabeth.

Francis Lovell died of dropsy in 1836 aged 68. He was buried at St Luke's in the Rector's vaults on payment of 11½d (most people paid only 3½d) on 25 January 1863. His will was proved 30 January 1836, the executors being (son) Francis Lovell, (widow) Elizabeth Lovell and a friend Claudius Francis Du Pasquier - a doctor who was to receive £50 for his troubles. The will runs to five pages of closely written script, much of which seems to be about setting up trust funds for the children.

So, the abandoned wife of Charles Dickens' brother Augustus was blind from birth, probably quite musical and came from a wealthy family. Her father's legacy enabled her to live comfortably, though not as luxuriously as her father, for another half a century and she maintained close contact with at least some of the Dickens family throughout her life.

Alas I cannot see any connection between this Lovell family and my Lovells who appear to have been much more ordinary. They lived in Hayes, Middlesex from the mid 18th century and before that Holborn in Middlesex, so at least geographically they were fairly close.

Notes from the Editor

*In the US Census for 1860, Augustus Dickens is living in May in Lee County, Illinois. He is 38 years old, wife Bertha is 31 and their son, Bertram, born in Illinois, is 3 years old. Dickens is listed as a farmer, his estate is worth \$1,000; his personal fortune is worth \$300. This is the only census listing for the family on Ancestry.com.

**From *The Lambeth Cholera Outbreak of 1848-9* by Amanda J Thomas: '...Henry Austin (1812-1861), who had married Charles Dickens' sister Letitia. Henry Austin was a campaigner for health reform and established the Health of Towns Association in 1844, becoming Honorary Secretary. He later became Consulting Engineer for the Metropolitan Commission of Sewers ...Austin sent the report to Dickens, but Dickens' views on [Edwin] Chadwick were already biased, as is illustrated in his brutal portrayal of the workhouse in his 1838 novel, *Oliver Twist*. Dickens' response in his *American Notes* of 1842 was not overly enthusiastic: "Much of the disease which does prevail might be avoided if a few common precautions were observed." Though he did add, "There is no local legislature in America which may not study Mr. Chadwick's excellent report on the Sanitary Condition of our labouring Classes with immense advantage." In the end, however, he did become a supporter of Chadwick's ideas for sanitary reform.'

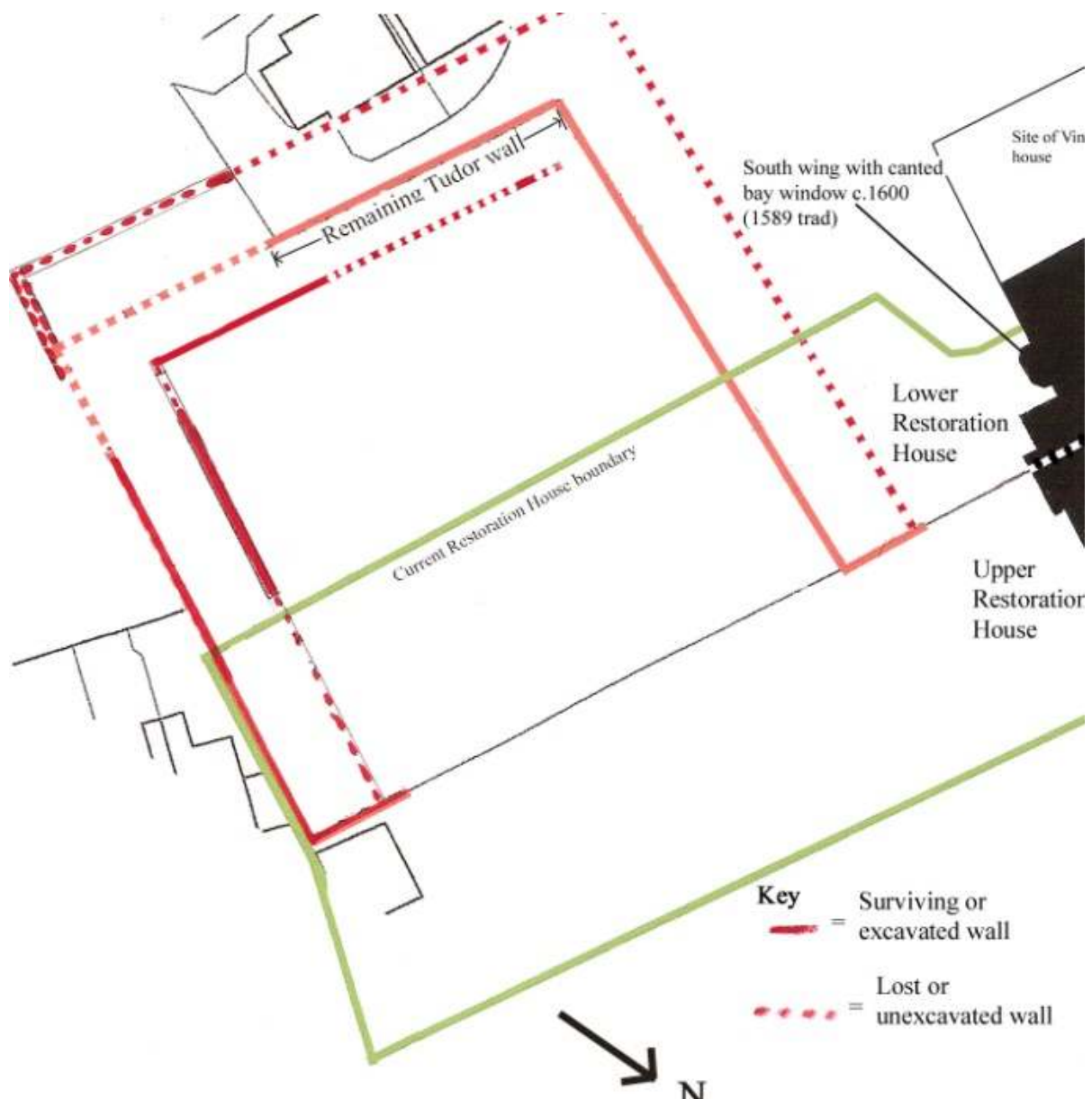
The Tudor Garden at Restoration House

Elaine Gardner

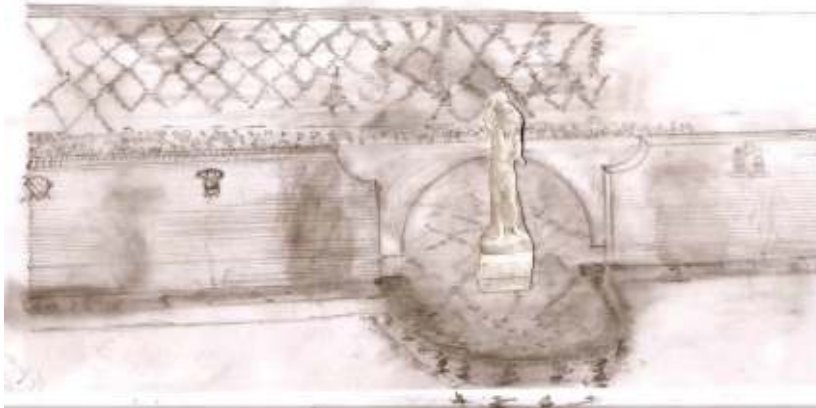


Elaine was born in Surrey but has lived and worked in Medway since 1952. She taught maths in Medway secondary schools, but has always been interested in local history. She is a member of the City of Rochester Society, and a society guide since 2003. She is also a Friend of Eastgate House, a volunteer at Restoration House since it opened in 2000 and a FOMA committee member actively involved with the education and outreach aspects of the Heritage Lottery project

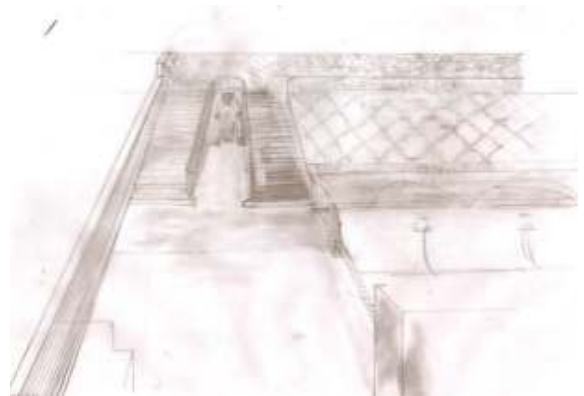
As many of you are no doubt aware, the owners of Restoration House were finally able to purchase the entire Woodhams Brewery site (Sentry Supplies Cash & Carry) when the previous developers went bankrupt and the Secretary for State ruled that the houses being built on the site of the old Tudor garden had to be demolished. Robert Tucker and Jonathan Wilmot went much further, demolishing everything that the developers had started and drew up their own plans for restoring the Tudor garden and the orchard mentioned in Samuel Pepys diaries.



Major archaeological investigations revealed foundations of many walls and raised walks which Robert had long suspected might lead on from the raised section at the end of the present Restoration House garden. These are determining the structure and layout that is currently taking shape. (See diagram)



Sketches showing the view along the walkway from the present garden to the Tudor wall with steps up to the high-level view point and the planned water feature. Sketches by Robert Tucker.



The plan is that the destroyed section of the Tudor wall be rebuilt with a high-level view point on the area behind it (next to Pretty Seat Mews).



The gate piers; photographs by Elaine Gardner



The raised section at the end of the present garden will lead through a pair of beautiful gate piers and continue at the same level to the base of the Tudor wall, then turn and continue along in front of it to the south-west corner of the site, recreating the raised walk that once existed. The archaeological evidence suggests that it originally then continued back to meet the raised lawn behind the oldest part of the house before the present boundary wall was built. Below the walkway, parallel to the Tudor wall a new, warm red brick wall is being built. This not only provides the vertical support for the walkway, but is providing an interesting water feature for the garden. Elegant apertures are spaced at intervals along this wall through which water will cascade down into a rill running along at its base to a central pool and statue. There was originally a spring below Pretty Seat Mews which, in the early 18th century was providing water for the city, and later for Woodhams Brewery. A bore has been drilled to the aquifer and this will provide the water for the water feature and the rest of the garden.



Water feature detail; photograph by Elaine Gardner

The central lower area of the garden will be laid out with formal box-edged beds. Robert decided that his initial plan, whilst looking good on paper, did not look right once it had been excavated so he has revised this.

A view of the excavated lower central section before Robert's change of plan. Photograph by Elaine Gardner



As with the parterre in the present garden whose design is based on the Jacobean doors in the house, the new plan for the central section is also based on a feature from within the house. This time Robert has chosen the chimney-piece above the fireplace in the Oak Salon as the inspiration for the design. The appearance of this does bring to mind a formal garden layout – its raised surround representing the walkway and the elaborate carved sections the formal planting in four corner beds around a central feature. I for one cannot wait to see the finished result!

The plans for the rest of the site are also underway. The old brewery tower and building is being restored and will be converted into apartments, four I think. There are also plans to build a small number of houses either side of this building; three on the corner plot to Victoria Street/The Terrace and five facing onto East Row opposite the former police station. It goes without saying that if Robert and Jonathan have planned them these will be beautifully designed. In fact they are of a very elegant Georgian town house design to fit with the Troy Town buildings of that time. Planning approval has finally been achieved, after much effort, but the housing market being what it is there will be a delay in starting these. However, the space between the raised walk and the brewery building is being worked on. Vegetable plots are being dug in along the wall behind The Terrace and an orchard will also be established – including some cherry trees one hopes. To reach this area there will be a tunnelled walk under the raised walkway from the lower level of the Tudor garden.

Having had the opportunity to see the work recently, I am impressed by the way walls have been built using the old foundations, both with ragstone to continue the existing wall between Restoration House and the end house in The Terrace and the warm red new bricks of

the water feature wall. The gate piers mentioned above are a joy and it is wonderful to think that true craftsmen still exist as some of the decorative courses in these pillars are hand carved to reflect the curved decorative courses in the house.



The ragstone wall, brewery side; photograph by Elaine Gardner

Whilst it will not be finished by the time the house is opened in June, Robert is hoping that visitors will be able to walk out part way along the raised walkway to see how things are progressing. That may be knocked on the head by health and safety – we will have to hope not!



The lower wall and walkway under construction (see the sketches above). To the rear, the remains of the Tudor wall. Photograph by Robert Tucker.

A Dickens of a Night Out!

Sue Haydock

News from our roving reporter, Medway Heritage Champion and FOMA Vice President



To celebrate Charles Dickens' 200th birthday on 7 February I was delighted to attend the Stationers' Livery Company's special evening entitled, *Beyond Expectations*. The Stationers' Company originated in 1403 when the scribes and illuminators of manuscript books petitioned to be allowed to join in a single company.

A friend of mine is a member of the Livery Company, and it was he who invited me to join him for the evening. It was partly our suggestion (last year) to have a Dickens' evening, and I asked Gerald Dickens if he would be available to be their guest speaker. He, of course, was fully committed to family gatherings!

The evening consisted of a wonderful dinner with readings and singing between the courses. Victorian Parlour songs were performed by Elizabeth Desbrulais and Adam Sullivan, accompanied on the piano by Louise Lam all from The Guildhall School of Music and Drama. They were not in costume, but the singing was lovely! To complete the set the harpist, Murdo Macrae, played before dinner.

The readers from Shopfield Productions were Keith Hutton, Joan Garbutt and Richard Morley whom I accompanied. We read from the following:

Great Expectations: An Encounter with Miss Havisham

Oliver Twist: Mrs. Corney and Mr. Bumber

Bleak House: Miss Summerson and Mr. Guppy

Sketches by Boz: The Misplaced Attachment of Mr. John Dounce

Pickwick Papers: Miss Rachel Wardle and Mr. Tracy Tupman

David Copperfield: David with Barkis the Carrier

At the end of the evening, I was given a lovely keepsake of a printed version of part of Dickens' manuscript for the ending of *Great Expectations*.



The Dickens Bowl. A late Victorian electroplate centre piece, the pierced cover applied with a standing figure of a young boy holding an ewer of water engraved with the coat of arms of the Company and presentation inscribed: This Relic of Charles Dickens was presented to the Worshipful Company of Stationers by Mr Henry Sotheran, Master 1895-96. The other inscription reads as follows: Presented to Mrs Charles Dickens by the Committee of the Birmingham and Midland Institute as a slight acknowledgement of the debt and gratitude due to her husband for his generous liberality in reading the Christmas Carol and Cricket on the Hearth, to nearly six thousand persons in the Town Hall, Birmingham, on the nights of December 27, 29 & 30 1853 and of the funds for the establishment of the Institute, by Elkington & Mason, 1852.



The entertainers (readers) of Shopfield Productions: Keith Hutton, Joan Garbutt and Richard Morley



Sue Haydock (second from right) with the entertainers, Keith Hutton, Joan Garbutt and Richard Morley

The photographs on the inside front cover are of Dickens' Chair and Sue Haydock. This is the chair in which Dickens sat as he wrote the *Pickwick Papers*. The Chair is now owned by The Athenaeum, who kindly loaned it to the Stationers' Company for the celebration.

Some Dickens characters. From the collections of the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre.



Is this the hand of Dickens?

Dr Andrew Ashbee



Dr Andrew Ashbee was born and bred in Snodland. The former Head of Music at Rochester Grammar School for Girls, he currently teaches music appreciation for the WEA. Dr Ashbee is internationally known for his work on Tudor and Stuart music and musicians, especially the Maidstone composer John Jenkins. He is the Honorary Curator of Snodland Millennium Museum and the Chairman of Snodland Historical Society.

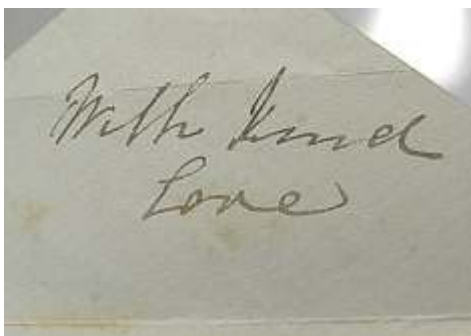
Andrew Ashbee contacted Editor Amanda Thomas with the following intriguing information about the Hook family of Snodland and their possible connection with Charles Dickens. The Snodland History website explains (www.snodlandhistory.org.uk):

“Samuel Hook, his wife Anna Maria and their five children moved from Chalford, Gloucestershire to Tovil, Maidstone, in 1852, when Samuel took a partnership in the paper mill there. Two years later his son Charles Townsend, aged twenty-two, acquired the Snodland mill and they all moved to the house in the High Street called 'Acacia cottage' in the 1851 census, which had been the home for previous papermaker masters. It was on the south side, just where the by-pass is today, and the Hooks lost no time in rebuilding the property to make it a large and imposing building, filling the space between Brook Street and May Street.”

An article in the Snodland Historical Society Newsletter of September 2006, Vol 9, Issue 3, discusses the discovery at a second hand book shop of 22 volumes belonging to Anna Maria Hook, as most contained bookplates with her name on. The article goes on to say, “In one of the books the bookseller found a card from ‘Boz’ [Charles Dickens] addressed to ‘Mrs Hook’ ‘with kind love’.”

The Christmas card illustrated may be another piece of correspondence between Mrs Hook and Mr Dickens and Andrew asks, “It's just the question of whether the text is written by Dickens or not, and whether he did have contact with Anna Maria Hook (and indeed any others of the Hook family). It is possible given their social standing - and Charles Townsend Hook seems to have been widely known and respected - but no evidence has come to light.”

If you are able to solve this mystery, then please contact the Editor, Amanda Thomas (see *The Committee* on page 36 for contact details).



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

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.



Anyone for Football?

Lionel Messi and the Higham connection.

Well, Amanda asked for something about Higham for this Dickens themed issue and Lionel Messi comes to mind. No, I really have not lost the plot but it's a long story that goes back to the year 1848...

In June of that year the Reverend Joseph Hindle* married a couple, then resident in the Parish of Higham. Joseph Edward Savage Newell married Mary Ann Goodyer in an otherwise run of the mill marriage. A child of this marriage however, was to become a driving force in Argentinean football founding a club that years later would field players such as Maradonna, Gabriel Batistuta and Lionel Messi.

Joseph and Mary Anne Newell had three sons, Joseph (junior), William and Isaac. It is the youngest son who is the subject of this story. Isaac Newell was born in Taylor's Lane, Strood in 1853, and was baptised in St Nicholas. Unfortunately for the infant, his mother died shortly after in 1854. His father, left with three small sons, soon remarried. Joseph senior married Susanna Chapman in 1856, their marriage appears to have been childless. In 1861 the family were living at 5 Higham Place, Higham where Joseph continued in his trade as a Fishmonger. By the time of the 1871 census, Joseph and Susanna were living in West Malling and all of the boys had left home.

Isaac had left England sometime around 1869¹ and travelled to Argentina to find work. He started work on the British owned Central Argentine Railway² working as a telegrapher. During his employment he continued to study and graduated as a professor of English in 1878. He had married a German girl, Anna Jockinsen, in 1876 who had also graduated as a professor of English. They set up their own school, the Colegio Comercial Anglicano Argentino in the town of Rosario. The Newells introduced sport to the curriculum, and started a football club, which became a great success.

In 1903 Claudio Newell, son of Isaac and Anna, founded the club Newell's Old Boys in honour of his father who had recently died. The Club went on to be one of the most successful in Argentine football history, being league and cup winners many times. Isaac Newell is revered by football fans in Argentina as the man who took football to the country and as the founder of sport in schools. Taylor's Lane is known as the spiritual home of Newell's Old Boys. Perhaps the fields of Higham fostered a love of the beautiful game in young Isaac Newell. We shall never know, but a small part of Kent is well known in a far off continent because of him.

Notes

1. Les Rosbifs – the Medway Man who created a top Argentine club. <http://lesrosbifs.net>
2. Wikipedia – Isaac Newell.

*See *The Clock Tower*, Issue 9, February 2008, Editor's Footnotes, Amanda Thomas
The Rosher Family: From Gravesend to Hollywood

The Clock Tower is now fully indexed!

There is now a pdf on the FOMA website (www.foma-lsc.org/newsletter.html) which lists the contents of all the issues since Number 1 in April 2006. In addition, each of the past issues now includes a list of contents; these are highlighted with an asterisk (*).

If you have missed any of the previous issues and some of the articles published, they are all available to read on the website. Read them again - *A Stroll through Strood* by Barbara Marchant (issue 4); *In Search of Thomas Fletcher Waghorn (1800-1850)* by Dr Andrew Ashbee (issue 6); *The Other Rochester and the Other Pocahontas* by Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck (issue 6); *Jottings in the Churchyard of All Saints Frindsbury* by Tessa Towner (issue 8); *The Skills of the Historian* by Dr Kate Bradley (issue 9); *The Rosher Family: From Gravesend to Hollywood* by Amanda Thomas (issue 9); *George Bond, Architect and Surveyor, 1853 to 1914* by Pat Salter and Bob Ratcliffe (issue 10) plus all the regular features on the Victoria County History by Dr. Sandra Dunster and Dr. Andrew Hann, Edwin Harris by Janet Knight and Alison Thomas, not to mention regular contributors such as Betty Cole, Brian Joyce, JL Keys, Peter Burstow, Odette Buchanan and Catharina Clement.

Help is always needed with events.

If you think you could help, please contact Elaine Gardner on 01634 408595 or email emgardner@virginmedia.com

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Charles Dickens spent the last years of his life, from 1853 to 1870 living at Higham, Rochester. He died while writing The Mystery of Edwin Drood in his Swiss Chalet (pictured, from the collections of the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre.), in the grounds of his house, Gad's Hill Place.



DICKENS AT HIGHAM, 1870

Thames
Marshes with
Meandering twisting ditches
Giving way to Copperfields and hills,
By Rudge and Barn,
No Bleak Houses,
No Cities here –
Just Little Droody Dorrits
With Martins and swallows
Nesting in Chuzzlely Nicks
Until, at last, a-top the Gadding Hill
Picking Carols to celebrate St. Nicholas
And Expecting more imagination,
Dickens
Sits in his Swiss Chalet.

Odette Buchanan

Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre
Couchman Collection
DE402/24/41 (U)



Colour picture postcard entitled *Charles Dickens at Home, Gad's Hill, Kent* comprising view northern elevation of Gadshill Place, Gravesend Road, Higham, looking from north-east corner of garden, showing in foreground part of lawn, drive, shrubs and gaunt male figure looking at artist and in background house, porch, shrubs and trees. On rear, message from Alice [-] to a Miss Gurney, Rede Court, Strood, wishing her many happy returns. Published by Thornton Brothers, New Brompton. c.1910 DE402/24/41 (U) . From the Couchman Collection at the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre

Overleaf: A section from a postcard from the Couchman Collection at the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre. Tinted postcard photograph entitled *Dickens' Chalet* comprising view of southern elevation of Swiss chalet in terrace garden, North Pleasure Grounds, Cobham Park, looking north-east, showing in foreground trees and bushes, in middle ground path and in background chalet. Couchman's accompanying notes pertain to history of chalet 1865-1872, mentioning erection at The Shrubbery or The Wilderness, Gravesend Road, Upper Higham by John Couchman of Strood, builder and undertaker in 1865, sale to Crystal Palace Company of Sydenham, London in 1870, consequent removal by J. Couchman and re-erection at Crystal Palace 1871, purchase from company by Dickens' sister Mamie and sister-in-law Georgina Hogarth for £250, gift to 7th. Earl of Darnley and re-erection again by J. Couchman at the terrace garden, North Pleasure Grounds, Cobham Park. Published by Thornton Brothers, New Brompton. c.1910 DE402/24/p.51

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