

## World War One Commemorations

*Sue Haydock, FOMA Vice President, and Peter Homewood, Chairman of Kent County Council, being presented to HRH Prince Harry at the unveiling of the Step Short Centenary Arch, Folkestone, on 4 August 2104. See page 26.*

*Photograph, Freddie Lee Thompson Photography, Folkestone.*



*On 22 September 2014 at Chatham Historic Dockyard, HRH The Duke of Kent unveiled the plaque to commemorate the sinking of the three cruisers, HMS Aboukir, Hogue and Cressy. Sue Haydock had a front row seat and was able to take this photograph for The Clock Tower. See page 37.*

***If undelivered, please return to:  
Medway Archives office,  
Civic Centre, Strood,  
Rochester,  
Kent, ME2 4AU.***

# The Clock Tower



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The Friends of Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre  
Excepted Charity registration number XR92894

## We Remember

1914 - 2014



The memorial to some of the men of the Live Bait Squadron, Den Haag Municipal Cemetery, Holland.  
*Photograph, Amanda Thomas.*

A special issue to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of World War One.

## Unveiling at the Guildhall, Rochester



Mayor of Medway, Councillor Barry Kemp (left), and Russell Race, Senior Warden of the Bridge Trust unveil the new painting by Medway artist Kevin Clarkson, entitled Live Bait; the 7th Cruiser Squadron, Chatham 1914.  
Photograph, Tessa Towner.

## Lest We Forget: FOMA Exhibition at MALSC



The main display case for the latest exhibition at MALSC, Lest We Forget, Part One, 1914.  
Photograph, Elaine Gardner.

## The Live Bait Squadron Commemorations

Right:  
The Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines (Commando Training Centre Royal Marines) Lympstone in No.5 Covered Slip, Chatham Historic Dockyard, during the commemorative Drumhead Service on 22 September 2014.



Left: Den Haag Municipal Cemetery; the gathering at graves of the men of The Live Bait Squadron for the laying of wreaths.

Right: Den Haag Municipal Cemetery; the Last Post.  
To the right of the photograph is the British Ambassador to the Netherlands, Sir Geoffrey Adams.

Photographs,  
[www.corkuyvenhoven.com](http://www.corkuyvenhoven.com)



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**The Very Reverend Dr. Mark Beach,**  
Dean of Rochester.



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## *From the Chairman*

Tessa Towner, Chairman.



The last few months have been full of events locally and abroad commemorating World War One.

On 4 August there was a vigil in Rochester Cathedral, timed to end at 11pm to commemorate the outbreak of WWI. This was well attended, and I was delighted to be able to be there. This was the same day, of course, that we launched the new De Caville Index on the FOMA website. Amanda Thomas, our Editor, widely reported this in various family history publications, and at midnight she and son Alex, FOMA Webmaster, pushed the button! It has been a great success and we are delighted that so many people have contributed additional information to the database. It has been a very exciting and worthwhile project.

A new Friends group has been formed in Medway called the Friends of the Guildhall Museums. Many new members were present on 6 September (see opposite) when a painting by local artist Kevin Clarkson was unveiled at the Guildhall by the Mayor of Medway, Councillor Barry Kemp, and Russell Race, Senior Warden of the Bridge Trust. The painting depicts the three cruisers of the Live Bait Squadron, HMS *Aboukir*, HMS *Cressy* and HMS *Hogue* leaving Chatham Dockyard in 1914. The picture is now hanging in pride of place on the stairs leading up to the Council Chamber in the museum. Do go and have a look!

On pages 37 to 47 you can read Amanda Thomas' report on the four-day commemorative events for the Live Bait Squadron which started on 21 September at the St George's Centre, Chatham and continued at the Historic Dockyard and in the capital of the Netherlands, The Hague. These were all very emotional events and a lot of descendants of the men who were lost were present.

We were delighted that the first FOMA exhibition to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of WWI, *Lest We Forget, Part One, 1914*, has been such a success. To follow is a page from the visitors' book with some of the lovely comments we received.

FOMA is sad to announce that committee member Brian Joyce has resigned from the committee as he has moved to Chester to be nearer his family. We wish him well, but he has promised to keep in touch and visit us when he can - in fact, he's already been back at least once already! He is also still contributing to *The Clock Tower* and you can read his review of the talk by the Historic Dockyard's Alex Patterson on page 28.

Finally I wish to remind members that we are still looking for a new Treasurer. Please can you help? Jean Skilling, our outgoing Treasurer, wants to assure everyone that this is not too onerous a job, just a knowledge of basic book keeping is needed, and she is prepared to offer help and advice to whoever takes the role on.

1.9.14 (!) Excellent - well done Tessa & Elaine -  
best exhi. for ages. Very emotional.  
A well-constructed exhibition, it brings home  
the devastation caused to the local community. *LM*

2.9.14 What an achievement. Does Nick proud. *Bob*

4/9/14 Very informative and, at the same time,  
very poignant *Al*

11.9.14 A superb comprehensive and most interesting  
exhibition illustrating so well the attitudes at  
the time; so poignant with hindsight 100 years  
later. *Al Swabon*

11.9.14 An excellent effort - full of local  
details - so well researched. *OTR*

13/09/14 A fitting remembrance of the disaster of 22nd Sept. 1914. The loss  
of reservists and cadets - 1495 - was greater than that at the  
battle of Trafalgar. My grandfather William (Billy) Tree was saved  
after the sinking of HMS. Hague but he was so fat (23 stones) that he was not  
allowed to board a boat, so he was thrown a rope and towed until rescue.  
He lived in Rainham until his death in 1934 *John Luce*

22/9/14 A truly great outcome and reminder of the  
events and people who gave lives and efforts  
to secure their people's future. *Bj Baruchell*

This is the last issue of *The Clock Tower* for 2014, and whilst it is a sombre one commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of WWI, I would like to wish you all -

A very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year!



Left: Walking to the graves for the wreath laying ceremony at the Den Haag Municipal Cemetery.

Right: The Barrigans lay flowers of remembrance at the Den Haag Municipal Cemetery.



Photographs, [www.corkuyvenhoven.com](http://www.corkuyvenhoven.com)

More food and drink arrived when we returned to the reception area of the cemetery and then we all boarded the coach back to the Muzee where we said our final farewells. There was to be a screening of the documentary in the evening, but most of those attending would be the Dutch who had not yet seen it, and the Barrigans.

It had been an extraordinary few days and the beginning of the healing process for the descendants. Henk van der Linden had given them the opportunity to share their stories and their grief. They had been able to meet and thank the families of the *SS Flora* and *SS Titan*, but also discover that they too had grieved over the years in the knowledge that the crews of their ancestors' boats had had to choose who to save from the sea. Finally, everyone had had the opportunity to meet the family of Otto Weddingen. For some it was too much to bear, but for others it was important and necessary and they were able to forgive and even start to forget.

If you missed the FOMA public screening on 11 November 2014 in Frindsbury of *The Live Bait Squadron - History's Worst North Sea Maritime Disaster* and would like to order a copy of the DVD, please contact Amanda Thomas at [amanda@ajthomas.com](mailto:amanda@ajthomas.com)

Right: Henk Grootveld presents Henk van der Linden with a silk tie to commemorate the occasion at the Muzee Scheveningen.



At 3 pm, following wine, canapés and more coffee, we were all on the move again, boarding coaches outside the Muzee to take us all to the Den Haag Municipal Cemetery. Here we were escorted to another reception area where cakes and more drinks were waiting for us. We could not have been made to feel more welcome. Speeches were given by dignitaries from The Hague, including the British Ambassador to the Netherlands, Sir Geoffrey Adams, the Deputy Mayor of The Hague Tom de Bruijn, and Cllr. Barry Kemp the Mayor of Medway.



Right: from left to right, the Deputy Mayor of The Hague Tom de Bruijn, the British Ambassador to the Netherlands, Sir Geoffrey Adams, Henk van der Linden, and Cllr. Barry Kemp the Mayor of Medway.

Sadly as we listened to Barry Kemp's words we were all aware that the light had dimmed and the rain had begun to fall outside. However, no matter, as Henk van der Linden was on hand with umbrellas for everyone and we slowly progressed outside for the laying of the wreaths. The rain added to the sombre atmosphere as wreath after wreath was brought to the spot where some of men of the Live Bait Squadron now lie: wreaths from the people of Britain, the Netherlands, from Germany, and of course the wreath from Medway, which had been brought from Chatham. Then with bunches of flowers came the descendants of the fallen, and perhaps most poignantly, the Weddingen family. We stood in the rain for the *Last Post* and contemplated the past few days as silence fell.

## News and Events

Odette Buchanan, Friends' Secretary



At the time of writing - isn't this hot weather amazing? What are we going to do with all the money we save on heating bills? It really makes such a difference going out on a trip when the weather is good, doesn't it?

Talking of which, have you see the poppies in the moat at the Tower of London yet? They are superb. I have seen some criticism of the whole concept, saying they do not convey the horror of the First World War but my view is that they commemorate very well all those who died. One doesn't need barbed wire, skeletons, guns or gas masks to remember the awful toll on the population of every country involved, and we already have all the literature, poetry, paintings, statues, films, exhibitions, personal records and countless history books to reinforce that war's horrors and its devastating aftermath. A poppy for each life is a very poignant memorial. Another impressive memorial is the painting commemorating the Live Bait Squadron that was unveiled at Rochester Guildhall Museum (see page 2) It is very well-executed and an evocative reminder of that one horrendous incident in which so many local people were killed. Also, I do hope you were able to attend the screening of the Live Bait Squadron film, but if not, the DVD is available to purchase. Contact our Editor, Amanda Thomas, for details. Also, make sure that you turn to page 15 for all the wonderful books Steve Cross and Amanda Thomas have found for Christmas.

That just leaves me to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

### Important - Changes at MALSC

Simon Lace, Museum Services Manager, Medway Council.

Medway Council is proposing to move the current Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre. The Council will consult on a number of proposed sites across Medway, including Strood Library at Bryant Road, Strood and Chatham Library/Riverside 4 (the former RAFA club). Other sites under consideration are Chatham Historic Dockyard, Medway Council's Gun Wharf headquarters, the Finline Building on the Medway City Estate and St. Mary's Church, Dock Road, Chatham.

Council officers have already recommended Strood Library, in Bryant Road, Strood, to councillors as the most desirable and cost effective location as it would mean the archives stay in Strood with no need to purchase a new building. In addition, the Strood Library Bryant Road scheme would include the refurbishment of the existing Community Hall next door, improving this facility for local people. If built at this site, the move would take place after the current Strood Library is moved to a brand new Community Hub Site on Strood High Street early next year.

Medway Council has set out its cultural strategy for the next five years. This promises to further develop the area as an attractive place to live, work, study and visit. As well as restoring Eastgate House, establishing a cultural quarter in Rochester, further improving the Guildhall Museum and Central Theatre, and providing a Huguenot Heritage Centre for Medway, the new archive and local history service is a major part of this strategy. **Consultation on the proposals will begin at the end of November; see [www.medway.gov.uk](http://www.medway.gov.uk)**

## Obituary

Lewis Jones (1931-2014)



It is with great sadness that we announce the death of FOMA member Lew Jones who died on 11 September 2014. Lew was born in Melbourne Australia, and arrived in the Medway Towns in 1953 with a letter of introduction for Winget's from a local chap called Reg Marsh. Lew later worked at Chatham Dockyard for many years and studied at the Medway College of Technology, completing the education he had curtailed to travel, and eventually becoming a Chartered Engineer. He loved the Medway Towns and was a fervent and inspirational supporter of our heritage, with a particular fascination for maritime history. Recently he contributed to the series *Amateur Dramatics in Medway (The Clock Tower, Issues 33 and 34)*, with his recollections of the Good Companions Club in Rochester, where he had been a member for many years with his wife, Dulcie. Lew was the father of *Clock Tower* Editor, Amanda Thomas.

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### *Dr. Thomas Plume*

*Clock Tower* fans may recall an article in an earlier edition (Issue 11, August 2008) entitled, *Thomas Plume* by Tony Doe.

MALSC's Catharina Clement informs us that Tony, and Victoria County History editor Chris Thornton, are now working with the Friends of Plume Library and the University of Hertfordshire Press on a book for publication in 2016 about Thomas Plume and his legacies. Plume was archdeacon of Rochester and Rector of Longfield as well as owner of Stone Castle in Kent. The book will be a series of articles by different contributors on various aspects of Plume's work, including a brief biography, the Plume Library and his book collection, the Plume Trust in Essex, his interest in astronomy as well as his numerous Kent charitable bequests.

Watch this space for further information!

We were all sitting in quite different groups to how we had been on Sunday at the St. George's Centre, as by now everyone knew everyone else. However we very soon became aware that the occupants of one of the tables were only recognisable from the documentary, as these were the descendants of the U9 Kapitänleutnant Otto Weddigen.

Following lunch, the room was rearranged so that we could sit in rows. We were welcomed by the Chairman and CEO of the Muzee, Henk Grootveld and Paul de Kievit, and Henk van der Linden, who also introduced the start of the *mini conference*. Tessa was the first to speak and explained how FOMA's work on the De Caville Index had played a key role in the story of the past few years and the discovery of so many of the descendants who had come to the ceremonies in Chatham and The Hague. Next to speak were Dr. Richard Porter and Dr. Jane Harrold, Curator and Deputy Curator and Archivist respectively of The Britannia Museum, Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth. Together they told the story of the teenage boys, the so-called *Lost Term* from Dartmouth, who had been called up and were lost on the three cruisers. From *Aboukir* there were Cadets J.D. Stubbs, G. Gore-Brown, G.B. Barchard, A.V.G. Allsopp, H.L. Riley, and A.D.C. Robertson. From *Cressy* there were Midshipmen C.P. Dalmege, V.H. Corbyn, F.G. Matthews, and J.A. Froude, and from *Hogue* there were Midshipmen H.H. Ward, G.C. Harold, and C.W. Holt.



*Left: from Left to right, Margret Weber, the great niece of the U9 Kapitänleutnant Otto Weddigen, Klaudie Bartelink, and Alice Barrigan.*



*Right: FOMA Chairman, Tessa Townner speaks during the mini conference at the Muzee Scheveningen.*

Henk Grootveld and Paul de Kievit were swiftly on their feet again to announce the official opening of the *Live Bait Squadron exposition*. Henk was presented with a silk tie to commemorate the occasion and guests then progressed to the upper level of the Muzee to see for the first time the artifacts, displays and information associated with every aspect of the Live Bait story.



*Life rings from the three cruisers over which poppy petals fell at the end of the service in the No.5 Covered Slip, Chatham Historic Dockyard, during the commemorative Drumhead Service on 22 September 2014.*

Wednesday 24 September was the final day of the commemorations. Not all of those who had attended in Chatham had decided to come on to Holland, and those who had made the journey were scattered across the area in different hotels. It was therefore a slightly strange experience to arrive at Muzee Scheveningen to be greeted by familiar faces. The Muzee was a fabulous showcase for local history and we were greeted most warmly by everyone, including Henk, of course. The Live Bait commemorations had taken over much of the museum and we were ushered into a lovely room set for lunch. The Dutch hospitality was overwhelming, and straight away we were presented with a wonderful selection of rolls and open sandwiches full of Dutch ham and cheese, jugs of milk and fresh orange juice, followed by fruit and steaming coffee. It was exactly what everyone needed.



*Right: Lunch at the Muzee Scheveningen.*

## News and Events

### Calendar of Forthcoming Events and Exhibitions

#### FOMA Events

10<sup>th</sup> March 2015, 7.30 pm.  
Hospitals and Almshouses.  
A talk by David Carder, postponed from last year.

Tues April 7<sup>th</sup> AGM, 7.00 for 7.30 pm.  
**FOMA AGM**  
Business will be followed by light refreshments.  
More details in the next issue.

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April, 7.30 pm start.  
Quiz Night.  
£5 for members and non-members. **BOOKING REQUIRED** (see below).

#### Talks

Further details in the next issue on:

June 2015 - *Medway Tales*, a talk by Wilf Lower.

November 2015 - *Army Chaplains in WW1*, a talk by Linda Parker.

**Booking for FOMA talks is no longer necessary! Until further notice all events are at Frindsbury Parish Hall. Talks are £3 for members, £5 non-members. Booking for Quiz Nights and enquiries through the FOMA Secretary: Odette Buchanan, 72 Jersey Rd, Strood, ME2 3PE; odette\_buchanan@yahoo.co.uk; 01634 718231.**

#### MALSC Events

#### Exhibitions

20<sup>th</sup> November 2014 - 13<sup>th</sup> January 2015.  
*'A little of what you fancy...'*  
A century of entertainment in Medway.

15<sup>th</sup> January 2015 - 4<sup>th</sup> March 2015  
*Plaque to Plaque.*  
Edwin Harris' contribution to the plaques in and around Rochester.

## Talks and Events

17<sup>th</sup> December, 2.30 pm.

*'Your Own, Your Very Own...'*

Theatres and music halls in Victorian Medway.

A talk by Brian Joyce.

**PLEASE NOTE: This talk will take place at The Guildhall Museum, High Street, Rochester, ME1 1PY.**

**Unless otherwise indicated, all the above are held at the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre, (MALSC) Civic Centre, Strood, Rochester, Kent ME2 4AU, and all talks and events are now free of charge. Further information is available from MALSC; please telephone 01634 332714 to book. TICKETS MUST BE BOOKED IN ADVANCE. Please note: You may be aware that Medway Council has been relocated to Gun Wharf. This move does not include MALSC and until further notice, we are still to be found in the Clock Tower building, Civic Centre, Strood, Rochester, Kent ME2 4AU.**

**MALSC OPENING HOURS: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9.00 am to 5.00 pm; Saturday 9.00 am to 4.00 pm. Wednesday and Sunday closed. For Satnav please use ME2 2AD.**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT AS MALSC WAS CLOSED FOR REMEDIAL BUILDING WORKS DURING AUGUST, THE ANNUAL STOCK TAKING CLOSURE IN NOVEMBER WILL NOT TAKE PLACE AND THE ARCHIVES ARE OPEN AS NORMAL.**

## Eastgate House

Eastgate House is one of Rochester's landmarks. Built in the 1590s by Sir Peter Buck, the most senior member of staff at Chatham Dockyard, its structure has been adapted considerably over the years, but research has indicated that the original building may be Medieval or earlier. A Heritage Lottery Grant awarded in January 2011 has enabled Medway Council to begin planning conservation work on the house and to start opening its doors once more to visitors. Eastgate House is now closed and work was due to start in June 2014. Further information can be obtained at: [www.friendsof-eastgatehouse.org](http://www.friendsof-eastgatehouse.org) on Facebook on [www.facebook.com/eastgatehouse](http://www.facebook.com/eastgatehouse) and on Twitter <https://twitter.com/EastgateHouse>. To join the Friends of Eastgate House, please contact Terri Zbyszewska, The Membership Secretary, FoEH, 31 The Esplanade, Rochester, ME1 1QW or at [tzbyszewska@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:tzbyszewska@yahoo.co.uk); a copy of the membership form is also available on the website.

The service was led by The Right Reverend Dr. Stephen Venner DL and The Reverend Scott Brown, Chaplain of the Fleet and following an introductory prayer, the congregation sang 'Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us.' The drumhead was built and the standards were presented. The Bishop introduced the service, reminding us all why we were there: '...to remember all those who were caught up in the courageous but tragic events of the First World war, especially for the crews of HMS *Aboukir*, HMS *Hogue* and HMS *Cressy*, three Chatham Division Cruisers. We remember all those who were killed in action, or by disease, the bereaved, the lost, the families who were shattered, the wounded, maimed and injured, those who held in silence unspeakable memories of warfare...we remember those who fought and those who remained anxiously at home in this community...'

The Duke of Kent unveiled a plaque to commemorate the sinking of the cruisers and we then listened to a reading by Julie Cook, the granddaughter of John Richard Back who was lost in HMS *Cressy*. Julie read extracts from a contemporary account of the action. Admiral Sir George Zambellas, First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff rose next to read from *Ecclesiasticus*. More hymns and prayers followed and then Henk van der Linden got to his feet.:

I call upon the Mayor of Medway to pass a traditional commemorative poppy wreath to the Mayor of the Hague with the request that this wreath be taken by him and laid on behalf of the people of Medway at the Municipal Cemetery, Den Haag on Wednesday 24th September in remembrance of the loss of the three cruisers HMS *Aboukir*, HMS *Hogue* and HMS *Cressy*.

The mayor of Medway represents the people of Medway who recognise and thank the Dutch people for their rescue of and kind acts in caring for the survivors from His Majesty's Ships *Aboukir*, *Hogue* and *Cressy* and also to remember the 1,459 men lost in the action of 22nd September 1914 of which 1,264 were from the Chatham Port Division.

The handing of this wreath to the Mayor of The Hague symbolises the connection between the people of Medway and the people of The Hague today, a connection made stronger by the history of one hundred years ago.'

The final moments of the ceremony were the most moving. The *Act of Remembrance* was read by Cllr. Barry Kemp the Mayor of Medway and the Mayor of The Hague's representative. Poppy petals fell, the *Last Post* was played and the Covered Slip fell completely silent.

Following the service guests mingled again over refreshments and to bring the day to a close everyone gathered on Museum Square for Beat Retreat by the Royal Marines Band which had so brilliantly played at the ceremony.

Tuesday 23 September was *Travel Day* according to Henk's itinerary. Tessa and I met early at St Pancras International Station, ready to board the Eurostar train for Brussels where we would change for The Hague. Thanks to a broken down locomotive we arrived at our destination, the coastal resort of Scheveningen, slightly later than anticipated, but it didn't matter as we were excited to have arrived, buoyed by the bracing sea air and the many wonderful people we had met on the journey.



been possible had the descendants of those people not got in touch with Henk. Whilst Otto Weddigen's story proved fascinating, it was the story of Duncan Stubbs and his friend W.H. Wykeham-Musgrave, known as Kit, which took centre stage. The 15 year old cadets from Dartmouth Naval College survived all three sinkings only to be drowned attempting to save the life of another, older man. The story was taken up by Stubbs' great nephew and Alice Barrigan's son, also named Duncan, a keen diver who was filmed diving down to the wrecks with the rest of the team. The documentary was breathtaking and there were few dry eyes in the St. George's Centre as the titles rolled to loud applause.

Klaudie Bartelink then took questions from the floor and this gave the descendants a further opportunity to tell their individual stories and ask others for lost pieces of information. There was also much discussion about the salvage work going on in the North Sea and the desecration of the graves of the crews of the cruisers, all of which had been highlighted in the documentary. Archaeologist, Andy Brockman, took to the floor and explained how the wheels were in motion to recognise the site as an official war grave. As yet no official announcement had been made, but there was some considerable pressure for this to happen as quickly as possible. This was a subject to which everyone would return over the next few days.

At the close of Sunday's proceedings, Henk made his concluding remarks: 'Someone picked me to take this road. I don't know who. It is what it is.'

Guests remained in the Centre for refreshments and an opportunity to talk and look at the photographs of the crew members Tessa Towner had put on display. Many of the guests were staying at the Ramada Hotel in the Historic Dockyard and here discussions continued well into the evening.

The following day, 22 September, and the one hundredth anniversary of the sinkings, guests were hushed over breakfast at the Ramada. It was not that everything had been said the previous day or that they were tired, but the anniversary was upon us and the morning was a time to reflect. The Dockyard was open at 10 am for everyone with a ticket for the commemoration ceremony to be able to look around free of charge. Visitors arriving for a day out and unaware of what was going on were also thrilled to discover that entry was free. Tessa and I were joined by Elaine Gardner and after lunch we and the other thousand guests made our way to the No.5 Covered Slip for the commemorative Drumhead Service. All the descendants had been given enamel badges to wear by the Historic Dockyard to indicate their affiliation with each cruiser: yellow for HMS *Hogue*, blue for HMS *Cressy*, and red for HMS *Aboukir*. Some wore more than one badge as many of the men had swum from vessel to vessel in an attempt to save themselves.

Around us were many familiar faces, but we were particularly thrilled when the VIPs began to enter to spy FOMA Vice President Sue Haydock arrive with Vice Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence, the husband of Anne, the Princess Royal. Then we heard The Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines (Commando Training Centre Royal Marines) Lymington as they began their progress into the Covered Slip. It was an exciting moment. Their entrance was followed by HRH The Duke of Kent, The Lord Lieutenant of Kent, The Viscount De L'Isle MBE and Admiral Sir Ian Garnett, Chairman of Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust.

## The City of Rochester Society

"The City of Rochester Society was founded in 1967 to help conserve the historic City as a pleasant place to visit. The Society is still active today, helping to improve the environment and quality of life in Rochester for residents and visitors alike." Taken from the City of Rochester Society website, [www.city-of-rochester.org.uk](http://www.city-of-rochester.org.uk), where further information on the society and how to join is available.

### Talks

22nd January 2015, 2pm for 2.30pm,  
All Aboard the Medway Queen,  
Gillian Ellen, Medway Queen Preservation Society.

12 February, 2pm for 2.30pm,  
The work of the Kent Gardens Trust, including the Medway project,  
Paul Howarth, The Kent Gardens Trust.

All talks are at The Moat House, 8 Crow Lane, Rochester, ME1 1RF. There is a small charge for events to defray expenses; please contact the CoRS Secretary, Christine Furminger on 01634 320598 or at [cafurming@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:cafurming@blueyonder.co.uk) for further information and how to join.

See Rochester's wealth of historic buildings and hear about the City's long and fascinating history from an enthusiastic and knowledgeable guide of the City of Rochester Society! Every Saturday, Sunday, Wednesday and Public Holiday from Good Friday until the end of October. Starting at 2.15 p.m. from The Visitors Centre, High Street, Rochester. The tours are free of charge, but donations to Society funds are always gratefully received.

## Friends of Broomhill

Broomhill Park has been awarded a fourth Green Flag; the Award recognises the best green spaces in the country. Help us get a Green Flag for the fifth year running and improve our quite high score in the RHS South East in Bloom competition.



This year FOB were classed 'outstanding' in the RHS South East in Bloom competition.

Task Days -

First Sunday of the month. December - shrub planting; January - no Task Day; February - 'Bob Wade Commemoration Big Scrub Clear;' March - wild flower planting; April - end of season litter pick. Do come and join us - it's free, it's fun and it's healthy.

Healthy Walks -

Every Tuesday, meet at Strood Library at 9.45 am. A guided and pleasant walk with wonderful views overlooking the Medway and Thames, and woodland paths. Duration about 60 minutes. Complimentary tea and coffee served in the library after the walk. Sorry - dogs not allowed in the library. Contact: 01634 333720.

## The Royal Engineers Museum, Library and Archive

Prince Arthur Road, Gillingham, Kent, ME4 4UG

[www.re-museum.co.uk](http://www.re-museum.co.uk) for more details



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

The Royal Engineers Museum now has an e-newsletter. To subscribe for free, email 'Yes Please!' to [deputycurator@re-museum.co.uk](mailto:deputycurator@re-museum.co.uk)

### Events

Thursday 27th November, 7pm.  
Creating Cinematic War Memorials: The First World War Battle Reconstructions of British Instructional Films, 1921-1931.  
A lecture by Mark Connelly.

British Instructional Films made a series of battle reconstructions with the aid of the War Office and Admiralty that proved smash hits across the Empire. Now almost entirely unknown, these films attempted to show the people of the Empire exactly what their soldiers and sailors had done on their behalf. Using hundreds of troops and ships lent by the army and navy, BIF was able to create epics which thrilled people whilst also making them consider the cost of the war. Such was the importance of these films that King George V made the first ever visit by a British monarch to a public cinema in order to see the 1924 film *Zeebrugge*. He was so impressed that when the Battles of the Coronel and Falkland Islands was released in 1927 he requested a private showing at Balmoral. By looking at these films, it is possible to tell much about how people across the British Empire understood the war in its immediate aftermath.

**Tickets: £5 (includes refreshments). Booking is essential as places are limited, please book early to avoid disappointment. To reserve a place call: 01634822312**

with him. Hughes said that when he was in his hammock he could hear the two talking on watch and Duncan's laugh could be heard all over the ship.'

Descendants continued to join Henk on his *Road* which was to take an interesting turn when it came to organising the book launch for the English imprint. Henk had placed an advertisement in the *Medway Messenger* asking for information and it was this which Tessa Towner, FOMA's Chairman, responded to and which began our own involvement. Tessa told Henk about her work on the De Caville index which included many of those who had served on the three cruisers. Thanks to this and FOMA's help, some 80 relatives representing 20 cruiser crew members eventually attended Henk's book presentation at the St. George's Centre in 2012 and the Turning the Page Ceremony at Rochester Cathedral (see *The Clock Tower*, Issue 28, November 2012.)

Henk realised that the descendants needed a focus for their stories and a means to find each other to share information, and thus the Live Bait Squadron Society was formed ([www.livebaitsqn-soc.info/](http://www.livebaitsqn-soc.info/)). Barry Mack and John Tice (the grandson of survivor William (Billy) Tice, a Petty Officer Stoker on HMS *Hogue*) wrote to the *Daily Mail*. The publicity which this generated uncovered even more descendants, including those of Kapitänleutnant Otto Weddigen, captain of the U-boat *U9*, which had fired the torpedoes at the cruisers that fateful September morning. For this, Weddigen had been awarded the Orden Pour le Mérite medal, or the Blue Max, Prussia's highest military award



*Right: the Tice family at the commemorations in the St. George's Centre, Pembroke Barracks, at Chatham Historic Dockyard; John Tice is on the right.*

In 2013 Henk received a letter from the Lord Lieutenant of Kent and Chatham Historic Dockyard. Plans to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the sinkings were being considered, but to move things forward they needed Henk to be part of the Centennial Team. Whilst all of this was going on, Klaudie Bartelink and her team had continued work on the documentary with a view to screening it at the commemorations. Everything was falling into place.

At this point in Henk's talk at the St. George's Centre the lights were dimmed for the inaugural screening of the documentary. Narrated by Roger Thurman, the film is to be shown on Dutch television in October or November. The film tells the story of the Live Bait Squadron, focussing in large part on the stories of individuals, none of which would have

There was not a seat to spare in the old Dockyard church and once Henk had welcomed everyone in Dutch and English, he called out the name of each of the cruisers, to which descendants were to respond, 'Here!' Each response was unexpectedly emotional, for it was as if the voices of those who had perished a hundred years before were calling out to us, the dead making themselves present at our gathering. Cllr. Barry Kemp, the Mayor of Medway, and Mrs. Ann West, Deputy Lieutenant of Kent, representing HM The Queen, were invited to speak, and then Henk returned to the lectern to begin his presentation. Henk spoke about the early years of his research, the highs and the lows, and then the breakthrough moment in 2008 when he began writing his book, *Live Bait Squadron* (ISBN 978-9461532602) and realised that it should be the men on the cruisers who 'should tell the story, should be the heart of the book.'

The original Dutch version of the book was to be launched at a special commemoration on 16 September 2010 at the Municipal Cemetery in The Hague, the place Henk had found himself back in 2004 and where the story had begun. A member of the Mayor's staff who had contacted Henk to organise the commemoration recognised him as one of his personal heroes, the author of the much-admired school books Henk had written on economics. The tide began to turn. Dutch radio and the press started to take an interest and as a result the descendants were found of Captains Roelof Voorham and Joop Berhout, the respective masters of the rescue vessels *SS Flora* and *SS Titan*. Momentum grew and the book launch became a far more formal commemoration ceremony than had originally been anticipated.

From this moment on Henk began to receive correspondence from more Live Bait descendants, but not all the information he received was good. In 2010 reports began to emerge of metal salvagers on the wrecks of the three cruisers at the bottom of the sea.

In 2011, the second edition of the book was printed, this version having been translated from Dutch into English. At about this time Henk was to discover that diving was permitted at the wreck site and it was through the Duik de Noordzee Schoon (Dive the North Sea Clean) that he learnt there was a budget available for filming and they could make a documentary about the cruisers. From that moment on a camera crew, led by diving enthusiast Klaudie Bartelink, was to follow him along his *Road*.

At the end of this same year, Henk received an email from Alice Barrigan regarding her ancestor, 15 year old midshipman Duncan Stubbs, who had perished on board HMS *Aboukir* and whose remains have never been found. Then in January 2012 Henk was contacted by Barry and Brenda Mack about Gunner William James Shrubshall RN, aged 40, who had also perished on board HMS *Aboukir*.

These descendants were to become a driving force for the dissemination of the Live Bait Squadron story. Alice's family had inherited Duncan Stubbs' sea chest which he had been prevented from taking on board the *Aboukir* as it was too large. The box contained many treasures including written evidence of Stubbs' friendship with Shrubshall, something Barry Mack was not aware of. Duncan's father, Major Stubbs had written: 'Duncan and the gunner Mr. Shrubsole [sic] were great friends and took the watch together. Lt. Hughes wanted to change Duncan's watch for some reason but Mr. Shrubsole would not hear of it; he liked to hear Duncan talk at night and would not have any other midshipman

First World War Battlefield Tour Groups: January 2014 - November 2018

For more information or to book please call: 01634 822312.

Outbreak 1914: Royal Engineers Go To War:  
3<sup>rd</sup> July 2014 - 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2014.

The Unseen Project: 30<sup>th</sup> October 2014 - 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015

The Unseen Project is an experimental photo-series which uses some of the last infrared colour film ever produced. The work explores the boundaries of our perception, allowing us to see things outside our normal visual spectrum.

War Time Christmas Weekend: 13<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> December 2014; 10.30am – 5.00pm.

Join us this Christmas at the Royal Engineers Museum to find out how Christmas time was celebrated during the Second World War.

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



## The Chatham Historical Society

Meetings are held at The Lampard Centre, Sally Port, Brompton, ME7 5BU, **excepting January and August**. The Lampard Centre has easy disabled/wheelchair access and a small car park. There is plenty of unrestricted roadside parking space in Maxwell Road, about 50 metres away. Sally Port has some unrestricted roadside parking space, but please avoid the sections with the double yellow lines or the *No Parking* notices.

11th December 2014 - Christmas Social.

8th January 2015 - No meeting.

12th February 2015,  
*Conscientious Objectors*,  
A talk by Brian Joyce.

12th March 2015,  
*Lighter than Air*,  
A talk by S. Pope.

9th April 2015 - Annual General Meeting.

Doors open at 7:15 pm, meetings finish at 9:00 pm. Refreshments are available and visitors are very welcome. Admission: £1 for members, £3 for visitors. Further information is available at [www.chathamhistoricalsoc.btck.co.uk](http://www.chathamhistoricalsoc.btck.co.uk)

Results of the latest research into exciting discoveries made on Kent's major prehistoric sites will be discussed at a public conference in Canterbury in December (see below).

Ian Coulson, president of the Kent Archaeological Society, who will chair the event, said: 'We will enjoy presentations from seven experts whose knowledge spans 10,000 years of life in the county – from the Stone Age to the Roman invasions of 55 and 54 BC. This will be the most important conference on prehistoric Kent for many years. If it's a success we hope it will become an annual or biennial event.'

Digs at Mesolithic era (10,000 BC - 4,500 BC) sites at Shorne Woods Country Park, Gravesend and Ranscombe Farm, Cuxton, will be described by Andrew Mayfield, Kent County Council Community Archaeologist and Dave May, amateur archaeologist and naturalist.

Dr Pat Reid of the Faversham Society Archaeological Research Group will focus on the results of excavations, geo-resistivity surveys and metal detecting carried out in attempts to solve the mysteries of the 'Davington plateau' west of Faversham, rumoured for many years to be the site of a Late Iron Age hill fort, a medieval road, and possibly a small village and manor house.

Dr John Hammond's chosen subject will be Bronze Age round barrows and ring ditches. He is an alumni research scholar and lecturer at the University of Kent, and the Canterbury Archaeological Trust's business manager.

The *Bridge helmet*, worn by a Late Iron Age warrior, and the *Chilham mirror* and two brooches that belonged to a woman of the same period, are two of the most exciting finds in Kent. Keith Parfitt, who is one of the UK's leading field archaeologists, will relate everything that is known about these objects.

Focussing on the brooches from Kent, Dr Sophia Adams will discuss the unique nature of the Iron Age material culture of the county, through comparison with the rest of Britain.

The conference will conclude with an update by Dr Paul Bennett on the latest sea trials of the Canterbury Archaeological Trust's replica of a Bronze Age boat unearthed in Dover in 1992.

**The conference will be held at Rutherford College, University of Kent at Canterbury on Saturday, December 13. For a full programme and booking form visit the Events pages at <http://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk> or contact Ted Connell on 01474 872763, email [ted.connell@btinternet.com](mailto:ted.connell@btinternet.com)**

## *The Live Bait Squadron Commemorations: The Road to Chatham*

Amanda Thomas



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

FOMA's commemorations of World War One continued at the end of September as Tessa Towner and I joined the much anticipated gathering of descendants of the Live Bait Squadron.

Many of you will now be familiar with the name Henk van der Linden, a Dutch economist, who one day in 2004 strayed into the war graves cemetery in The Hague. He was on his way to a meeting but could not find a parking space and parked near to the cemetery. This chance decision led him to discover the story of Chatham's three cruisers: HMS *Aboukir*, *Hogue* and *Cressy*.

Henk calls this the start of *Our Road to Chatham*, and on 21 September 2014 the end of that long road was almost in sight. It was a beautiful late summer's afternoon when guests began to arrive at the St. George's Centre, Pembroke Barracks, at Chatham Historic Dockyard. This was to be the first day of commemorations and celebrations of the lives of the 1,459 men and boys who perished in the space of a few hours in the North Sea on the morning of 22 September 1914.



*FOMA Chairman, Tessa Towner (left), and Clock Tower Editor, Amanda Thomas, at the commemorations in the St. George's Centre, Pembroke Barracks, at Chatham Historic Dockyard.*

## HMS Pathfinder

John Magee

*John lived in Rainham until 2006. he is a former Medway Councillor and now lives in Bluntisham, Huntingdon, where he runs the Rockmeadow Boarding Kennels.*

*The launch of the De Caville index on 4 August 2014 has caused a considerable amount of correspondence to arrive from people whose Medway ancestors died in World War One. One of these is John Magee whose grandfather, Richard Edward Magee, was lost on HMS Pathfinder.*

In 2012 I discovered a film about the wreck of HMS *Pathfinder* on the internet when The Prime Minister announced the Centenary of The First World War. Only the land war was mentioned and the fact that visits would be arranged for students to visit the cemeteries in France and Belgium. I wrote several letters to government departments but they informed me that Jutland was to be the only naval commemoration. So began Operation *Pathfinder*. The wreck had only been located in 1962 and the first diver to visit the wreck was in 2006. I wrote to the First Sea Lord requesting a naval presence over the *Pathfinder* in October 2012.

On Saturday 5 September 1914 HMS *Pathfinder* was low on coal and travelling at 5 knots. She was a sitting duck and the first ship in history to be sunk by a powered torpedo. She was struck off St Abbs Head in Berwickshire with the loss of 259 men. My grandfather, Richard Edward Magee, Master at Arms, was killed that afternoon. In May this year my family was asked to loan items belonging to my grandfather for the exhibition *Valour, Loss and Sacrifice* at Chatham Historic Dockyard. We loaned some letters dated 6 August and 3 September, my grandfather's medals, a photograph and a death penny. It was a very emotional day for the three generations of our family who visited Chatham in July

Then I discovered that Marine Quest of Eyemouth were organising a centenary dive on Friday 5 September and I was asked to be the principal guest. At 0700 hours we sailed out of Eyemouth Harbour, accompanied by a pod of dolphins, arriving at the wreck site at 0830 hours. The divers from the British Sub-Aqua Club (BSAC) dived down and placed a wreath on the wreck. The sea was calm and the sun penetrated down to the ship. On the divers' return I delivered the eulogy and placed my family's wreath over the wreck. During the dive, the Union Flag flew over the site of HMS *Pathfinder*, thanks to a special licence from the Ministry of Defence. Following the eulogy, the flag was presented to me by the divers.

On our return to Eyemouth ITN, STV and BBC Scotland were at the quayside and *Pathfinder* received nationwide coverage on News at Ten - she had been forgotten for far too long

Other wreaths were placed in memory of HMS *Pathfinder* at Chatham Historic Dockyard and Richard Edward Magee's great grandson, Andrew, placed a wreath both at The Naval Memorial at Chatham and at the wreck site. We must never forget we are an island nation and the families who lost loved ones serving in the Royal and Merchant Navies have no grave to visit. On Remembrance Sunday (9 November) Marine Quest will be arranging another dive to HMS *Pathfinder*. It will be a fitting tribute.

## About The Clock Tower

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

### Editorial deadlines

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

**The copy deadline for Issue 36 of *The Clock Tower* is Monday 26 January 2015, with publication on Wednesday 18 February 2015.**

### Publication date

The fourth Wednesday following the editorial deadline.

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

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### Front Cover Accreditations and Website Information

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

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

*The Clock Tower* is also available at [www.foma-lsc.org/newsletter.html](http://www.foma-lsc.org/newsletter.html)

### Further Information

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

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

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

## Readers' Letters

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

### Masson Family of Medway

From Diana Wadham:

'My mother will be 90 in December and would like to know more about her father's family. He lived in Medway although he was born in France. He was Charles Henry Levy Masson. We know he was born in October 1898 in the Calais region of France. His parents married in Calais but his mother Leah Levy Tranah was born in Strood. He married Elsie Florence Elvy in 1922 and died on the 12th December 1973 in Chatham. He actually lived as a child in Strood and owned the Invicta Garage opposite the main church in Strood High Street. His mother Leah Levy owned a shop on the left hand side coming down Strood Hill after the railway bridge. I think his grandfather Levy owned the public house that used to be on the corner of Cuxton Road and Strood Hill and he also owned what is now the Conservative Club on Star Hill Rochester. We probably know quite a lot about his mother's family. I think it might be his father's family that my mother would like to know more about. His father was a French captain of a cross channel ferry. Can you help at all, please?'

### FOMA MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

**Please note that all FOMA subscriptions are due on 1st January. The final opportunity to renew will be at the AGM and NO LATER.**

**If you do not renew by the AGM, website passwords and email addresses will be deleted from the database. Please ensure that you renew on time!**

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

**You can also renew on the FOMA website at  
<http://www.foma-lsc.org/foma/new/membership.html>**

A man named George Webb, of Snodland, near Maidstone, joined the Royal Field Artillery a month or two ago, and was sent to Glasgow for training. His wife received a telegram from the army authorities stating that Webb was seriously ill in Ruchill Hospital, where he had been conveyed from Maryhill Barracks suffering from an infectious disease.

Two hours later another wire arrived intimating that he was dead, and that if she desired a warrant to travel to Glasgow for the funeral it would be forwarded. The request was made and granted, and a similar pass was provided for the mother of the soldier.

The women bought mourning, and Mrs. Webb, junior, borrowed money from the insurance agent on the strength of the telegram. They went to London where they were joined by a brother, and then proceeded to Glasgow, arriving there at ten o'clock in the morning.

At the hospital they found a gun-carriage outside the mortuary chapel. A chaplain expressed his sympathy, and stated that the funeral service was about to commence. The mother pitifully exclaimed 'But I want to see my boy!'

The chaplain informed her that she would be able to see the body after the service. The party then entered the chapel and found that a glass screen, over which a blind was drawn, separated them from the place where the coffin lay. The service was held, and the blind was drawn.

Suddenly the mourning party were startled by a shriek. Webb's mother stepped forward and exclaimed—'That is not my boy!'

This was taken merely as an exclamation of an overwrought mother, and fainting, she was assisted outside. Mrs Webb junior and her brother-in-law left the chapel and a party of soldiers entered the chapel by another door to bear the coffin away.

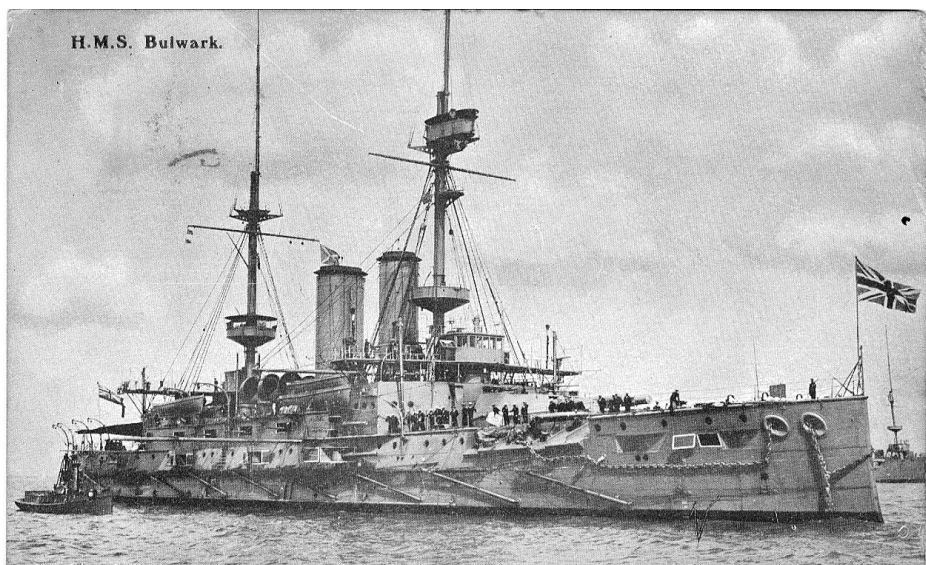
When the coffin, enveloped by the Union Jack, had been deposited on the gun carriage, the mourners followed it to the grave. By this time Mrs Webb had sufficiently recovered from the shock she had received to join the rest of her family.

The firing party had just drawn up when another extraordinary thing happened. One of the firing party turned his head, and at that moment Webb's brother-in-law exclaimed "Why, there's George". The widow also exclaimed - "Yes, there's my husband". Webb then for the first time recognised the funeral party as his own wife, mother, and brother. He had previously been standing in the background.

The explanation of the mistake appears to be that the men were both named George James Webb, they were both twenty-seven years of age, and that there is only the difference of one figure in their regimental numbers.

The regimental number of the one was 82614 and of the other 82619. It is understood that the deceased soldier himself contributed to the mistake by giving the number of the other soldier of the same name.

The online article in *The Daily News*, Perth, records that when the funeral was over Mrs Webb had a talk with her husband. 'He told me that when he was out the hospital authorities sent to his room and had his kit taken away to be disinfected. He thought there was some mistake, but although he knew the name of the man who was taken to hospital was George Webb, like his own, he did not think they were being mixed up.' Webb is described as 'Private, 3<sup>rd</sup> Essex' at the baptism of his son William Charles at Snodland on 18 July that year. The family lived in East Street from 1911 to 1917, paying rent to the mill, but they then seem to have moved away.



*HMS Bulwark, from the private collection of Bob Ratcliffe.*

## *An Extraordinary World War One Story*

Dr. Andrew Ashbee

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



The story which follows was apparently first told in the *Daily Express*, but it soon appeared elsewhere. The account comes from the  *Lanarkshire Sunday Special*, 15 March 1915, and there are at least two other Scottish versions. I first saw it online where it had been printed in *The Daily News*, Perth, Western Australia, on 12 May 1915:

I have made enquiries regarding the extraordinary climax at a military funeral in Glasgow a few days ago, when a soldier named George Webb of the Royal Field Artillery, had died of an infectious disease.

## *Books for Christmas*

Steve Cross



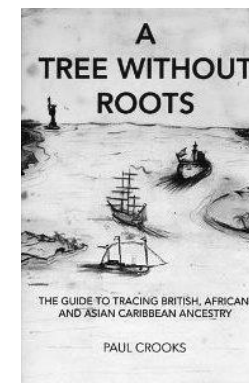
*Steve moved from Yorkshire to Chatham with the Royal Navy in 1977, and has lived there ever since. He was an engineer at BAe. Systems at Rochester Airport Works for 29 years, retiring in December 2008. He is now a volunteer at MALSC also a member of FOMA and the KFHS. He has been researching his own family history since the birth of his son in 1985 and now enjoys helping others research their own families with the aid of Ancestry. He also dabbles in the repair and improvement of digital or scanned photographs.*

### *A Tree Without Roots*, by Paul Crooks.

The majority of amateur family historians in the United Kingdom, when starting out on their researches, have a generally recognised path to tread, using the readily available information in the public domain. In the case of the researcher of black African, Caribbean or slave trade descent, things are not so straightforward.

In this book, Paul Crooks, uses his personal experiences from researching his own heritage, to explain the particular problems he encountered. He uses the medium of Case Studies to present the specific difficulties he had to overcome to progress through every stage of his family history struggle, which took him over eleven years.

He starts by questioning one's motives for starting research, which makes one think deeply exactly what is trying to be achieved and why. He then goes on to suggest many avenues of research which the reader may not have considered or even realised existed. The first is the obvious preliminary step of talking to people, especially older family members, whilst they are still able to remember facts and dates. The importance of passing information through the generations by word of mouth is stressed very strongly in the book. The next chapters go on to give examples of each stage of the search, even for people about whom not the least item of information is known, i.e. name, birth date or place, marriages, death, let alone any details whatsoever of their personal lives. Even for an experienced family historian this book gives an insight into many different, interesting areas. It is a very worthwhile read, with fresh ideas. Even if slave ancestors may have never yet been a subject of investigation within your own family, the information is just as valid.



ISBN 978-1-90514-781-6

## *Beyond the Basics*, by Tana L. Pedersen

Although the title says 2012 it is valid for the 2014 upgrade too! *Beyond the Basics* is produced primarily for users of Ancestry.com, but it is equally valid for users of Ancestry.co.uk.

The review on the back of the book reads: '*Beyond the Basics* teaches you the best ways to define complex relationships; gives examples of custom reports and charts that can help you share your family history and become a more effective researcher; and explains how to get the most out of *Ancestry* and *Family Tree Maker*.'

I came upon the book by accident whilst browsing the web and I couldn't resist: I bought it immediately! I have found it invaluable, so I am merely bringing it to the attention of fellow family historians who may not be aware of its existence, nor understand how helpful it may prove for their research and, in particular, for using *Family Tree Maker* software when recording and presenting research.

The book is American, but it is just as valuable for UK family history researchers. Although some of the sources of information may differ, the principles of that research remain the same in either case. As it says in their own review it really does take over where the companion book (also written by Tana L. Pedersen), supplied with the software, leaves off, explaining some of the more advanced techniques and less well explained features. Even if you have an older version of *Family Tree Maker* than 2012, this volume may even entice you to upgrade - even to 2014.

ISBN 978-1-59331-340-1

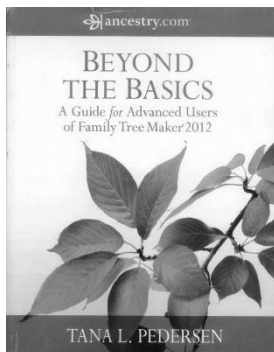
## *More Essential Christmas Reading*

Amanda Thomas



### *Divorced, Beheaded, Sold*, by Maria Nicolaou

What better read for Christmas than one about marital breakdown? Historian Maria Nicolaou's *Divorced, Beheaded, Sold*, from publisher Pen and Sword, looks at divorce and the role of women in marriage through the centuries. Nicolaou is quick to point out that for women marriage was an entirely different institution in the 1500s to what it was in the Victorian era and, indeed, today.



## *HMS Bulwark*

Bob Ratcliffe



*Bob Ratcliffe is a retired architect. He is President of The City of Rochester Society and a local historian; Bob is also a FOMA committee member.*  
Bulwark

This month we commemorate the centenary of the first of the two naval disasters on our river, the loss by internal explosion of *HMS Bulwark*. Despite frequent requests by the Conservancy for the Admiralty to clear the wreck site, little was done, and the area remains to this day as *foul ground* on the charts. This description of her loss is taken from Ronald Marsh's *History of the Medway Conservancy 1881-1969*.

On the morning of Thursday, 26 November, 1914, *HMS Bulwark*, a battleship of the *London* class, was lying at moorings in Kethole Reach, taking in ammunition. She was a ship of 15,000 tons displacement, 411 feet long at the waterline, 75 feet in breadth and with a draught of 27 feet. The time was seven minutes to eight, and between 700 and 899 men of her Portsmouth crew were on board, most of them on the mess-decks having breakfast. On the upper deck the band of *HMS Excellent*, gunnery school at Portsmouth, were playing, as was their normal duty, when suddenly a tremendous explosion ripped the ship apart. Enveloped momentarily in a vast sheet of flame, she almost instantly disappeared in billowing clouds of black, yellow and white smoke. When the smoke cleared, she was gone. All that could be seen of her was a small, unidentifiable portion projecting four feet above the water.

The flash was seen at Conyer, near Teynham, fourteen miles away, while the explosion was heard at Gravesend, Southend and Faversham. Only twelve men were saved. One able-seaman on the mess-deck, blown up through the smoke, felt himself turning over and over as he rose and fell, yet never lost consciousness, plunging into the sea to find himself instantly swimming. When a rescue boat appeared he told them to help others - he was alright. Strangely all the ship's papers and books floated to the surface and were recovered. Very few bodies were recovered, not more than thirty. When the tide ebbed the remains of *Bulwark* could be seen above the water in three huge pieces.



Canada, who is the granddaughter of James Dale. She has spoken to her mother, Pauline, who has Alzheimer's, but has recollected quite a lot about the family's early life.

James Dale was in fact Caroline's third husband; she had previously married Robert W. Pirie in 1911 (he died in 1914 of tuberculosis) and then Jesse W. Norman in 1917 (his death has not been traced, but he could be a WWI casualty), both in Woolwich. Caroline was born in Woolwich in 1892. The family's connection took them back to Woolwich in 1936, when in straightened circumstances. Apparently James never really found work again and his family had to resort to various means to make ends meet. Caroline took in laundry, the children had cleaning jobs. James junior worked at a big market in London and the family went hop picking in August every year in Kent to supplement the father's pension.

Pauline recalls how the family were twice bombed out in Woolwich during World War Two and Caroline received an injury when a glass cabinet shattered in the family home. The daughter also recalls being evacuated to Kent for a short time; probably during the 'phoney war' in September 1939. The children were quickly returned to their parents after no action occurred; Kent also was not the safest place to be evacuated to. She could also remember three further children that did not survive: Colin, Ernest and Jesse. Her two half brothers, by Caroline's marriage to Robert Pirie, were Robert Pirie Junior born in 1912 (who was murdered in the first month of WWII when serving in the Navy as a seaman cook on board a ship in Scotland), and Alfred born in 1914.

Sadly both James and Caroline died while the family were relatively young. James Dale went home on a visit to his family in Lymington and died of a fatal heart attack in the street outside his former home. Caroline died in 1949 due to her war injury, leaving behind the youngest aged just 18 and his four siblings who are in the photo above. James Macklin Dale was the first British injury of World War One, but did not merit a mention till 1931. He received his belated Christmas present, as illustrated above, eighteen long years after the friendly fire incident.

*My sincere thanks to Carol McLean for providing the information on her grandfather, James Dale, and assisting in obtaining the above recollections from her mother.*

In addition, and not altogether surprisingly, marriage and separation were not regarded in the same way by the rich and the poor. Nicolaou discusses the various forms of marriage which took place before the ceremony was formalised in 1753. She looks at the vows which needed to be exchanged and the places in which a wedding could take place, which included taverns and brothels. Such informality and lack of documentation poses significant problems for today's family historians trying to unravel the lives of more distant ancestors. Evidence suggests that in the late 1500s marital separation and bigamy were not uncommon. Indeed by 1604 bigamy had become so rife that an act of parliament was passed making it punishable by death, though in reality many culprits escaped this fate. The book is essential Christmas reading for all family historians especially as Nicolaou cites many individual cases, all of which are indexed. I even found one of my ancestors! The research is extensive, the case studies and observations are fascinating and the final chapter features one of the most famous divorcees in history - that of King Henry VIII.

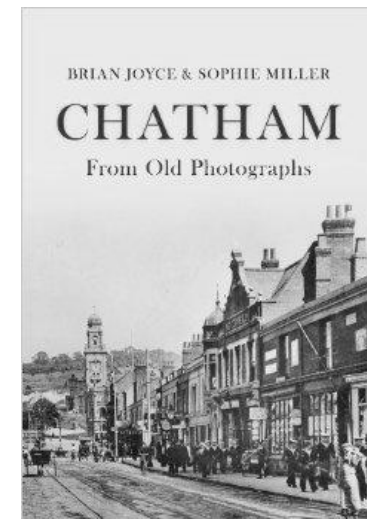
ISBN 978-1781593400

### ***Chatham From Old Photographs,*** by Brian Joyce and Sophie Miller

*Chatham From Old Photographs* is another *must-have* stocking filler. Most people with a connection with the Medway Towns will also have a connection to Chatham, and if you are over a certain age, this book will bring back some wonderful memories. It is a selection of old photographs of Chatham and its environs from the private collection of FOMA's Brian Joyce. Known for his love of old images, Brian was contacted by Amberley Publishing as the obvious author for such a work. Brian collaborated with old friend Sophie Miller who helped with the words and contributed additional information. The book begins with a lovely acknowledgement to the staff at MALSC, and continues in the same warm vein. It is clear that Brian and Sophie feel passionate about the area and the work contains a wealth of information.

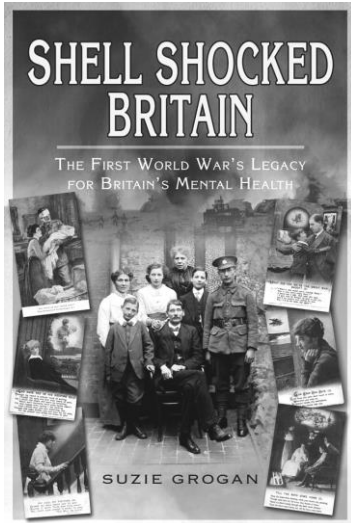
ISBN 978-1445632919.

Also available from the same authors (from 28 Nov 2014) is *Gillingham & Around from Old Photographs*, ISBN 978-1445632971.



## *Shell Shocked Britain*, by Suzie Grogan

*Shell Shocked Britain*, from publisher Pen and Sword, looks at the impact of the First World War on the men, women and children who survived it and highlights the legacy of shell shock in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. How did those four years of conflict affect the way we view the mental health of those traumatised by their experience of war?



Suzie Grogan was inspired to write this book by an incident in her family history that sent shock waves through generations of her family, but it was not an isolated case.

Civilians were also traumatised. Devastating air raids brought the war into the domestic lives of the Home Front. Every family knew someone lost to the conflict and anxiety, grief, bereavement and the privations of war took their toll. The Spanish influenza outbreak of 1918-19 killed more than 200,000 people who had survived the war itself.

This book uses new material to chart the many tragedies which have their roots in the 1914-1918 conflict. It looks at the direct effects of shell shock on the troops and their

families and examines different medical approaches to *cure* shell shock. The work includes many lesser known facts about the period, such as the surge in the popularity of the spiritualist church.

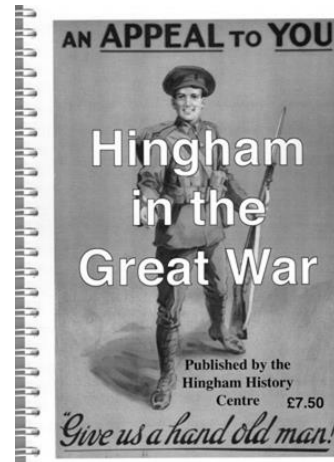
ISBN 978-1781592656

## *Hingham in the Great War*

FOMA member Carol Harris kindly sent us the details about this super A5 book which is full of over a hundred pages of text and pictures.

Many Medway people originated in East Anglia or have relatives there. Hingham is well known for its involvement in heritage and the History Group publishes some excellent books all at competitive prices.

Published by and available from the Hingham History Centre (<http://hinghamhistorycentre.co.uk/publications/>)



The photo had obviously not come from this article neither did it provide much more information on the family or incident than the image did. Dale's service record, however, gave both his place and date of birth: Lymington in 1883. From this a marriage was found to a Caroline Norman in Medway during 1922. Names could also be put to all the children in the photo from Free BMD: Pauline (1926), Philip (1931), Doreen (1923), James (1924) and Francis (1929). Another child, Ernest, was born to the couple in 1930, but died soon afterwards. According to the newspaper they lived at 29 Harold Avenue in Gillingham, having just moved from no. 65 where they had resided since 1924. This road was new council housing built in 1923/4 to provide accommodation 'fit for heroes.'

Now I had the full name an internet search was undertaken, but revealed only one pertinent entry from Genes Reunited. A Carol McLean (née Peake) had posted an entry in 2006, seeking further information on her grandfather. Her message confirmed his wife and children minus Ernest and recorded he had died back in the New Forest area in 1948. Sadly his family had disowned him for failing to continue the family business, which was two centuries' old.. His father had been a tailor, which is the occupation James had given on his service record. He enlisted in the navy in 1905 at Chatham for twelve years, but the war extended his period and he only finally retired from the navy in 1927 due to age restrictions after 22 years' service.

What had happened to the stoker in 1914 and where did this photo come from? The logical course was to try the local papers. I looked in the *Chatham News & Chatham Observer* in December 1931, but nothing was found. One last resort was the *Chatham Standard*, which rarely carried pictures at this time, but it produced a partial result. The issue of 30 December 1931 had the headline: *First War "Crock"*, but no photo. However the article was much more illuminating in relation to the service career of James Macklin Dale and his injury. 'It was whilst assisting in the rescue of survivors from the German ship *Königen Louise* [sic], which was sunk by gunfire during a North Sea engagement, at the onset of war, that Dale was wounded.' He received 'severe injuries to his legs' and was admitted to the Royal Naval Hospital at Gillingham. Initially Dale was told he would have to have his right leg and left foot amputated, but a skilled Harley Street specialist saved his limbs. Despite these injuries he served out the war and took part in the Zeebrugge Raid of 1918 aboard HMS *North Star*, returning unscathed from that episode.

On his pensionable retirement from the navy in 1927, Dale worked for the Medway Oil and Storage Company for three years as an engineer. In a period of economic depression it was difficult to obtain work, so in 1931 he briefly had employment as a labourer on a road building project for the council. During the three months before the photograph above was taken he had been unemployed, living on his pension (there was no welfare net in those days). Presumably somebody heard about this hero's circumstances and decided to make a gift of a Christmas hamper to the family anonymously. But the local paper states he received several at this time. The one is this picture was certainly not anonymous, but a presentation in front of the press, suggesting perhaps a civic gesture!

By 1936 the family had moved to Woolwich where they still lived at the outbreak of World War Two. Much of the later information below, has been provided by Carol McLean from

Several local possibilities were considered, but all rejected. Was this a hamper presented by a local body or council? The photo appears to be from a newspaper account, but none could be found in the local press in December 1914. Cindy suggested the Gillingham Borough minutes, as this could have been a civic presentation for a war hero of the town. But no joy there either!

Much internet trawling, using different search combinations, proved no more fruitful, so back to the drawing board. What did we know? Searches so far had focused on his name, Dale, and place of residence, Gillingham. Yet we also knew he was in the navy and was the first British injury of the Great War. That suggested an incident in the first few days of war and aboard a ship. So far a few naval records had looked possible, but Google references to HMS *Amphion*, being the first ship sunk, looked promising. However a list of all those who died or were wounded was discovered and no injured Dale was mentioned.

The same naval website gave a description of the loss of HMS *Amphion* and how 'friendly fire' from her had also scuppered HMS *Lark*. HMS *Lark* had come to the rescue of SS *Königin Luise*, a German destroyer which had sunk, and picked up the survivors. The shell from HMS *Amphion* killed several sailors and prisoners and wounded two men. Only the casualties were listed, making it difficult to work out who had been injured. Somewhere in the back of my mind I remembered seeing the HMS *Lark* listed on one of the Dale service records. This turned out to be James Macklin Dale, who joined her in February 1914 and served aboard until November, according to his record.

His service record did not list any injury or break in his service for 1914. Perhaps this was not our man after all. In desperation I googled 'first British man wounded in the Great War' and hey presto there was a *Findmypast* newspaper entry listed for 28 December 1931. Sceptically I clicked onto the entry and found mention of a Christmas hamper in the brief narrative and a James M. Dale. Despite this being 1931, rather than 1914 as I had anticipated, surely this had to be the right man! It was worth spending a few credits on the website to find out. *The Western Morning News* reported (see the clipping):



## *Stairway to Heaven: The Functions of Medieval Upper Spaces*, by Dr Toby Huitson

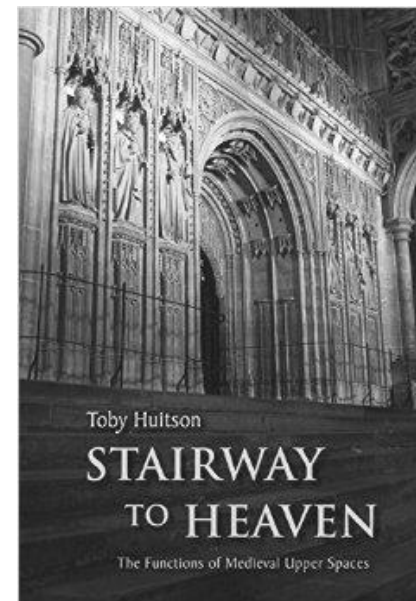
Our thanks to Paul Tritton of Kent Archaeology for contacting us about this interesting new book.

Dr Toby Huitson is assistant archivist at Canterbury Cathedral and a history lecturer at the University of Kent in Canterbury. For more than ten years he has been fascinated by what went on in the upper storeys of our medieval churches and cathedrals. His curiosity led him up spiral staircases above towers, naves and chancels all over Kent and further afield and into mysterious lofts, galleries and passages that were used as, among other things, dovescotes, treasuries and libraries. *Stairway to Heaven* describes and illustrates his hundreds of discoveries.

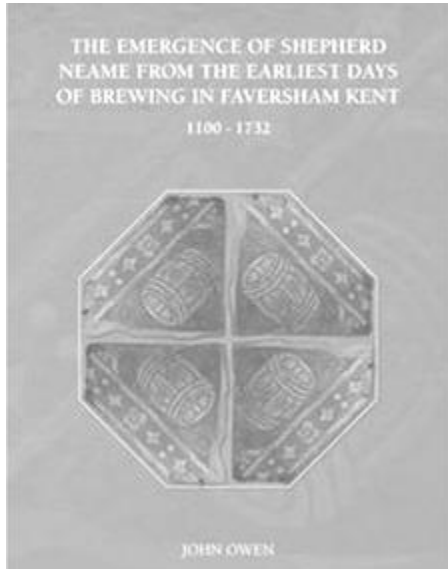
Among the unusual upper storeys Toby has found in Kent are the so-called Indulgence Chamber at Rochester Cathedral (which may have been used as a muniment room for storing official documents); the Old Bakery chamber at Canterbury Cathedral (a former Romanesque upper chapel, converted into a room for the Shrine Wardens around 1400 and used as a craftsmen's restoration workshop in the late 17th century); the Watching Tower at St Mary of Charity, Faversham, (used as a sexton's room in the early 16th century); and a blocked staircase to the lost upper chapel of St Blaise at Canterbury Cathedral (probably used for storing candles or documents).

ISBN 978-1842176658

Our thanks to Duncan Harrington, President of the Kent Family History Society, for providing information about the books on the pages which follow.



## *The Emergence Of Shepherd Neame From The Earliest Days of Brewing in Faversham, Kent: 1100-1732*, by John Owen.



Shepherd Neame has laid claim to the title of Britain's oldest brewer for a long period, with its logo bearing the official founding date of 1698. However, this date given in a promotional poster in 1864 is without foundation. Research by John Owen, the brewery's archivist and historian, reveals that its heritage precedes this date finding evidence that brewing has taken place continuously on the current site since at least 1573 – 125 years earlier than believed. Records show that in 1573 brewer John Castlocke II was living at 18 Court Street, and they also confirm the site has been a brewery ever since, from which Shepherd Neame is descended, with the Shepherd and Neame families joining in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries respectively. The site of the brewery was not by chance, here was a supply of unlimited water from an artesian well. Others may have brewed there earlier, and were certainly brewing at an adjacent address in Partridge Lane from at least 1507. For those

curious not only about the brewing industry but also about beer production for Faversham and area this book will be of great interest. For those simply interested in people pedigrees of the Castlocke and Marsh families may well tie in with your research.

Available from the Shepherd Neame website:  
<http://www.shepherdneame.co.uk/shop/emergence-shepherd-neame-book>

ISBN: 978-0-9559997-7-2

## *Lyminge a History*, Lyminge Historical Society

**Part One:** Four chapters covering the local shops during the 1930s and 40s, the geological formation of the area, a review of previous books in which the parish appears and a brief insight into the 18th and 19th century incumbents of the parish church.

ISBN 978-0-9530998-4-9.

## *The Home Front*

Catharina Clement



*In 2005, Catharina completed a BA in history at Canterbury Christchurch University, and in 2013 a PhD in local history entitled Political and Religious Reactions in the Medway Towns of Rochester and Chatham during the English Revolution, 1640-1660. She has been involved in various local history groups and projects such as FOMA, CDHS, and the Victoria County History EPE projects. She won the 2009 Friends Historical Society Award resulting in a paper on Medway Quakerism 1655-1918 delivered at the Institute for Historical Research and later this year at the Friends Library in London. Currently Catharina works for MALSC.*

## A Belated Christmas Present!



This photo was included in the MALSC display, *Lest We Forget, Part One, 1914*, put together by FOMA. There is nothing beyond the brief inscription underneath to indicate, who this chief stoker and his family were.

## *Chatham's Naval Losses in 1914- A talk by Alex Patterson to FOMA*

Brian Joyce



*Brian Joyce was born in Chatham and has always been fascinated by the history of the area. Brian is the author of several books, including The Chatham Scandal, Dumb Show and Noise and Chatham and the Medway Towns, a History and Celebration. With Bruce Aubry, Brian co-wrote In the Thick of It-Medway Men and Women in the Boer War, which was published by their own Pocock Press. His latest books include Chatham From Old Photographs and Gillingham From Old Photographs both co-written with Sophie Miller.*

On Tuesday 9 September 2014, Alex Patterson, the Collections and Galleries Manager at Chatham Historic Dockyard, talked to FOMA members about the loss of the three cruisers, the Live Bait Squadron, and other Chatham-based ships during the first six months of the Great War. Alex meticulously described the stories of the vessels lost in action, the subsequent loss of life and the impact of these events on the Medway Towns. Members of the audience were engaged by Alex's detailed descriptions, and several asked him searching and pertinent questions afterwards.

Many Medway families suffered the loss of men folk at Mons and the subsequent retreat, and in the battles of autumn 1914. In this respect, the experience of the Towns was typical of that of Britain as a whole. However, the unexpectedly high naval losses in the first six months or so of the Great War hit this district much harder than most.

Chatham Town Hall was used as a local headquarters by the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association and the Friendly Union of Sailors' Wives. It was the focal point for women desperately seeking news of their loved ones when rumours of the sinking of locally-based ships swept the Towns.

Lady Poore, the wife of the Admiral Superintendent of Chatham Dockyard wrote of the women anxiously waiting for information of the three cruisers, HMS *Aboukir*, *Cressy* and *Hogue* on 22 September 1914. She observed that "...thirteen days of racking suspense elapsed before full and authentic lists of the lost could be published, and every day of those thirteen days, hundreds of wives and mothers came down to look for news, with faces growing hourly more lined and haggard, their eyes dimmer and more sunken from want of sleep and the gradual draining away of hope...A piteous dignity was theirs that none who strove to comfort them will ever forget".

Of course, I need hardly remind readers that those whom Alex inspired can go to MALSC themselves and read vivid accounts of the sinking of these ships and interviews with survivors in the local press!

*Alex's fee for the talk was donated to the Historic Dockyard Trust.*

**Part Two:** The arboreal flora of the area and its effect on the land, an account of the archaeological dig in 1953 of the Jutish Cemetery, a look at local charitable institutions, a notable bell ringer, King George V's Jubilee Tree, the practice of rogation and the first two parts of a chapter on the smaller local fauna.

ISBN 978-0-9530998-5-6.

**Part Three:** *Lyminge at War 1939-1945*, included are two accounts of life on the home front and two from opposing sides during the Italian campaign, 1943 to 1945. We take a brief look at recycling - 1939 style, and a study of the German invasion plans for their abortive 1940 Operation Sealion.

ISBN 978-0-9530998-6-3.

**Part Four:** The Saxons; Local Fauna - 3rd part; Machine Breakers; The Royal Observer Corp; Capt. Swing; Sibton Park; Early Keyboard Instruments; Lyminge Park and more on the Beddingfield Charity.

ISBN 978-0-9530998-7-0.

**Part Five:** A commemorative volume on *Men of Lyminge* who sacrificed their lives during the First and Second World Wars. First published in 2008 this second edition has been completely revised including the biographical details of those commemorated and the accompanying photographs.

ISBN 978-0-9530998-8-7

**Part Six:** Shortly to be published, contains a miscellany of topics from ancient maps, the workhouse, a story from our grave yard, the missing gates of Longage Farm, a childhood in Lyminge, beds, bugs and beasts, parish registers or *Who was Who* in Lyminge and a report on the Anglo Saxon archaeological dig of 2013.

ISBN 978-0-9530998-8-7

Titles available from the Lyminge Historical Society at  
<http://lymingehistoricalsociety.co.uk/contact.html>

## *My First Memory*

Angela Watson



*FOMA member Angela Watson has lived in Rochester all her life, as did her parents. Although she trained as a teacher and taught for a while, she later found herself working for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and then for twenty-three years with the Associated Examining Board. Since her retirement she has become associated with several organisations and is currently Chairman of The Friends of Horsted Valley. However, travel, languages and history are her main interests and she really would like to be able to find time to carry out research into her family history.*

*Whilst this issue of The Clock Tower focuses on the commemorations of World war One, we should not forget that on 11 November we remember all those who died in the service of our country. It is therefore appropriate that we should include this article remembering World war two. A version of this piece was published in the Medway Messenger on 15 August 2014.*

The 16 August this year was the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a V1 flying bomb, commonly known as a doodlebug, hitting the railway bridge over Oak Lane, Upchurch, in 1944. Apparently a Canadian pilot, Flt. Lt. John Alfred Malloy of 274 Squadron based at West Malling, had sighted a doodlebug just inland from Dover and chased it to Rainham, opening fire, unsuccessfully, from 800 yards. He then closed in on it and, as was the practice, tipped it over with his wing tip. London was saved but fate was unkind when it crashed onto the railway line near Rainham hitting the brickwork at the base of the bridge on the down side.

The 3.35 pm train from Victoria to the Kent coast was about four minutes behind schedule due to an extra heavy load of mail at Chatham. This was to be a fatal four minutes which resulted in the death of eight people and 61 injured when the train ran onto the bridge, which collapsed under the weight of the engine and the first two carriages telescoped causing extensive damage and where the majority of casualties were found.

Why am I writing about this? Well, this was the day that my mother Violet Watson and I, her 18 month old daughter, together with her husband's two sisters Jean Hammond and Dorothy Tutleman, and their respective children, two-and-a-half year old Rosemary and nine month old Gerald, had decided to go to Sheerness for the day. We had duly set off that morning with a picnic lunch, bathing costumes and buckets and spades. I think a good day was had by all, although I do not remember, and we caught the train from Sheerness to Faversham where it joined the 3.15 pm train from Ramsgate, which was due to cross the railway bridge at Oak Lane from the opposite direction shortly after the train crash which had destroyed it.

All branches of the Armed Forces made up the parade, including a detachment of WWI re-enactors, Chelsea Pensioners, the Royal British Legion, and local Scouts. Pipes and drums played, and a big cheer went up when HRH Prince Harry arrived. He spent time talking to people in the crowd, shaking hands with those in the several lines of local and county dignitaries. Peter was in the first line-up, and he then joined me and was presented again! Following the unveiling the Prince laid a wreath at the war memorial. Peter did the same a few minutes later. We then followed the marching troops down to the harbour where HRH did a tour of inspection, and hundreds of balloons were released.

By now the sun had disappeared and steady rain began to fall, but it did not deter the crowds who had gathered at the harbour. We all watched Prince Harry say his farewells before he was driven away to his next engagement which was to meet up with his brother the Duke of Cambridge at Mons.

Peter and I then enjoyed a lovely lunch at the Grand Burstin hotel before returning home to download our photographs. What a memorable day!



*Sue Haydock and Peter Homewood, Chairman of Kent County Council, by the plaque unveiled by HRH Prince Harry.  
Photograph by Sue Haydock.*

# A Clock Tower Special Feature

## Commemorating the Outbreak of World War One: 1914 - 2014

### *The Step Short Centenary Arch*

Sue Haydock

*The latest from our roving reporter, Medway Heritage Champion, and FOMA Vice President*

On 4 August I accompanied Peter Homewood, Chairman of Kent County Council, for the unveiling of the Step Short Centenary Arch, which has been built at the top of Folkestone's Road of Remembrance. The arch is in memory of all those who died in the Great War and who passed through Folkestone on their way to the Western Front. The slope to the harbour, now known as the Road of Remembrance, is so steep that the soldiers were ordered to 'step short,' taking smaller strides to help them make it safely to the bottom. It is estimated that ten million soldiers, nurses and civilians set off to the battlefields through Folkestone.



The day was warm and sunny and a large crowd was gathering, anxious to see HRH Prince Harry who was to do the unveiling. There was a great array of poppies and flags decorating the flats and hotels fronting The Leas, and the hanging baskets maintained the red colour scheme. The arch itself is 17 tonnes of stainless steel, 14 metres high and 12 metres wide at the base. It has LED lights set into it which come on at night, like stars. The circular base includes the names of the allied countries during World War One

*The Step Short Centenary Arch.  
Photograph by Sue Haydock.*

The train's fireman, David Humphreys, although injured, proceeded towards Newington and managed to get detonators laid on the track. He also met a dock porter riding a bicycle who returned to Newington with the news of the accident and damaged railway line and finally he himself reached the Newington signal box. Consequently the 3.15 pm train on which I and my family were travelling was stopped at Newington. David Humphreys was awarded an official commendation for his action and, had it not been for him, you might not be reading this article today.

But this description of events is not my main reason for writing this article but rather to show how very different the subsequent events would be today. My father worked in Chatham Dockyard and as the fire engines and ambulances started to stream out of the Dockyard the news and rumours started to fly around that a train had been derailed on the London-Dover line but no-one knew whether it was an up train or a down train. My father knew that his wife and daughter and other close members of his family would have been on the up train. His two brothers-in-law, who worked in civilian occupations, would have known nothing about the event until their wives eventually got home that night.

There was no stopping work for my father, no turning on the radio, no mobile phone call, no dashing off to the scene in a car, no counselling. I don't know how long he had to wait until news came through that it was the down train which had crashed and that the up train had been stopped in time. But I hate to think of how he endured the waiting; just trying to carry on with his work I suppose.

But the relief when he finally got home after his half hour cycle ride from Chatham Dockyard to the top of City Way when he was reunited with those he loved must have been so great. Although he never knew me, David Humphreys' action had a profound effect on my life.

So what was my first memory? The interminable wait outside Newington Station sitting on the kerb waiting for the bus which eventually came to take us to Rainham Station so that we could continue our journey home. It must have made a great impression upon me as my first memory after that was at the more usual age of three.

## Archives Update

Alison Cable, Borough Archivist



*The latest news from the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre*

### Medway School Admission registers published on *Findmypast*

In September, with much anticipation on my part, I opened an email containing a press release from the family history website, Findmypast ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk)). It related to the imminent online publication of hundreds of pre-1914 schools admission registers:

2.5 million historic school records published on *Findmypast* 22 September, 2014.

National School Admission Registers and Log-books 1870-1914

Today we're delighted to announce the publication of the

**National School Admission Registers and Log-books 1870-1914.**

Working with 25 archives and schools throughout England and Wales, these 2,562,402 historical records from 1500 schools are now online for the very first time.

This exciting collection captures a snapshot of school life across the UK prior to WW1, and reveals stories of tragedy and stoicism as well as everyday school life. They capture fascinating details of the last school days of the 'Lost Generation' – a generation of young men who fought at the front, many of whom did not return, including war poet Wilfred Owen.

The realisation of this partnership project represented four years of planning, negotiation and organisation by national bodies and around 25 local authority archive services. Numerous archivists set to work in order to identify, quantify, measure, list, package and send off, registers containing over two million individual records of English and Welsh school children. The records cover the period 1870-1914 and I am pleased to report that MALSC's local authority school records are included in the first stage of this major project.

The impetus for the project came from the National Archives and the Archives and Records Association (which is the professional body for archivists) and after the initial appeal for participants and the survey of suitable records at local level, it took almost two years to find the right commercial partner. Added to this, much debate took place amongst the Association of Chief Archivists, about the logistics of actually scanning the records off-site. This would necessitate finding the most suitable company that we could trust to take temporary custody of our fragile archive material.

During the Victorian and early Edwardian periods, schools admission registers were produced en-mass by the same few stationery companies and the quality of the bindings and

paper meant that the volumes were not really designed for longevity. Many admissions registers were in a rather fragile state by the time they were transferred to archive offices during the mid-late twentieth century. Of the 49 registers that we at MALSC submitted for digitisation, about 11 were in a *very* poor condition with collapsed bindings and crumbling pages. In effect, the information was inaccessible because we could not handle the volumes without causing further damage. Now that they have been handled one last time and digitised very carefully, the originals can be kept safe and sound and research can be done via the excellent images available on the education section of Findmypast.

The database was launched on 22 September 2014 and the great news is that visitors to the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre can access school registers on-line free of charge from the following archive offices of the National Digitisation Consortium, using a special link provided for us by Findmypast:

Bedfordshire & Luton Archives Services, Bolton Museum & Archive Service, Cambridgeshire Archives, Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, Cheshire Archives & Local Studies, Devon Heritage Services, Exeter, Hackney Archives, Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies, James Allen's Girls' School, Kingston Borough Archives, Lambeth Archives – Minet Library, Lancashire Archives, Maynard School, Medway Archives & Local Studies Centre, Merton Heritage & Local Studies Centre, North Devon Record Office, Barnstaple, Stockport Archive Service, Surrey History Centre, Sutton Archives, Tameside Local Studies & Archives Centre, Trafford Local Studies Centre, Wandsworth Heritage Service, Battersea, West Glamorgan Archive Service, Swansea, Westminster Archives, Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre, Wirral Archives Centre.

The Medway schools currently included on the database are shown below, with admissions dates in brackets. A full list of all the schools included can be found at [http://www.findmypast.co.uk/articles/britain-national-school-admission-registers-and-log-books-school-list?\\_ga=1.43839781.183876123.1363699829](http://www.findmypast.co.uk/articles/britain-national-school-admission-registers-and-log-books-school-list?_ga=1.43839781.183876123.1363699829)

Barnsole Board School (infants) (1899-1914)  
Byron Road School (infants) (1903 - 1914)  
Cliffe Temporary Council Infants' school (1905-1914)  
Council School (infants) (1905-1908)  
Council School (mixed & Infants) (1901-1913)  
Gillingham National School (1905-1914)  
Gillingham National School (boys) (1892-1905)  
Gillingham National School (infants) (1899-1909)  
Gordon Road School (girls) (1889-1914)  
Hoo St Werburgh Council school (1899-1914)  
Luton Council School (1901-1914)  
Luton Council School (Boys) (1914-1914)  
Rainham Council School (1913-1914)  
St Helen's Church of England School (infants) (1901-1912)  
St Margaret's School (Boys) (1876-1913)  
St Margaret's School (infants) (1895-1908)  
Troy Town Board School (boys) (1912-1914)  
Troy Town Board School (girls) (1905-1914)