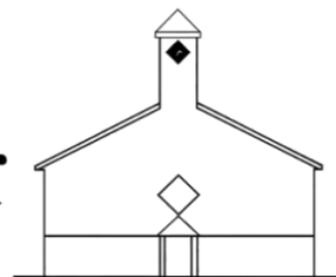


# The Clock Tower



Issue Number 72: November 2023  
£2.00; free to members

The Friends of Medway Archives  
Excepted Charity registration number XR92894

## Medway's share of £200 million! The National Lottery Heritage Fund launches Heritage Places



What a fabulous early Christmas present! On 8 October, the National Lottery Heritage Fund launched Heritage Places, a ten-year project to help 'boost local economies and pride in place'; Medway is on the list of the initial nine places to receive a share. More on page 10.

### ALSO INSIDE

Meet Sally Ironmonger, the new FOMA Treasurer! See page 6.

## ***The Great North Sea Flood of 1953***



On a warm evening at the beginning of September, author and barrister Cherry Burroughs gave a very moving talk to FOMA members and guests about the 1953 floods (as illustrated above). This year marks the seventieth anniversary of one of the worst peacetime disasters in Britain, and Cherry had travelled from her home in Shoeburyness, Essex, with her husband John, to talk about the dreadful events of the night of 31 January 1953. Read more on page 17.

*Cindy O'Halloran and Alex Thomas serve refreshments at the talk.*



*Photographs by Amanda Thomas.*

*The photograph on the front cover, Rochester from Frindsbury Churchyard, is by Ian Capper*  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search=rochester&title=Special:MediaSearch&go=Go&type=image>

## *Chairman's Letter*

Elaine Gardner



Welcome to the last *Clock Tower* of 2023; the years seem to go by very fast these days - or is that just me getting older?!

Looking back at my last newsletter and our search for a new Treasurer I am delighted to say that one of the new members who joined us this year saw our request for a volunteer and volunteered! Sally Ironmonger (see page 6) came along to our September committee meeting to find out more and agreed to become our new Treasurer, much to the delight of Jean Skilling who stepped in temporarily when Josie had to resign a couple of years ago.

So Thank You Sally! Hopefully by the time you receive this magazine the bank will have finally got its act together and changed all the contact details. A big Thank You from me also to Jean for staying on until her replacement was found and for sorting all the transfer arrangements with the bank. Jean is staying on as FOMA Membership Secretary.

Good news too on the staffing front. Will Train, Medway Libraries Manager came along to our recent committee meeting to update us on new appointments to the MAC team.

Helen Worthy has been promoted to the post of Medway Archives Centre Manager and will deal with the day-to-day management of MAC, a role previously added to the Archivist's role. Emma Ovenden, Local Studies Librarian is now working full time at MAC and Eleanor Cooke has joined the staff from Twydall Library as Archives Assistant. Will Train was also delighted to report that the new Archivist, has been appointed: Sarah Trim-West will take up the role at the beginning of January. This means that in the new year, the Archives Centre will be fully staffed, which is great news for the existing team who have worked hard - and done a fantastic job - to maintain the service.

I also mentioned in my last newsletter that we were returning to St Nicholas Church hall in Strood for our talks. Sadly, the discovery of asbestos under the church floor meant a last-minute change of plan. Once again we met at St Luke's hall in Rochester and this time for a really interesting talk by Cherry Burroughs on the disastrous floods of January/February 1953 and the effect they had on life in Mersea in the Thames Estuary. You can read more on page 17. I'm keeping my fingers crossed for our meeting in November, which will have taken place by the time this reaches you.\* I hope you were able to get along to Colin Harvey's film entitled '*The Yard*' *HM Dockyard Sheerness 1665 to 1960*. Colin's films are always interesting, and we chose this one to commemorate the 50 years since the closure of Sheerness Dockyard in 1960. In 2024 we will be commemorating 40 years since the closure of Chatham Dockyard in 1984. 40 years? I can't believe it was that long ago, but as I said at the start of this letter ...

I recently went along to the Medway History Showcase hosted by the Royal Engineers Museum, an all-day event focusing this year on Medway industry. I went along to increase FOMA awareness with the public generally, and with the aim of recruiting new members. MAC staff Helen Worthy and Emma Ovenden were also there along with stands representing other Medway and Kent historical groups. A number of visitors stopped to chat and seemed very interested so hopefully we will gain some new members as a result.



*The FOMA stand at the Medway History Showcase. Photographs by Elaine Gardner.*



*Helen Worthy (left) and Emma Ovenden at the Medway Archives Centre stand – right next to FOMA's.*

At the FOMA AGM in April this year, members agreed to a small increase in membership fees, the first since FOMA was set up in 2006. If you pay your membership by Standing Order, please remember to change the details with your bank. Details can be found below on page 5.

Finally, as this is the last magazine for the year, may I wish you the very best for the Festive Season, however you may celebrate it!

*\*Editor's Note* – Colin Harvey's film *'The Yard' HM Dockyard Sheerness 1665 to 1960* was able to be shown at St Nicholas Church Hall the evening of Friday 10 November. Colin also gave us a sneak preview of his latest film about Short Brothers, *Wings over Rochester*. We cannot wait for the film to be finished as it looks superb, and Colin has promised that FOMA will be the first to know once it is completed!

## *New Members*

A warm welcome to new FOMA members Derek Munton, Anna Midgely, George Atzev, and Wendy Daws.

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### **Subscription Renewal Reminder**

FOMA Membership subscriptions are due for renewal from 1 January 2024.

You can renew on the FOMA website <https://foma-lsc.org/membership.php>

As agreed at the 2023 AGM, FOMA subscriptions will increase from 1 January 2024, our first increase since the formation of the society in 2006.

The new rates are as follows:

single membership £12 - family membership £14 - society membership £18  
life membership £120 - corporate membership £60.

If you have a standing order at your bank or a PayPal recurring payment, please change the amount as soon as possible so that the correct amount is paid.

If you would like to set up a standing order so that your subs are paid automatically then our bank details are as follows.

NatWest Bank, Strood. Sort code 60-21-02. Account number 48040304

Thank you!

Jean Skilling, Membership Secretary ([membership@foma-lsc.org](mailto:membership@foma-lsc.org))

*Sally Ironmonger*  
*Our new FOMA Treasurer!*



I am delighted to be joining FOMA as Treasurer and hopefully I will be able to make a positive contribution to the committee. I have used the Medway Archives intermittently for the past 30 years or more, mainly online, and mainly for the purposes of family history or local history research. I have long appreciated what a marvellous resource we have locally.

I have a very strong connection with Medway, with my parents and grandparents all living and working here, and I have spent most of my life as a resident of Chatham and Rochester. I spent many years working for Medway Council in housing, health and wellbeing roles, and I can hardly believe that I have been retired now for eight years. Giving up the 9-5 meant that I had more opportunity to focus on my other occupation, as a singer-songwriter, performing as a duo with my husband, at folk clubs and festivals around the country. Local history is a rich source of material for our song writing – in fact the very first song we wrote together is called *No Ships*, which we were commissioned to write to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the closure of Chatham Dockyard. Since then, we constantly return to our own histories as inspiration for our musical compositions.

## Secretary's Report

Chris de Coulon Berthoud



### More EBay Discoveries

In August, and just after the last *Clock Tower* went to press, I spotted yet another gem on EBay. After consulting Rob Flood, we decided to go ahead and bid on a very special album of photographs of local events. The lot was entitled, *Large Photograph Album From 1983 Ft Photo'S From Chatham Carnival, Rochester Air Display, Bus Rally, Cinema'S & Whitbread Hop Farm Country Fayre. Includes Newspaper Cuttings Lots Of Buses, Planes, Cars, Animals, Floats, Boats, Displays & Bands Etc.* It is now safely at the Medway Archives Centre and joined the box of 18th and 19th Century Documents (*Mayor's Office Rochester Council Kent*) we purchased earlier in the summer, and as documented in the August issue of *The Clock Tower*.



Following the September FOMA committee meeting, members were able to have a look at the purchases we had made before they are quarantined and catalogued.

*From left to right: Amanda Thomas, Elaine Gardner and Rob Flood examine the documents purchased on EBay.*

### Annual MAC Closure

**Please note the Medway Archives Centre will be closed for our annual collections care fortnight from Tuesday 2 January to 13 January 2024. We will reopen at 9am on Monday 15 January 2023.**



## Medway Archives Centre Report

Helen Worthy, Medway Archives Centre Manager



Hello everyone! We have had a busy time at Medway Archives Centre since our last update. The following is just a brief overview, so please do get in touch if you'd like to know more about the collections at Medway Archives Centre, our events and exhibitions, or about the services we offer.

### Staffing

We are delighted to announce that a new Archivist has been appointed; Sarah Trim-West will take up the role at the beginning of January. We are also pleased to welcome Eleanor Cooke as our new Archives Assistant, and with these appointments it now means that from January the Archives Centre will be fully staffed. As you will all be aware, we have had many staff changes over the past couple of years and in the next issue of *The Clock Tower* we will introduce you to all everyone at MAC, and let you know a little more about our roles and responsibilities.

Now that we have a full complement of Archives Assistants, we will be re-opening the archive viewing room. Please do get in touch using our email address [archives@medway.gov.uk](mailto:archives@medway.gov.uk) or ring 01634 332714 if you'd like to visit.

### Current and Forthcoming Events, Exhibitions and Outreach

We have a busy programme planned for 2024, but here are a few things happening between now and the end of January.

Our current display, *Once Upon a Time in Medway*, is a photographic exhibition by Dan Gardner. He has lived in Medway all his life, and his new exhibition seeks to capture the untold stories, forgotten spaces, and old landscapes that make Medway what it is today. An endearing photographic record reflecting the diverse character, community and comforting familiarity found on the streets around us. Copies of Dan's latest photo zine, featuring images from the exhibition, are also available to buy. The exhibition runs until 15 December 2023.



We have contributed resources to the current exhibition at the Rochester Art Gallery. *Upon the High Street* is an ongoing photography project shot in collaboration by award-winning Medway-raised photographers Joshua Atkins and Daniel Loveday. The project captures the people and landscape of Chatham High Street and the surrounding area, celebrating the town's history and the diversity of its residents. The exhibition runs until Saturday 13 January 2024.

We look forward to welcoming you all to our Christmas Drop-in on Wednesday 6 December 10am-12 noon. (*Please note we will not have a Saturday drop-in in December!*) Join us for a friendly social

with a small sale of old and new books, enjoy seasonal refreshments and see if you recognise the locations in our unidentified photos.

**Please note the Medway Archives Centre will be closed for our annual collections care fortnight from Tuesday 2 January to 13 January 2024. We will reopen at 9am on Monday 15 January 2023.**

This temporary closure enables us to work on tasks that cannot take place whilst we are open to the public, and we look forward to telling you what we've been up to in the next *Clock Tower!*

## Past Events, Exhibitions and Outreach

Our Heritage Open Days drop-in family history sessions were a great success, and these would not have been possible without our wonderful volunteer Brenda Paternoster who ran many of the sessions for MAC. On page 22 you can also read some of the research Brenda has been undertaking.

Images and original resources from our Short Collection were on display at Rochester Art Gallery, part of the exhibition *Seaplane Works*. MAC staff also ran a reminiscence session in the gallery. This exhibition has now closed, and the memories written on cards will be deposited at MAC.

We continued our series of Saturday drop-in sessions, including *Focus on ... Medway's Parks and Gardens*, *Focus on ... the Pentagon Centre and local area* and *Focus on ... Medway Forts*. These popular events give people a chance to see a selection of our resources and book a return visit to learn more.

We have also run a series of reminiscence sessions on Tuesday afternoons. These sessions are a great opportunity for older people to come together and share an enjoyable afternoon sharing their memories. Each session is followed by refreshments and a chance to chat and make new friends.

We offered a family session during local schools' autumn break. *Marvellous Maps* was aimed at 7- to 10-year-olds, and each child had fun creating their own map to take home. We had extremely positive feedback about this event, which was fully booked, and hope to run this session again in the future.

We also had an appearance at the *Medway History Showcase 2023* which was held at the Royal Engineers Museum in October (see Elaine Gardner's report on page 3). Staff appeared on the panel *What Can Your Archives Do for You?* and this was a great opportunity to promote our services and collections and a chance to meet our colleagues in similar organisations and societies.

## Volunteers

Our wonderful team of volunteers continues to support us, and we could not run many of our events without their assistance. A big thank you to all our who have made refreshments, helped at our reminiscence sessions and generally greeted our customers and made people feel welcome. We also have a team of volunteers researching local people and places. Current projects include listing archive and local studies collections, creating chronologies of Strood from 1900, and researching local alleyways in Chatham. We have paused taking on any additional volunteers until we have an archivist in place.

## Recent Donations

Recent material donated to Medway Archives Centre includes:

- Acc1587 – records collected by the Rev H St G Edwards whilst curate-in-charge at Bredhurst parish church, c.1874-1878
- Timeline of the Hoo Peninsula by Brenda Paternoster

Do get in touch if you'd like to view any of these items. Please note that occasionally new acquisitions are temporarily unavailable whilst documents are listed, cleaned and stored.

## *Medway Heritage News*

Amanda Thomas



*A round-up of all the latest Medway heritage news*

### The Dickens Chalet Restoration Project - An Update

FOMA Chairman, Elaine Gardner and I attended the latest Dickens Chalet stakeholders meeting at the end of September at Rochester's Guildhall Museum. It was wonderful to see so many others at the meeting with an interest in Medway's heritage, including representatives – amongst others - from the Friends of Eastgate House, City of Rochester Society and the Dickens Fellowship. The meeting was chaired by Rachel Kerr, (Project Coordinator, Medway Council Tourism and Heritage Service), supported by Ed Woollard (Heritage Services Manager) and Lisa Caleno (Visitor Development Officer for Eastgate House).

*Clock Tower* readers will recall Rachel's comprehensive update on the chalet restoration project in February of this year (see *The Clock Tower*, Issue 69, February 2023). However, by the September stakeholders' meeting it was clear that the project had moved on a pace and the future of the chalet was looking considerably more optimistic. The project has three aspects to consider which comprise funding, legal permissions (such as listed building consent), and people. This last element includes both those who will undertake the restoration, and, when the chalet is open to visitors, tourist guides: employees and/or volunteers.

With these key things in mind, we were thrilled when Ed Woollard explained that the funding of the project might be facilitated by a new and exciting initiative. Indeed, on 8 October, the formal announcement was made by the National Heritage Lottery Fund (NLHF) regarding the launch of a new project called Heritage Places, as follows:

'We're forging long-term partnerships with towns and cities across the UK as part of a 10-year journey to help places thrive by unlocking the potential of their heritage. ... We're committing £200m to help areas across the UK thrive. By 2033, 20 long-term projects will be transforming towns, cities and landscapes using a dedicated funding pot of £200m. The first nine places are: Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon, County Durham, Glasgow, Leicester, Medway, Neath Port Talbot, North-East Lincolnshire, Stoke-on-Trent, and Torbay. ... The launch of Heritage Places is another step in the delivery of our Heritage 2033 strategy, launched in March 2023. This strategic initiative is part of our long-term vision for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future.'

The announcement is an exciting development not just for the chalet restoration, of course, but also for other heritage projects which have been looking for funding in the Medway area.

It was hoped that work on the chalet could start in April next year (2024), but there is still some uncertainty with the timings of bids and whether (as a consequence) funding will be in place in time. However, plans are still in place for a temporary exhibition at Eastgate House which will tell the story of the chalet thus far; Lisa Caleno will be directly responsible for this in her role as Visitor Development Officer. The exhibition will be the first step in educating visitors not just about the restoration, but also the great historical importance of the chalet itself, and the role it played in Dickens' creative process. Lisa is also hoping that the building may also be used as a part of the *Great Expectations* immersive production which will be taking place at Eastgate House in May.



*Illustration from the National Lottery Heritage Fund website.*

You can read the full announcement on the National Lottery Heritage Fund website at: <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/news/ps200million-funding-heritage-places-will-boost-local-economies-and-pride-place#:~:text=Heritage%20Places%20is%20just%20one,National%20Lottery%20Grants%20for%20Heritage.>

The restoration of the chalet is a massive and expensive undertaking, and the involvement of Historic England is reassuring. Rachel discussed the long list of requirements necessary to satisfy their exacting standards, including the reinstatement of the missing wooden balusters on the chalet balcony (as pictured below). There was also much discussion regarding the use of stainless steel in the support of the building and whether it might (in certain cases) be preferable to use wood. There is an important balance to be made between saving the structure of the old building and maintaining both historical accuracy and integrity.



*The chalet balusters.*

Following the meeting, Ed Woollard commented:

‘At the time of the meeting I had little information on the new relationship with NLHF, and the processes are still a bit unclear, but I do know that we will not be bidding for the chalet in November as the first bid is about logistics staffing and research and also due to the Council’s current budget situation. As has been reported, Medway is amongst a number of councils facing significant funding gaps next year and is having to take some hard financial decisions. In this context, NLHF’s announcement of its new investment relationship with Medway is still excellent news for heritage in general, but perhaps less immediately pertinent to the chalet

project. The project would rely on council match funding from a capital pot and the council's current acute need to balance its budget means it cannot responsibly commit to any capital spending in a timescale that allows the chalet project to happen in 2024. Once it has more certainty, the council will continue to work on the options for the Chalet.'

Much work is still to be done, but the project to restore Dickens' chalet is already at a most exciting stage and the future for this and Medway's heritage is looking bright!'

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## The City of Rochester Society Celebrates the Chatham House Restoration

Over the summer, the City of Rochester Society (CoRs) presented its coveted Conservation Awards for 2022. Since 1977 the award has recognised 'people or organisations that have made the biggest contribution to conservation in Rochester in that year.'

This year, CoRs presented two awards. The first was to the Rochester Bridge Trust on 10 July 'for their excellent and sensitive restoration of the Bridge Chapel and Chamber on Rochester Esplanade', and the second, on 22 August, was to the restoration team of Chatham House. Readers will recall FOMA member George Atzev's fabulous article on the restoration of Chatham House in Issue 69 of *The Clock Tower* (February 23), in which he (pictured) described in detail the history of the house and its recent restoration:

'Chatham House was built in around 1730-1740 as a substantial and prestigious mansion house for the owner of the brewery behind it in Hulkes Lane. The brewery was leased by brewer Isaac Wildash and his son John, who later went into business with Thomas Hulkes, who took it over in 1795. Shortly after, Chatham House became home to James Hulkes, the son of Thomas Hulkes, who himself was a brewer. In 1877, the brewery and its adjoining mansion house were sold to Charles Arkcoll and Co., who renamed it the Lion Brewery. Brewing later ceased on the site in 1912.

The sale of the site to Featherstones' in the early 1900s was a pivotal moment for Chatham House. Featherstones' was a family-run department store chain based in Medway, with branches in Chatham, Rochester, Strood and further afield. Chatham House became the firm's home furnishing department, and in 1936 the railings, portico and forecourt of the mansion were removed to make way for the installation of a new modern shopfront.'



*George Atzev*



*Chatham House before work began (L) and after the exterior restoration was completed in September 2022 (R). Photographs by George Atzev.*

The CoRs award was presented to Sheila Featherstone and the team behind the restoration of the façade of Chatham House. FOMA Committee Member and Chairman of the City of Rochester Society, Rob Flood said:

“The decision to make two awards this year was an easy one given the high standard of conservation and restoration work we can see in both these projects. Chatham House is a much-loved building in Chatham Intra and we are delighted that Historic England, Medway Council and the Featherstone family have been able to work together to preserve this important site. We hope that the attention received by Chatham House will be a catalyst to other building owners in the area to make similar investments in their properties.”

In response, Sheila commented:

“I’m delighted to receive this award on behalf of Featherstones’ Limited. Restoring Chatham House has been a long-desired project and I’d like to thank Historic England and the HSHAZ funding that enabled us to make it a reality. I’d also like to thank Medway Council, KLM Construction and Anthony Swaine Architecture, as well as Peter Moorcraft, Chris Griffin (Sharky) and our team of local heritage craftsmen. It’s wonderful to see Chatham House standing proud once again in Intra, 118 years after my great grandfather JT Featherstone first came to this High Street.”

*Rob Flood, Chairman of the City of Rochester Society presenting the 2022 Conservation Award on the steps of Chatham House to Sheila Featherstone and Peter Moorcraft.*



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## Eastgate House Wall Paintings

In October, we were most interested to receive an email from Friends of Eastgate House Secretary, and FOMA member, Terri Zbyszewska, about the wall paintings on the second floor of the house, as follows.

### ‘Wall Paintings Display Update

New specialist Perspex screens with interpretation have been installed in the wall paintings room on the second floor [of Eastgate House in Rochester]. Visitors will be able to see the detail of the incredible 16th century mural, which had not seen the light of day for more than 400 years, for the first time since they were discovered during the house renovations in 2017. The installation of the new screens has been made possible with a very generous donation from the Friends of Eastgate House.’



*Photograph by Lisa Caleno; reproduced with the kind permission of Medway Council.*

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## Short Brothers – Aviation Pioneers

The FOMA committee keeps a close eye on social media and on 29 October, Rob Flood re-posted to the Friends of Medway Archives Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/fomalsc](http://www.facebook.com/fomalsc)) an announcement from the group, Short Brothers – Aviation Pioneers ([www.facebook.com/ShortBrothersKent2016](http://www.facebook.com/ShortBrothersKent2016)), as follows.

‘A message from Liz Walker (Great Great Niece of Oswald Short)

“Great news”

The grave of Horace Short, his mother Emma and sister Ethel Alice and the adjacent grave of Eustace and his daughter Grace Olga have finally been restored. They can be visited in Hampstead Cemetery.

It took much longer than expected but now the Short Brothers, Pioneering Aeronautical and Balloon Engineers and Manufacturers have finally received the respect and recognition of the important contribution made by them to aviation.

Thank you to all the organisations and individuals who donated to the Short Brothers Graves Restoration Appeal.’



*Liz Walker at Hampstead Cemetery, London; photograph by Barrie Walker.*

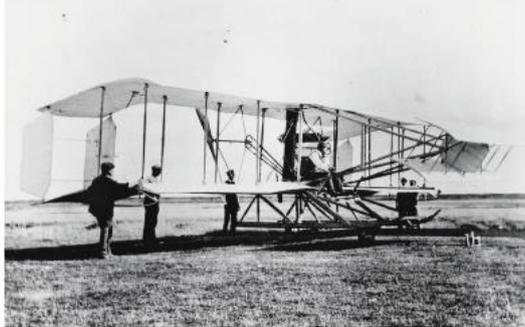
*Clock Tower* Editor, Amanda Thomas got in touch and was subsequently contacted by Liz Walker and her brother, Barrie Walker, of the Short Brothers Commemoration Society. Liz and Barrie were happy to supply more photographs and information and below are reproductions of the information signs which can be viewed at the newly restored graves.

## Here lie the remains of **HORACE Leonard SHORT** aircraft pioneer born 2 July 1872 Chilton Colliery, Co. Durham : died 6 April 1917 Sheppey, Kent

together with his mother  
EMMA (née Robinson)  
born in 1848 at  
Ashover in Derbyshire.  
She died on 2nd April 1936  
in Battersea, London.

and his sister  
ETHEL ALICE  
born in 1881  
at Stanton by Dale  
Ilkeston, Derbyshire  
and died 3rd July 1924.

HORACE Leonard  
was brother to...  
Ernest William 1874 - 1932  
Albert EUSTACE 1875 - 1932  
Ethel Alice 1881 - 1924  
Hugh OSWALD 1883 - 1969



a SHORT No.1, designed by Horace  
and built by the brothers at the  
Short brother's factory at Battersea, London  
to HORACE'S design.  
They also built balloons here in the railway  
arches adjacent to Battersea coal-gas works

As a teenager, Horace left home to visit his uncle William in Lampton, New South Wales Australia. He later worked in China, the United States of America and Mexico where he managed the Panuco silver mine. He returned to the U.K. after the death of his father, to work for Sir Charles Parsons before joining his brothers in their aircraft venture in 1908.

Horace became the genius pioneering designer of the three brothers His life was not a long one but he was later recognised by others in the industry as innovative and influential in early aircraft design and development.

In 2017 the refurbishment of this grave was possible due to the generosity of BAE Systems, the Short family, members of the Society, members of the Transport Trust and Medway Council.

This plaque was kindly sponsored by Bombardier (Shorts) Ltd of Belfast

### SHORT BROTHERS COMMEMORATION SOCIETY



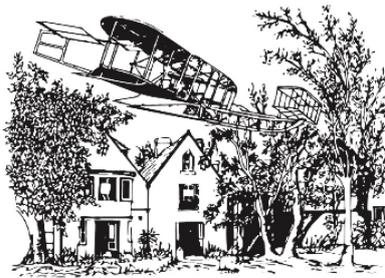
[www.shortbrothersaviationpioneers.co.uk](http://www.shortbrothersaviationpioneers.co.uk)



[shortbrothersaviationpioneers-kent](https://www.facebook.com/shortbrothersaviationpioneers-kent)

## Here lie the remains of **Albert EUSTACE SHORT** aircraft pioneer born 26 June 1875 Chilton Colliery, Durham : died 8 April 1932 Rochester, Kent and his daughter Grace Olga ('Babbie') who died 10 May 1923 aged 8 1/2

After a start building balloons in railway arches, Battersea, London the SHORT brothers built the U.K.'s first aircraft factory at Leysdown, Sheppey, Kent in 1909. In 1910, they moved to Eastchurch, Sheppey and it was here that their aircraft were used by Frank McClean to train the first Naval Air Service volunteers. The factory moved to Rochester in 1917 to build seaplanes on the banks of the River Medway. 800 workers built Airships R31 and R32 at Cardington (Beds) (1915-1917) in the first of the two enormous hangars still in use in 2017.



Picture by courtesy of Terry and Sharon Munns

A SHORT No.2 passes over Muswell Manor,  
Clubhouse of the Aero Club, Leysdown, Kent

In 1936, there was a partial move to Belfast where a new company Short and Harland Ltd was set up and when the Rochester factory was bombed during the Battle of Britain in 1942 the future demise of Rochester was sealed and the move to Belfast inevitable.

The SHORT brother's legacy and their name, alone in British aircraft manufacturing, lives on in Belfast as Bombardier (Shorts) Ltd.

They continue to make aircraft components for themselves and other aerospace companies, such as fuselage sections, engine nacelles and wings.

This grave was refurbished in 2017 thanks to the generosity of BAE Systems, the Short family, Medway Council, members of the Transport Trust and members of the Society.  
This plaque was kindly sponsored by Bombardier (Shorts) Ltd. of Belfast

Albert EUSTACE was brother to...  
HORACE Leonard SHORT 1872 - 1917  
Ernest William 1874 - 1932  
Ethel Alice 1881 - 1924  
Hugh OSWALD SHORT 1883 - 1969

### SHORT BROTHERS COMMEMORATION SOCIETY



[www.shortbrothersaviationpioneers.co.uk](http://www.shortbrothersaviationpioneers.co.uk)



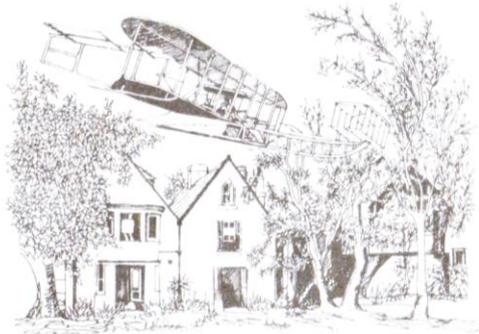
[shortbrothersaviationpioneers-kent](https://www.facebook.com/shortbrothersaviationpioneers-kent)

**Here lie the remains of Hugh OSWALD SHORT aircraft pioneer**  
 born 16 January 1883 at Stanton by Dale, Derbyshire : died 4 Dec 1969 at Lynchmere, Sussex  
 and of his wife Violet Louise born 6 January 1896 : died 18 May 1966

After a start building balloons in London the SHORT brothers built the U.K.'s first aircraft factory at Leysdown, Sheppey, Kent in 1909. In 1910 they moved to Eastchurch, Sheppey and it was here that Short aircraft, owned by Frank McClean, were used to train the very first Naval Air Service volunteers.

The factory moved to Rochester in 1917 to build seaplanes on the banks of the River Medway.

Two rigid airships R31 and R32 were built for the Royal Navy by Shorts in July 1918 at Cardington Bedfordshire in the enormous No.1 hangar still in use today.



a SHORT No.2 passes over Muswell Manor, Leysdown. Clubhouse of the Aero Club

In 1936 there started a move to Belfast where a new company Shorts and Harland Ltd was set up and after the Rochester factory was bombed during the Battle of Britain the move away from Rochester was completed in 1947. Their legacy and their name, the last of the British aircraft manufacturers – SHORTS- lives on today in Belfast where they are a major employer. Here, Bombardier (Shorts) Ltd continue to make aircraft components such as fuselage sections, engine nacelles and more recently (2013) wings.

This plaque was made and this grave was refurbished in 2017 thanks to the generosity of the daughters of John Lankester Parker, Chief Test pilot for Short Brothers and Company Director of SHORTS and HARLAND (BELFAST) LIMITED also a dear friend of Oswald. And by the generosity of Lynchmere Parish Council and several individuals

**OSWALD was brother to....**

- HORACE Leonard 1872 – 1917**
- Ernest William 1874 – 1932**
- Albert EUSTACE 1875 – 1932**
- Ethel Alice 1881 – 1924**

**SHORT BROTHERS COMMEMORATION SOCIETY**



[www.shortbrothersaviationpioneers.co.uk](http://www.shortbrothersaviationpioneers.co.uk)



[shortbrothersaviationpioneers-kent](https://www.facebook.com/shortbrothersaviationpioneers-kent)

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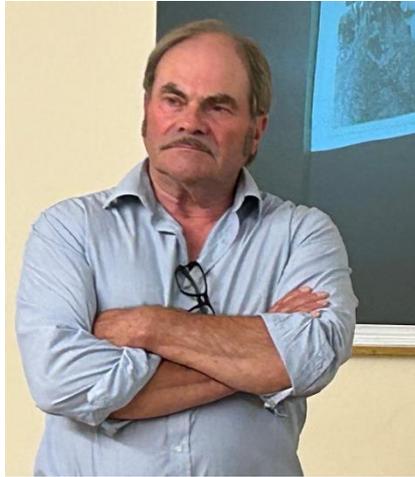
**The Great North Sea Flood of 1953 –  
 ‘The Farmer and the Fury’, a talk by Cherry Burroughs**



On the evening of 8 September, FOMA was delighted to welcome author and barrister Cherry Burroughs (pictured) to talk about the 1953 floods. This year marks the seventieth anniversary of one of the worst peacetime disasters in Britain, and Cherry had travelled from her home in Shoeburyness, Essex, with her husband John (pictured below), to talk about the dreadful events of the night of 31<sup>st</sup> January 1953. Cherry has recently published a novel entitled, *The Farmer and the Fury*, which follows the story of the fictional George and Annie Hadley, farmers on an island in the Thames Estuary. Caught up in the flood, the story is based on the first-

hand experiences of Cherry’s husband, John, who bravely recounted his own recollections. Despite the fact that he was only three years old, the floods – or Great Tide as it is known in Essex – had clearly caused a significant and lifelong trauma.

The talk was well attended, and the audience was enthralled by Cherry's extraordinary ability to describe the unfolding of events that bitter winter night, plus the terrible effect on the coastal communities of Essex and Kent so soon after the end of the Second World War. It was hard to imagine the sub-zero temperatures and gale force winds in the sweltering September heatwave, as we sat with all the doors and windows propped open at St Luke's Church Hall in Rochester's City Way.



*John.*

Cherry's talk began with a history of coastal defences, and she went on to explain how in 1953 an Atlantic storm swept across Scotland causing a massive surge in the North Sea and at the moment of an already high spring tide. Many of the slides Cherry showed were provided by Helen Worthy from the collections at the Medway Archives Centre, though others – of the Essex coastline – had been sourced by Cherry. They illustrated a shocking, quasi-apocalyptic scale of destruction, not just for the local infrastructure, but also for the quality of the soil which was inundated with salt water as miles of coastal defences were washed away. Cherry also described how cattle struggled with the rising waters, some drowning almost immediately, but others, in an attempt to escape, became caught up in the barbed wire and other detritus hidden by the swirling waters. It was a grim picture and concluded by a warning of the impact of climate change and a prediction that such extreme events could become more common place.

Cherry's enthralling talk also included readings from her novel, *The Farmer and the Fury*, copies of which were on sale at a discounted price, and which she signed for us all. During the tea and biscuits which followed, there was much discussion and a sharing of reminiscences. It was a most moving evening.

*The Farmer and the Fury* is available on Amazon and in all good in bookshops; ISBN: 9798366059251.

## *The Adam Family - A Tale of Boots and Lords.* (DE 288)

Cindy O'Halloran



*Cindy is a member of the FOMA Committee and was Senior Archive and Local Studies Assistant at MALSC, responsible for the daily management of the searchroom and non-professional staff. Now retired, she worked at the Medway Archives Centre for 22 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. For several years, she has also been a volunteer at Guide Dogs as a puppy raiser.*

A small bundle of unassuming documents revealed a more remarkable story when investigated during cataloguing. This bundle comprised a few bills, snippets of correspondence and Bank of England annuity certificates, these gave some unexpected insights into the lives of the Adam family of 199 (later 38) High Street, Rochester.

The home of the Adam family stood at the Bridge end of the High Street on what is now a vacant piece of ground between the old National Westminster Bank and the Pink Flamingo clothing store. For over a hundred years the shop had served as a bootmaker's premises. The first Mr Adam to take up residence is presumed to have been William Adam, a Surgeon from Scotland, who came to live in Rochester. Edwin Harris in his *Recollections of Rochester* notes that this information came from a descendant of the boot making family.

The premises passed to William's son, Arthur Adam, who had been apprenticed to a cordwainer or bootmaker. It is uncertain where Arthur Adam undertook his apprenticeship, but it may not have been locally. When he applied to become a Freeman of Rochester in 1791, he obtained it by paying £20 rather than by virtue of a time served apprenticeship. In 1789 Arthur Adam married a Susannah Ward in Westminster, London and over the following years they produced at least nine children, six sons and three daughters. One son certainly followed his father into the boot making trade, William (born 1801). William became a Freeman of the City in 1826 after completing his apprenticeship as a cordwainer under his father. Arthur Adam traded as a bootmaker from his bow windowed shop until his death in 1841 and the business continued with his son William until around 1870.

When Arthur Adam died in 1841, he left a will bequeathing the High Street premises to his son William. His will stipulated that his daughters, Ann, Susannah and Christian Berry were to remain unmarried spinsters and in remaining so were to reside in the family home, free of any rent with their brother William who was carrying on the business of cordwainer. He too was directed to remain a bachelor. Why these children were commanded to remain single is a mystery, it did not apply to any of the other siblings. Christian Berry was the only daughter to marry and leave the family home, marrying William Burt of Westminster in 1844. The premises in the High Street was to be equally divided between the surviving sons, Thomas Wilkie, Arthur and Bartholomew Rowley, not as joint tenants but tenants in common. All the household goods, plate, linen and china were to remain on the property for the daughters' use.

The census returns of 1841 to 1861 confirm that William and some of his sisters were resident at the house during this period. Bank of England Annuity Certificates among the collection show that William, Susannah and Arthur were all in receipt of payments from money invested, allowing them independent incomes. Some time before his death in 1880, William Adam rented out the shop to Joseph Gilbert, a bootmaker, who operated from the shop into the early 1900s.

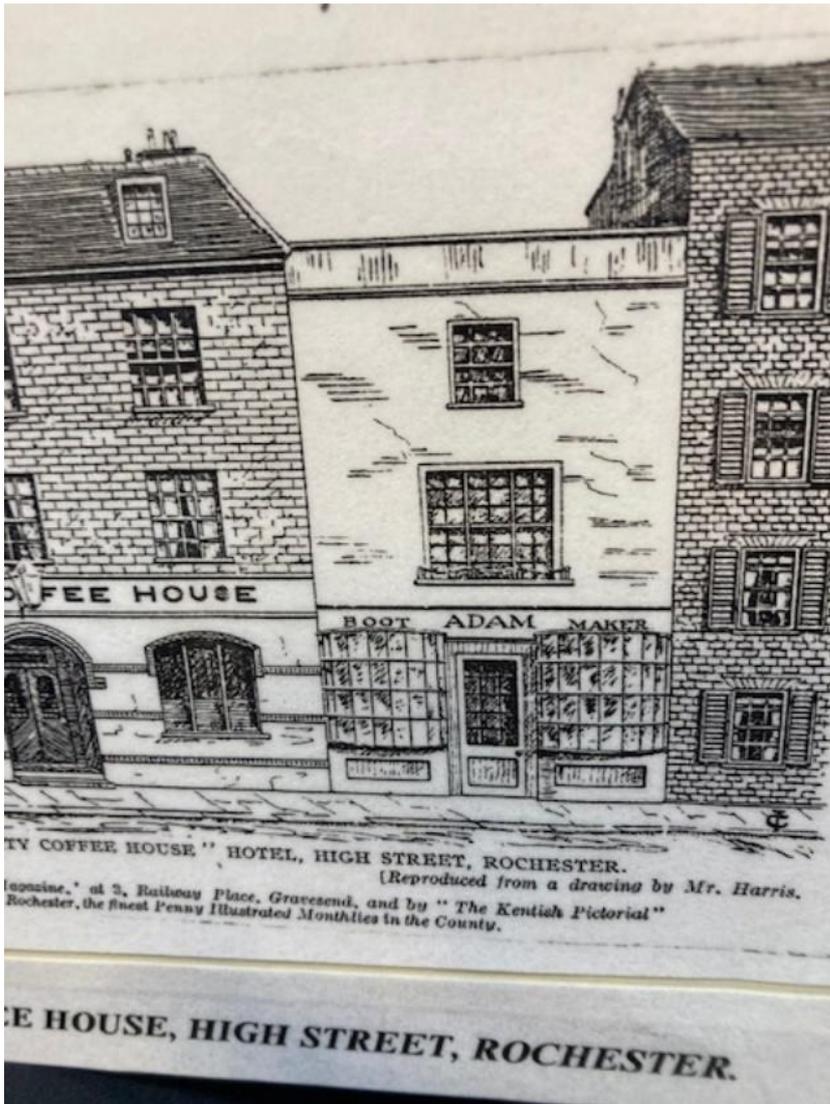
When William died, his brother Arthur, who lived in Foley Street, London became responsible for the premises. Arthur Adam junior (born 1807) carried on the trade of *oilman* from his London premises and the 1861 census shows one of his sisters, Anne, was at that time staying with him. In the census of 1871, he describes himself as *gentleman*. His companion at Foley Street in 1871 is recorded as Miss Eliza Ramage of Brompton, Kent and among the surviving bills in the collection is a payment to the doctor who attended at her death, it is uncertain if Miss Ramage was a relative. Another of the Adam brothers, Bartholomew Rowley, married into a Brompton family.

Some of the correspondence between Joseph Gilbert and Arthur Adam has survived in the collection. Initially it appears that Mr Gilbert worked from the shop while the housekeeper lived in the family rooms above. Joseph Gilbert wrote to Arthur Adam regularly begging to become the sole tenant of the property as he was taking care of paying the bills. The housekeeper he reported 'regularly sat with her gossips late into the evening burning the gas lamps', but *he* was a responsible tenant. In another letter to Arthur Adam in 1881 he writes that during a violent gale the chimney was destroyed, and water poured through the bow windows destroying his display stock in the window: if he were the tenant, he would be able to make repairs. The bill for the chimney repair survives in the collection. A little vignette of life in the High Street shop!

When Arthur Adam died in 1884, the surviving tenant-in-common, Bartholomew Samuel Rowley Adam took over management of the premises. Bartholomew Adam was the youngest of the Adam children and his career had been rather meteoric. At the time of the 1841 census Bartholomew was a clerk living in the home of Robert Howe an Ordnance Officer of Mansion Row, Brompton. In 1839 Bartholomew had married Harriet Howe, Robert's daughter. Presumably Mr Howe had some influence and helped Bartholomew rise in his trade. By 1851, Bartholomew, his wife and daughters were resident in Kennington, Surrey. He had risen to the position of Clerk of Works in Parliament and here he remained, eventually becoming the Parliamentary Taxing Master. He died at his office in the House of Lords 1886 aged 75 years whilst still at work. For many years he had been resident at Staines Manor House, Surrey and he died leaving the colossal sum of £57,000. He had come a long way from the son of a bootmaker.



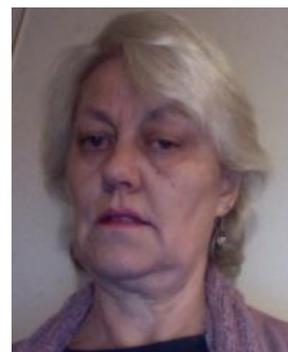
*Right: The shop in the post-war period; Medway Archives Centre photographic collection – Rochester High Street.*



*Left: an illustration of the shop from the Edwin Harris Sketch collection; Medway Archives Centre.*

## *Time of Day in Hoo*

Brenda Paternoster



*Brenda was born and brought up in Gravesend but moved to Strood when she married and then to Allhallows in 1978. She worked for a few years in laboratories in Woolwich Arsenal, then after a career break looking after three daughters, worked in Adult Education, teaching bobbin lacemaking and also in administration. Brenda has always had an interest in family history and since retiring in 2009 has had more time for genealogy. She is past Secretary of the Kent Family History Society and on the committee. Brenda also volunteers at MAC helping other people with their family history enquiries; she has a general interest in the Hoo peninsula.*

One of the most unusual combinations of Christian name/surname is *Time of Day*. Civil registration indexes on Free BMD ([www.freebmd.org.uk](http://www.freebmd.org.uk)) show that there were just three men who rejoiced, or otherwise, in that name and they were all from the Hoo area.

The eldest was Time of Day whose death registration was in the fourth quarter of 1851 (vol 5, page 201). He was baptised at Hoo St Werburgh on 27 May 1789, *Tyme o'*, son of Thomas and Elizabeth Day and was the eleventh child born to them. His siblings, some of whom died in infancy, were:

Sarah bap 28 March 1773;  
Elizabeth bap 09 March 1774;  
Mary bap 01 Aug 1779 (born 14 July);  
Patience bap 24 Feb 1782;  
William bap 15 April 1784;  
Eleanora bap 02 July 1786;  
Martha bap 20 July 1788;  
Henry bap 09 Dec 1792;  
Maria bap Aug 1794;  
John bap 17 April 1796.

Time married Harriet Gilbert on 06 February 1831 at Chatham St Mary and he signed his name confidently as *Time of Day*. He was a journeyman blacksmith. In 1841 he and Harriet were living at Hoo Street, (now Stoke Road), Hoo with four children and Harriet's father Thomas Gilbert who was also a blacksmith. In 1851 they were living at Fenn Street, St Mary Hoo (now Ratcliffe highway) again with four children and Harriet's widowed father.

It's not clear just how many children Time of and Harriet had, probably one boy and five girls. The 1841 census shows:

Henry aged 10, so born c 1830-31;  
Elizabeth aged 8, so born c1833-34;  
Harriet aged 3, so born 1838-39;  
Elinor aged 5 months, so born very early 1841.

The 1851 census shows:

Henry aged 19, so born 1831-32;  
Harriet Hep aged 13, so born 1838-39;  
Zibah aged 12, so born 1839-40;  
Eleanor aged 10, so born 1841-42.

Baptisms at Hoo St Werburgh show:

Henry, 19 June 1831;  
Elizabeth, 08 Sep 1833;  
Caroline, 02 Nov 1834;  
Mary, 29 May 1836;  
Harriet Hepzibah, 18 March 1838;  
Eleanor, 31 January 1841.

The older children were born before civil registration began. There were two recorded births in Hoo registration district surname *Day*, mother *Gilbert*. Harriet in the first quarter of 1838, which matches to Harriet aged 3 in 1841, and Harriet *Hep* aged 13 in 1851, and the baptism of Harriet Hepzibah in 1838.

The other birth registration was for Elizabeth in the first quarter of 1841. Did she become known as Elinor/Eleanor? And who was *Zibah*? I think that was probably an enumerator error in writing Harriet Hepzibah across two lines and then counting her as one person.

Time of Day's death at the age of 53 was registered in Hoo district in the third quarter of 1851. He was buried at St Mary Hoo on 21 December 1851, and his widow Harriet subsequently married John Kennett, (born in Faversham, on 07 February 1853) at Chatham St Mary. In 1861 they were living in Ropers Lane, Hoo.

The second person to bear the name *Time of Day* was baptised at Hoo St Werburgh on 10 February 1833, son of George and Mary. George Day (born in Burham) and Mary Fenner who were married at Chatham St Mary on 16 May 1825.

George and Mary had nine children baptised at Hoo St Werburgh:

David, 05 Aug 1827;  
Henry, 14 March 1830;  
Time of, 10 Feb 1833;  
Maria, 05 March 1837;  
Sarah, 09 June 1839;  
Charles, 06 March 1841;  
Ann, 05 January 1845;  
Harriet, 28 April 1844;  
Thomas, 14 Sep 1846.

Time of, baptised in 1833, married Martha Blackman on 29 Sept 1866 at Frindsbury; there were no children born to this marriage. Time of's youngest brother, Thomas married Elizabeth Blackman on 30 Sep 1873 at Hoo St Werburgh. Censuses indicate that Martha was born circa 1844 and Elizabeth was born circa 1846. They both had a father named William, although Martha's father was a victualler and Elizabeth's was a farmer. They may have been sisters although I cannot find a birth or baptism record for either of them.

Thomas and Elizabeth had three children, all baptised at Hoo St Werburgh:

Thomas bapt 06 Sep 1874;  
Elizabeth bapt 08 Mar 1876, buried 28 July 1876;  
William George bap 01 April 1877.

Thomas was a publican and in 1881 he and Elizabeth were recorded as living at the Five Bells Inn, Hoo with 3-year-old son George. Their son, 6-year-old Thomas, was with Time of and Martha, licensees of the Bell Inn at Fenn, St Mary Hoo. Thomas Day, the publican (born 1846) was buried at Hoo on 2 August 1882 and in the 1891 Census the widowed Martha Day was still living at the Bell Inn along with her nephews Thomas Day, 16, George Day, 14, a niece Elizabeth Ayers, and three lodgers. By 1901, a 26-year-old Thomas Day, publican, was the head of household at the Bell Inn along with one-year-old *Time of*, two servants and a boarder. I cannot find a marriage record for Thomas and his wife Alice, but Time of's birth registration in the second quarter of 1899 in Hoo registration district gives his mother's maiden name as *Smitt*.

In 1911 Thomas and Alice along with 11-year-old Time of and 13-year-old daughter, Mary Elizabeth (born in Cliffe), were living at the Privateer pub, West Street, Gravesend. Where was Mary Elizabeth in 1901? The Cliffe baptism register records Elizabeth Mary Day daughter of Thomas and Alice Ann, born 05 Nov 1897, baptised 26 Dec 1897 but there is no civil registration for a Mary or Elizabeth Day in 1897 in the area.

In World War One, Time of enlisted in the Royal Navy, rank A.C.1. and named his mother Alice Day as his next of kin; he later transferred to the Royal Air Force. By 1921 the family (Thomas, Alice, Mary Elizabeth, Time of and Alice's widowed mother Mary Smith) were living at 56 Chalkwell Rd, Milton Regis. Thomas was a working as a steward for the Committee of Milton Regis Conservative Club and Time of was a carpenter working for a paper manufacturer. and subsequently received the British medal.

Time of married Jennie Barker in Milton registration district in the second quarter of 1924. In 1939 Time of and Jennie were living at 26 Angola Road, Worthing, Sussex with two children, Edna E. born in 1927 and another, which is a redacted entry. Time of died in April 1975 in Worthing registration district.

From all of this it is clear that Time of Day who was born in 1899 was the great nephew of Time of Day born in 1833 but sadly I cannot link them to Time of Day who was born in 1798, although this Time of and his wife, Harriet were having children baptised in Hoo at around the same time as Thomas and Mary (and several other Day families) so they probably knew each other and may well have been related.

I have found another interesting link. In *The Clock Tower*, Issues 70 and 71 (May and August 2023), you will recall Elaine Gardner's articles about William Barrett, chauffeur to the Brice family in Birchington. William Barrett was married to Louisa Day, and she was the first cousin twice removed to Time of Day who was born in 1833; she was also third cousin to Time of Day born 1899.

3<sup>rd</sup> Gillingham Scout Group, Early to Mid-1920s  
Peter Bursey



*Peter grew up in Gillingham and attended Twydall Infant and Junior Schools, followed by the Grammar School when John Hicks was headmaster. Various jobs eventually led him to the Civil Service in Whitehall until he retired in 2007. In 1988 Peter spent five months at Chatham Dockyard on the Gannet project going up to the Public Record Office and the National Maritime Museum archives at Woolwich Arsenal where he discovered the original plans of the Gannet's masts and spars plus an assortment of other useful papers. He now lives in Shaftesbury, Dorset*

This undated photo below, labelled 3<sup>rd</sup> Gillingham Scout Group was in a small collection of photos that belonged to the Swan family of 183 Rock Avenue Gillingham. The Scouts are standing outside St Augustine's Lodge, with tram tracks clearly visible in the road. I would suggest that this Lodge was behind St Augustine's church and is where the modern vicarage is now located. The Scout leader looks like the vicar of St Augustine's church, Rev. Cyril Reinold (1875-1931), found in the 1929 photo of him with the four Sea Scouts in my article in the previous issue of *The Clock Tower* (Issue 71, August 2023). However, I might not be correct in this assumption!



*3<sup>rd</sup> Gillingham Scout Group; photograph from the author's collection.*

There were three Swan children living at 183 Rock Avenue: Edna (born 1903), Wallace (born 1906), and Ronald (born 1911). Edna married George Allen, Wallace joined the Royal Navy, and Ronald worked as a clerk in Dockyard Naval Stores (who didn't?) and this is where he is found in the 1939 Register. Scout groups consist of Beavers (aged 6 to 8), Wolf Cubs (aged 8 to 10), and Scouts (aged 10 to 14) so I would suggest that this photo contains Ronald Swan aged about 12, as his older brother Wallace would have been too old to be in it.

What is interesting is that 43 local boys wanted to be in the Scouts and most, if not all, would have attended Byron Road junior school, although there may have been a few from Luton or Chatham who found their way up the hill to join. The Scout movement was very popular in Britain during the inter-war years, it being an age when health and outdoor pursuits were high on the agenda for working class people in their spare time. Communal exercises at school, group outings in charabancs, and joining clubs were all the rage. None of the boys can be identified (by me), but it can be noted that the two boys sitting at the front are wearing very robust hob-nailed boots.

## *What a Constellation!*

Janet King



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

We had seen the advertisement over the top of Varley's shop for the latest in Hoovers, but never thought that Mother would own a Hoover Constellation as we weren't usually the first to go for the most modern electrical appliances.

The Goblin's days were numbered, it had gobbled its last piece of our dirt, and was going to live with Gran. Gran did not want a cleaner gobbling what bit of dirt there was in her house as she was quite capable of brushing the runner and shaking the rug. She definitely did not need the spray attachment to get rid of anything nasty, but Mother knew best!

The Goblin was cylindrical but the Constellation was spherical, a nod to the space age we were living in. Ours was a pinky colour, but they did come in other colours. It was quite advanced for its time, with hovering action, supposedly to make cleaning easier. The manufacturers hadn't bargained for Mother. She operated the new cleaner with an iron grip and clenched teeth! She pulled and tugged, the cleaner hovered. She tugged harder, the machine still just hovered gently. Tugging even more, the machine hovered as it was designed to do, just like the hovercraft that were in vogue at the time. Gracefully the machine hovered as best it could. Mother persisted, clearly the machine didn't clean properly. How could it? It wasn't putting enough effort into this cleaning lark. It was too subtle. Mother didn't understand. This machine was a hindrance rather than a help. Mother wouldn't let it help. It wasn't a proper cleaner. It didn't put enough effort in.

Fiercely mother continued. Loyal to its maker the cleaner hovered. It hovered some more, taking the scenic route round the room. Clearly mother and this machine weren't going to get on. Mother was cleaner in charge, but it still hovered. She didn't need this kind of help, it wasn't hard work. It ought to be hard work so that you knew you had cleaned properly. Hovering obediently in a corner the machine finally gave up its quest to help.

I think she thought that the Constellation was like one of the first vacuum cleaners, which needed a lot of effort to make the pumping mechanism work. One of the very early models made more dust than it cleaned up. Another one used a foot pump to drive the bellows to make the cleaner work. Progress was made first when Hoover, a saddle maker, used some his factory work space to make an electric vacuum cleaner designed by Spangler, his caretaker. Spangler was asthmatic and designed the cleaner to help his condition at home. His prototype apparently consisted of a broom handle and a pillow case, together with an electric motor to suck up the

dust. He had heard of Booth's vacuum cleaner invention in England, and thought of designing something similar to help his asthma. These were all upright cleaners and it wasn't till about ten years later that a Swedish firm, that was to become Electrolux, encased everything in a tidier metal can and created the cylinder cleaner. This was a direct improvement on Booth's basic ideas. Booth was still making and improving his vacuum cleaners, and by 1926 he had adopted the name Goblin for all his cleaners.

I didn't have a Hoover. I had a Seeboard, as it was somewhat cheaper. Putting the Seeboard round didn't have the same ring to it, nor did *Seeboarding*.



*Hoover Constellation vacuum cleaner and attachments circa 1956. Science Museum Collection; © The Board of Trustees of the Science Museum, reproduced under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 Licence.*

## *Readers' Letters*

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

### **Janet King's Transistor Radio**

16 September 2023

Hello Amanda

I wanted to respond to Janet King's piece in the August 2023 issue, I relate to much of what she writes, we must be a similar age I think.

When I tell people I had to buy a licence for a radio, they think I'm making it up, but when I married and left home in January 1971, I went to the Co-op in Chatham High Street to buy a radio, it wasn't a small transistor, but a Roberts Radio, and I had to buy a licence for it. I don't remember now how much it was, and I only remember buying the one. Further investigating found this information which explains that.

If you had a radio but not a television you were required to pay for a radio licence until February 1971. Originally costing £1 5s, (25/-). I understand that the cost was reduced pro rata for any bought in the year before and intended to expire after that date. Radio licences in the UK were abolished in February '71. After February 1971 only television licences were issued which covered all your TV viewing (BBC or Commercial).

At home we had a big radio on which we listened to *Family Favourites*, *Uncle Mac*, *Navy Lark*, and then Radio Luxembourg with its fading volume. The first song I remember hearing on a transistor radio outside the house was Bill Haley's *Rock around the Clock*; I would have been perhaps 9 or 10. Right up until the time my mother passed away last year at the age of 97 she had Roberts Radios, one in the kitchen, now owned by my son, and strictly left on *her* station, and one in her bedroom, for those sleepless nights. The Shipping Forecast was so soothing.

Take care,

Hazel Thorn.

## *News and Events*

Calendar of Forthcoming Events and Exhibitions

### **FOMA Talks and Events**

January 2024  
Quiz Night

Dates and timing to be confirmed.

Please look out for email announcements and updates on the FOMA website ([www.foma-lsc.org](http://www.foma-lsc.org))

Friday 8 March 2024, 7.30 pm

*Rochester Bridge in Times of Modern Conflict*

A talk by Ray Harris, Assistant Warden at the Rochester Bridge Trust

The talk coincides with the exhibition at the Bridge Trust which re-opens in March and runs until May 2024

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Friday, 12 April 2022, 7.00 for 7.30 pm;

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

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

### **Medway Archives Centre**

32 Bryant Rd, Rochester ME2 3EP; 01634 332714; [malsc@medway.gov.uk](mailto:malsc@medway.gov.uk).

### **Events and Exhibitions**

Exhibition: *Once Upon a Time in Medway*

Thursday 12 October – Friday 15 December

Photographer Dan Gardner has lived in Medway all his life, and his new exhibition seeks to capture the untold stories, forgotten spaces, and old landscapes that make Medway what it is today. An endearing photographic record reflecting the diverse character, community and comforting familiarity found on the streets around us. Copies of Dan's latest photo zine, featuring images from the exhibition, will also be available to buy.

Also ...

MAC has contributed resources to the current exhibition at the **Rochester Art Gallery** (until Saturday 13 January 2024).

*Upon the High Street* is an ongoing photography project shot in collaboration by award-winning Medway-raised photographers Joshua Atkins and Daniel Loveday. The project captures the people and landscape of Chatham High Street and the surrounding area, celebrating the town's history and the diversity of its residents.

#### Christmas Drop-in

Wednesday 6 December 10am-12 noon.

*(Please note we will not have a Saturday drop-in in December!)* Join us for a friendly social with a small sale of old and new books, enjoy seasonal refreshments and see if you recognise the locations in our unidentified photos.

**The Medway Archives Centre will be closed for our annual collections care fortnight from Tuesday 2 January to 13 January 2024. We will reopen at 9am on Monday 15 January 2023.**

#### Opening Hours and Visiting

Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, Saturday 9am to 12.30pm, Wednesday and Sunday closed.

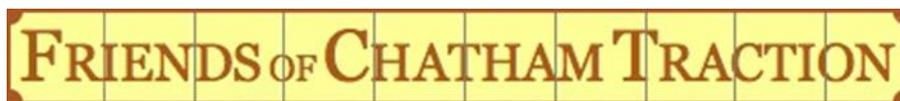
An appointment must be made to view original archive material and use microfilm or fiche readers.

#### How to Make an Appointment

Email us at [malsc@medway.gov.uk](mailto:malsc@medway.gov.uk) to make an appointment and to discuss which items you wish to consult. For original archive material you must give at least three working days' notice of your intention to visit. For all other material (such as books, maps, photographs) we just require one working day's notice. When you book we will ask for your name and contact details so that we can keep in touch with you about your appointment.

- You can also search or browse for original archive material on the [Medway Council Heritage Services catalogue](#).
- You can find books and periodicals by searching the [Medway Libraries online catalogue](#).
- If you cannot find what you are looking for, please contact us.

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For more information see the website at [www.chathamtraction.org.uk](http://www.chathamtraction.org.uk) or contact Richard Bourne (Chairman); 31 Usher Park Road, Haxby, York YO32 3RX; 01904 766375, or 07771 831653. Email [Richard@thebournes.me.uk](mailto:Richard@thebournes.me.uk).



## Friends of Broomhill

The Friends of Broomhill, Strood, Task Days are the first **Sunday** of every month (except January), from September to April inclusive, 10 am to noon. **Thursday** Task Days are every Thursday morning (all year) concentrating on the Old Orchard woodland, 10 am to noon. Meet in car park at end of King Arthurs Drive, Strood, ME2 3NB. All welcome, no experience necessary, tools provided or bring your own. It's fun, free and healthy!

For further details see our car park notice boards or visit our website: [www.friendsofbroomhill.org.uk](http://www.friendsofbroomhill.org.uk) . You can also find us on social media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) or contact David Park, Secretary on 07968-380588 or email: [secretary@friendsofbroomhill.org.uk](mailto:secretary@friendsofbroomhill.org.uk)

## Medway Geographical and Local History Society

We start our new season in September 2023.

Friday 24 November

History of the Local Area – a talk by Maggie Francis

Meetings at 2.00/3.30pm. Doors open 1.30pm.

Holy Trinity Church, Twydall Lane, Gillingham, Kent, ME8 6JU.

Visitors £3.50 per meeting, annual subscription £20.

For further information contact Vanda Woollett,

Telephone 01634 389916, mobile 07948 277 131, email [vwoollett@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:vwoollett@hotmail.co.uk)

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## Remembrance

Lest We Forget



They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.

*For the Fallen,*  
Laurence Binyon.

## About The Clock Tower

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

### Editorial deadlines

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

**The copy deadline for Issue 73 of *The Clock Tower* is Monday 29 January 2024, with publication on Wednesday 21 February 2024.**

### Publication date

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### Front Cover Accreditations and Website Information

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### Further Information

Further information on the Medway Archives Centre can be obtained on the MAC website <https://cityark.medway.gov.uk/> or by writing to Medway Archives Centre, 32 Bryant Road, Strood, Rochester, Kent, ME2 3EP. Telephone +44 (0)1634 332714; fax +44 (0)1634 297060; email: [malsc@medway.gov.uk](mailto:malsc@medway.gov.uk)

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## The City of Rochester Society Celebrates the Chatham House Restoration

Over the summer, the City of Rochester Society presented its Conservation Awards for 2022. On 22 August the Award was presented to Sheila Featherstone and the team behind the restoration of the façade of Chatham House.



*Inside Chatham House. From left to right: Ross Crayford - Medway Council Conservation Officer, Sheila Featherstone and Peter Moorcraft from Chatham House, Rob Flood, Chairman of the City of Rochester Society, and Councillor Harinder Mahil (Fort Pitt) - Medway Council Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture and Leisure.*

Read more on these stories and other FOMA/Medway heritage news in Amanda Thomas' round-up on page 10.

## ***Christmas at the Medway Archives Centre***



The annual Christmas Drop-in will be taking place at the Medway Archives Centre on Wednesday 6 December from 10am to 12 noon. Come for a chat, enjoy some seasonal refreshments and see if you can recognise the locations in our unidentified photos. There will also be a small sale of old and new books! For more details see page 8.



**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year  
from the Friends of Medway Archives!**