

Patron: Professor Sir Robert Worcester KBE DL

The Friends of Medway Archives

#### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> April 2023, 7.00 for 7.30 pm;

St Nicholas Church Lower Hall, Strood, Rochester, Kent, ME2 4TR.

Refreshments and raffle

PLEASE PRINT THIS DOCUMENT (IF REQUIRED) AND BRING IT WITH YOU TO THE AGM

#### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2023, 7.30 pm.

#### **AGENDA**

- Apologies for absence
   Welcome address from the Chairman
   Matters arising
   Treasurer's report
- 5. Secretary's report
- 6. Editorial report (Amanda Thomas)
- 7. Medway Archives Centre report (including Local Studies)
- 8. Membership fees 2024
- 9. Election of Committee members
- 10. Any other business

To join the FOMA Committee please complete and return the nomination form below to the Secretary, Christopher de Coulon Berthoud (berthoud@blueyonder.co.uk)

I nominate the member below to join the FOMA committee:

Name:

Address:

Post Code.

Email:

Tel.

#### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022**

Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> April 2022 7.00 for 7.30 pm; St Nicholas Church Lower Hall, Strood, Rochester, Kent, ME2 4TR.

#### **Minutes**

This is an abbreviated version of the official minutes for the above meeting. Full copies of the reports are available from the FOMA Secretary, Christopher de Coulon Berthoud, 4 Albert Road, Rochester, ME1 3DG, Kent. berthoud@blueyonder.co.uk

Present: Chris de Coulon Berthoud, Natasha Boardman-Steer, Odette Buchanan, Catharina Clement, Betty Cole, Norma Crowe, Len Feist, Elaine Gardner, Rita Gregory, Peter Hassel, Sue Haydock, Jane Joyce, Peter Joyce, Alan Moss, Kevin Russell, Vanessa Sanderson, Jean Skilling, Alexander Thomas, Amanda Thomas, Angela White, Pat White.

Apologies: Deborah Collins, Rob Flood, Sandra Fowler, Cindy O'Halloran, Pat Harlow, Bob Howe, Michael Jennings, Elspeth Millar, Sir Robert Worcester, Helen Worthy.

#### Welcome Address from Chairman,

Elaine Gardner, Chairman

- Welcome it is lovely to be back in the same room for our AGM.
   Recent FOMA events talks, September, November, December and last month although low attendance we are at least able to meet.
- FOMA nomination of Norma for the CILIP Award (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) for Local Librarian of the year and its successful outcome.
- FOMA membership of BALH (British Association for Local History) to provide public liability insurance. We now send them our quarterly *Clock Tower* magazine and getting reports and reviews in their quarterly magazine and on their list of societies.
- FOMA involvement with MAC Accreditation Status from the National Archives.
- FOMA links with Friends of The National Archives potential to bring benefits to FOMA members.

• Elaine thanked Jean Skilling for her hard work since becoming FOMA Treasurer last year, and also Bob Howe who had kindly agreed to act as Independent Examiner for the accounts.

#### **Matters Arising**

• Odette Buchanan proposed, Peter Hassel accepted the last minutes (2021).

#### Treasurer's Report (2021),

Jean Skilling

- As printed in the AGM 2022 booklet and circulated.
- Vote of thanks to Jean Skilling proposed by Norma Crowe; seconded by Elaine Gardner.
- Report proposed by Alan Moss; Peter Joyce seconded.

#### Secretary's Report,

Chris de Coulon Berthoud, Secretary

- As we move into this new phase of the pandemic, I have been particularly pleased to see people coming back to the Archive, and it has been particularly satisfying to be able to work with people face-to-face as they explore their research and the material available to them on site.
- Membership: We currently have

70 – Ordinary members

36 – Family members (17 memberships)

5 – Society Memberships

21 – Life Members

6 – Honorary members

- Now is a good time to remind you that memberships are due for renewal if you haven't already taken care of that.
- I reported last year about the problems we were facing with the FOMA eBay project, which involved a series of complexities with accepting payments though FOMA's accounts. It was put on hold, and we have now formally stopped the process.

- The portrait of Bob Ratcliffe that was commissioned by FOMA in memory of his remarkable collection, much of which is making its way into the Archive via the efforts of Rob Flood. This represents a significant amount of material, including substantial numbers of slides, negatives and photographs and will be known as the Bob Ratcliffe Collection. Chris additionally thanked Bob's son, Andy Ratcliffe for his help with this. It has been suggested that we might put together a bid for funding for the huge amount of time it will take to catalogue and digitise this material to make it available. The final positioning of the portrait will be decided following the completion of a space review of the Archive premises.
- A donation received from FOMA member, our friend and colleague, Henk van der Linden will be put towards a cassette player which will be used to digitise audio cassettes held in the collection.

#### Editorial Report,

Amanda Thomas, Clock Tower Editor

- Thanks were extended to FOMA members for their continued support, and enthusiastic response to messages.
- The past few months have seen an increased number of articles, information, letters and queries. The last year has seen the welcome return of old friends, such as Jean Skilling. Betty Cole and Elaine Gardner proof read *The Clock Tower* with enormous skill and care, and Betty has said she will continue to help with this after retiring from the FOMA Committee. Norma Crowe's departure was a sadness but as noted in the next issue of *The Clock Tower*, she was recently back at the Archives to receive a very well-deserved award from the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals for her extraordinary career in Local Studies.
- For some time and thanks to Betty Cole we had been aware that the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Dock Road Tragedy would soon be upon us. In the November 2021 issue, Brian Joyce wrote one of the most moving articles we have ever published. It relayed the dreadful story of one of the worst road accidents in British history and how, on the night of 4 December 1951, 24 royal marine volunteer cadets aged 9 to 13 years lost their lives in Dock Road. Thank you, Brian, and I am sure this will become one of the more popular pieces searched for by the public when it becomes available to non-members on the FOMA website. I know that Alexander Thomas will be giving you some statistics in his report (as follows) about the most popular *The Clock Tower* issues, but it really does make my job worthwhile to know that so many people not just FOMA members find *Clock Tower* articles on the web and are able to read them both for research purposes and for their own enjoyment. Of course, none of this would be possible without the number of fantastic articles members and sometimes non-members send me for publication.
- Thanks were given for the invaluable work of Nic Nicholas who compiles the quarterly index to *The Clock Tower*. The production of an illustration index was suggested and help with this solicited.

- Thanks also given to Dr Alexander Thomas, for his maintenance of the FOMA website, revamping it and adding more and more links, references and nuances to make it a more exciting and superb site for research and reference.
- Thanks also extended to the FOMA Committee and at the Medway Archives Centre for their continued support and for providing the editor with news, photographs and articles. Thanks also to Jon Barker of Barkers Litho Printers in Rochester for his fantastic job printing *The Clock Tower* despite current restrictions and shortages.
- The Facebook page remains as popular as ever with 400 followers. Thanks given to Rob Flood for his extensive posting of items on Medway news and events.

In conclusion, Amanda noted her certainty that 2022 will be a much better year for us all, and her excitement about working with so many new people on the committee and FOMA's future relationship with the Friends of The National Archives.

#### Webmaster's Report,

Dr Alexander Thomas, Webmaster

#### The FOMA Website

- The continued popularity of the FOMA website is evident from the 2020 to 2022 visitor numbers. The key metric are the unique visitor numbers, and it is very pleasing to see that this increased year-on-year between 2021 and 2020 by 4%. On average 703.5 unique visitors visited the FOMA website each month in 2020, with 738.5 visiting in 2021. This is equivalent to 23 visitors a day in 2020 and 24 visitors a day in 2021 respectively. It is extremely encouraging to see that unique visitor numbers have continued to increase by an average of 19% in the first quarter of 2022.
- Clock Tower issues and related PDFs accounted for 15,833 total downloads. Clock Tower PDFs therefore had an average of 3,958 downloads per month during this period. Over 90% of Clock Tower issues were downloaded over 100 times.
- Between December 2021 and March 2022, the five most popular issues of *The Clock Tower* during this period were:
  - o Issue 29: the issue about the 1953 floods, with 670 downloads
  - o Issue 21: the issue which focussed on Medway memories of the Battle of Britain with 539 downloads
  - Issue 33: the issue about amateur dramatics in Medway, which had 434 downloads
  - o Issue 30: the issue about the Big Freeze of 1963 with 421 downloads
  - Issue 12: the issue about the 90th anniversary of the World War One armistice, with 363 downloads.

#### The FOMA De Caville Index

• This remained a popular resource in the first quarter of 2022 with over 3,000 views. January: 1,267 views, February: 680 views, March: 1,174 views. (An average 1,040 views a month).

#### **FOMA Website Domain and Hosting**

• The FOMA website continues to be hosted on a virtual private server as it not only gives a generous amount of storage space (70 gigabytes), but also enables unlimited database creation. Database creation is crucial should FOMA participate in a project like the FOMA De Caville Index again. The website's virtual private server is due for its annual renewal in June this year and will cost FOMA £250.67. The domain name, foma-lsc.org, was last renewed for three years in September 2020 for £57.56. It is therefore due for renewal in October 2023 for a further three years. On average, it costs FOMA £269.86 per annum to maintain its web presence.

I am happy to continue as webmaster and remain on the FOMA Committee.

#### Medway Archive Centre Report (including Local Studies),

Elspeth Millar, MAC Manager and Archivist (not present)

Thank you to the FOMA Committee and members for supporting us over this last year, which has been challenging at times as we came out of lockdown again and adjusted to running a new service.

#### **Archive Service Accreditation**

Our big news of the last year is that we were awarded Archive Service Accreditation in November 2021.

Accreditation is the UK quality standard which recognises good performance in all areas of archive service delivery. Achieving accredited status demonstrates that we have met clearly defined national standards relating to management and resourcing, the care of our unique collections, and what the service offers to its entire range of users. It puts us in a select band of UK archives to become accredited. The panel commended us for our "recent and ongoing improvements at the archive service, and recognised the strong support for the service from senior staff and elected members. The Panel were also impressed by the service's practical approach to developing digital preservation and the progress achieved here."

Being awarded accreditation is a huge achievement and demonstrates our continued commitment to developing, preserving, and improving access to the unique heritage collections in our care. It also provides recognition for the hard work of the Medway Archives Centre team, our stakeholders, volunteers, and partners who all contribute to the work of Medway Archives Centre. Accreditation is an iterative process – we will need to report back in three years on the activities we've done to meet the improvement actions, and then fully reapply again in six years.

#### **Staffing**

Norma Crowe retired in July 2021 after being the Local Studies Librarian at MAC (and MALSC) since 1998 (and before that as Heritage Officer for KCC, pre-Medway Council). Norma had a huge impact during her tenure as Local Studies Librarian, helping to build the collections at MAC, and sharing them with the community through wonderful exhibitions, talks, events, reminiscence sessions and education packs. We wish her an exciting retirement!

We welcomed Adele Martin-Bowtell to Medway Archives Centre as our new Librarian in November 2021. Adele has previously worked for Medway Libraries as a children's librarian and came to us from the library service at UCA Rochester. Adele has made a flying start and will be leading on MACs Platinum Jubilee sessions in April, May, and June!

We are lucky to be taking part in the Government's Kickstart scheme, which has meant that we have been able to have temporary staff over the last year. Chris and Ella joined us as Digital Archive Assistants from April to October 2021 and helped to work on some of the first work tasks on our Digital Preservation Strategic Plan. They also digitised more of the Local Studies Photographic Collection and put on a fantastic display in the foyer of photographs from the collection with a focus on Industry in Medway. We recently welcomed Jamie as a Digital Archive Assistant, and Kirsty as a Collections Information Assistant (who will be focusing more on cataloguing and listing); they will be working with us until the end of September. Welcome to Kirsty and Jamie!

#### Outreach and engagement

We have been able to hold a lot more in-person events and activities over the last year. We held a couple of reminiscence sessions in the autumn, focusing on 'My favourite place in Medway' and 'Home Sweet Home', and will be holding two reminiscence sessions in the coming months, one about the coronation and another about the 1977 Silver Jubilee.

We have had several onsite exhibitions over the last year, including 'The Medway Heritage Bus: Bringing the past alive' (from the Friends of Chatham Traction), 'Industry on the Medway: A Photographic Display' (curated by our Kickstart Digital Archive Assistants), 'Chatham Intra Photographers in the Victoria Era' (curated by Rikard Österlund), and 'The Medway Universities Campus: Now and 116 Years Ago' (curated by Professor Keith Tomlins). We have a busy schedule of exhibitions planned for 2022, further details will be announced via our newsletter, social media, and through FOMA.

We have held two public talks, one from Rob Flood ('Outing Medway's Past: the LGBTQIA+ History of the Medway Towns') and one to sit alongside the current exhibition from Professor Keith Tomlins ('Medway Universities Campus: From Royal Navy to World Class Research and Education'). Thank you to both speakers!

We have also started a new series of drop-in events on the first Saturday morning of each month, focusing on different themes. We have held events on Chatham Intra, starting your house history, natural history, and the next event (7 May) will showcase the resources held on 'Mechanical Medway', from local industry to the everyday machines we used in our homes, and from our historic images of windmills, pumping stations, and steam engines, to Louis Brennan's torpedo.

#### **New Collections and Accessions**

Collecting was again reduced in 2021, due to the pandemic, but we still received a steady stream of parish deposits. Other recent accessions in the archives include:

- Minute book from the Men's Adult School, Vicarage Road. Covers part of WW1 period. Includes minutes of meetings and details of classes, plus newspaper cuttings relating to the school (ref DE1301)
- Documents relating to Court Lodge Farm, Cuxton, and Ifield Court Farm, Gravesend. The papers generally cover dates between approx. 1905 and 1930, with some earlier documents. For much of the time the farms were run by a partnership Moore and Miskin (M&M) (ref DE1302)
- Deeds, wills and other legal documentation from CES Fisher, Solicitors, Nelson Rd, Gillingham, which relates to properties and people in Medway. 1816-1996 (ref DE1303)
- Records relating to Captain Thomas Baker (1793-1871), Captain of East India Company ships, later a farmer, JP for Kent/Rochester (ref DE11136 add)
- Medway City of Culture 2025 bid Digital files relating to Medway's bid to be City of Culture 2025 (ref DE1310)
- Karise West material (provenance unknown) various drafts of her publication 'Rochester Speaks'. Karise West was a local portrait photographer in the 1920s and 1930s, running a photographic studio on Rochester High Street (Medway Studios Ltd). She later became an estate agent, owning 11 properties in Strood and Rochester, as well as writing a couple of historical pieces about Rochester (ref DE1311).
- Augustus Clements Collection Photo albums (compiled by Augustus Clements) of performances by the Wallace Collection (a local theatre group based at St Stephen's Church Hall in Rochester), 1976-1990, and photo albums of performances by the Chatham Amateur Operatic Society (1974-1981) (ref DE1315)
- Nicole Mollett Artwork original drawings and concept sketch work for a drawing work in response to the Rosemary Tonks (1928-2014) poem 'The Drinkers of Coffee', which was created for the Gillingham POW! Festival in September and October 2021 (ref DE1316).
- Records of Medway Technical High School for Girls/Fort Pitt Grammar School (ref C/ES/85/15)

#### Volunteers

We are delighted to be able to welcome volunteers, regular and new, to volunteer again at Medway Archives Centre. Lockdown transformed how we think about volunteering, and we recognise that some of our volunteers may welcome an opportunity to volunteer remotely from home. Whilst some are keen to return to MAC, and are continuing projects or starting new ones onsite, we are also creating projects that people can do from home. Projects completed in 2021 include:

- Labelling the vertical files within the Medway Villages, Chatham Dockyard and Naval collection to ensure each individual item is marked with a reference for use by staff and customers, so when removed from VFs they can be correctly filed after use
- House histories of Medway Villas (4-20 Medway Road, Gillingham)
- Creating a list of Medway items in 'Excerpts: Kent, The Gentleman's Magazine' to assist with enquiries, exhibitions and research and cataloguing of the book.
- Creating biography cards for Medway men who fought at the Battle of Trafalgar
- Listing Medway people included in the book 'Contemporary biographies' on index cards to assist customers with future research and to help staff with research, exhibitions and enquiries.

#### **Re-election of Committee Members**

There were three new nominations, as follows:

- Peter Joyce, seconded by Betty Cole;
- Vanessa Sanderson, seconded by Norma Crowe;
- Natasha Boardman-Steer, seconded by Amanda Thomas.

#### All unanimously elected.

With regard to the current committee, Membership Secretary Betty Cole is standing down. Odette Buchanan, Chris De Coulon Berthoud, Len Feist, Rob Flood, Elaine Gardner, Jean Skilling, Amanda Thomas, and Alexander Thomas were all unanimously re-elected for another year.

#### **Any Other Business**

#### Item 1

• Covid lockdown with no meetings or fund raising events, coupled with the postage costs for sending out *The Clock Tower*, as well as the increasing cost of its production have been a considerable drain on FOMA funds. Our main purpose is to provide support to the Medway Archives Centre (MAC), paying for items that their budget simply doesn't run to.

Currently our membership fee no longer covers the cost of *The Clock Tower*, never mind supporting MAC.

Our fees have remained the same at £10 since FOMA was established in April 2006, 16 years ago and the committee feels it has no choice but to increase them in 2023.

Amanda Thomas will be communication with members to canvas opinions on increases and ways to reduce production costs of *The Clock Tower* and to consider other benefits we could include with membership. We hope members will respond with constructive ideas.

Amanda Thomas additionally raised the possibility of a digital only subscription.

#### Item 2

- Norma submitted an article about friends organisations for the Local Studies CILIP site with contributions from Elaine Gardner and Amanda Thomas. This can be found at <a href="https://lslibrarians.wordpress.com/toolkit/">https://lslibrarians.wordpress.com/toolkit/</a>
- Norma also thanked FOMA for her nomination and award.

#### Item 3 - Events

- Quiz Night 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022 £5 a head
- Alison Cable from Rochester Bridge Trust talk on Tuesday 7th June 2pm for 2.30 start. This to take place at MAC; clarification needed on website and in the May *Clock Tower*.
- Geoff Ettridge September 9th "Richard Watts A man of his times; a man for his times"
- Film Wings over Rochester, November 11th tbc or film about Richard Montgomery
- 30<sup>th</sup> April Royal Engineers Kent Gateway to the World History Festival

#### Item 4

20:21 Meeting Closed

• Betty Cole has been Membership Secretary since November 2008 and has done a very efficient job. She now feels it is time to retire from her membership role. There was a vote of thanks and presentation.

CWdCB

I certify that this is a true record of the FOMA Committee meeting:

Name: Position:

Date: ......

Signature: .....

# INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2022

		2022		2021
Income				
Subscriptions	£	1,066.00	£	1,114.00
Bank Interest	£	10.18	£	0.58
Donations	£	195.00	£	130.00
Gift Aid Tax Reclaim	£	167.79	£	184.00
Talks and Other Events	£	783.80	£	167.00
Other Income	$\underline{\mathfrak{t}}$	30.09	£	250.00
<b>Total Income</b>	£	2,252.86	£	1,845.58
Expenditure				
Itama numbagad for MAC	£	386.99	£	320.00
Items purchased for MAC Portrait of Bob Ratcliffe	£	0.00	£	600.00
Fund Raising Costs	£	323.27	£	270.60
Clock Tower –	L	323.21	æ	270.00
Printing and Postage	£	1,158.04	£	1,058.09
AGM Costs	£	35.00	£	0.00
Website	£	250.67	£	250.67
Postage, Stationery etc.	£	5.72	£	5.20
Insurance	£	75.00	£	75.00
Gifts	£	55.00	£	70.00
Other Costs	$\underline{\mathfrak{t}}$	12.63	£	18.08
Total Expenditure	£	2,302.32	£	2,667.64
Excess of expenditure over in	ncome	e £ (49.46)	£	(822.06)
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# BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2022

		2022		2021
<b>Current Assets</b>				
Debtors – Gift Aid	£	165.25	£	491.50
Advance payments	£	75.00	£	75.00
Business Reserve Account	£	4,689.62	£	4,679.44
Current Account	£	2,231.05	£	1,705.21
Cash and stamps	£	53.12	£	77.56
-	£	7,214.04	£	7,028.71
Less				
Sundry creditors	£	0.00	£	19.21
Advance Receipts	£	676.00	£	422.00
Current liabilities	£	676.00	£	441.21
Net Current Assets	£	6,538.04	£	6,587.50
Accumulated Fund b/fwd	£	6,587.50	£	7,409.56
Deficit	$\mathfrak{L}$	(49.46)	£	(822.06)
<b>Net Current Liabilities</b>	£	6,538.04	£	6,587.50

The income and expenditure account and balance sheet were approved by the Trustees on 12 January 2023 and signed on their behalf by

Elaine Gardner	Jean Skilling
Chairman	Treasurer

The Friends of Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre

#### **Notes to the Accounts**

These accounts have been prepared on the basis of historic cost in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP 2005) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' and applicable accounting standards.

#### **Life Subscriptions**

Life subscriptions are included as income in the Statement of Financial activities at £10 per member per year. At the end of each financial year the balance carried forward to future years is included with deferred income.

# **Membership Renewal 2023**

Please renew my (our) membership of the Friends of the Medway Archives, I (we) enclose cash / cheque for £.....

Individual	£10	Family	£12
Society membership	£15	Individual life membership	£100

Cheques should be made payable to Friends of the Medway Archives.

Payment may also be made using the BAC system:

Please enter the information below in block capitals

SORT CODE 60-21-02, ACCOUNT No. 48040304 and please use YOUR NAME (in capitals) for REFERENCE; please confirm you have done this with the Membership Secretary (or by PayPal via our website: http://www.foma-lsc.org/membership.html If

If you wish to pay by standing order please complete the form overleaf and forward to your bank.

Title and Name(s):
Position (organisation):
Address:
Post Code:
Tel. NoEmail:
GIFT AID DECLARATION I wish the Friends of the Medway Archives treat all donations and subscriptions I have made for the six years prior to this year and will make from the date of this Declaration, as Gift Aid, until I notify F.O.M.A. otherwise. I pay income or capital gains tax at least equal to the amount of tax reclaimed.

The completed form and payment should be sent to the FOMA Membership Secretary, Mrs. J Skilling, 15 Port Close, Lordswood, Chatham, Kent, ME5 8DU. Email: membership@foma-lsc.org

Signed: Date:

# **STANDING ORDER**

# The Friends of Medway Archives Excepted Charity registration number XR92894

To the Manager								
(Please enter name of bank)								
Branch Address								
Postcode					_			
Sort Code			-			-		
Account Number		ı				ı		,
Account Name								
Please pay on receipt writing the sum of £	and t	hen oi	n <b>2</b> <sup>nd</sup>	Janu	ary aı	ınuall	<b>y</b> unti	il this order is cancelled in
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In case of query please Mrs. J Skilling, 15 Port								