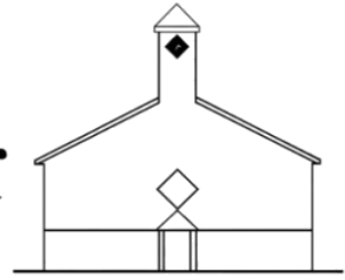




The Clock Tower



Issue Number 44: November 2016
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The Friends of Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre
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MALSC's First Project with Ancestry



A new partnership between the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre (MALSC) and family history website Ancestry began in August 2016. Here Archivist Alison Cable and Friends of Medway Archives (FOMA) Chairman, Tessa Towner look at just one of the pre-1916 workhouse registers now available to view on the online database. More on page 8.

PLUS
Two new series!

To mark their 70th anniversary, Odette Buchanan writes about prefabs;
Pat Salter on the life of Charles Larkin

AND

Michael Baker continues the story of the contents of Alfred William Baker's trunk.

From the Chairman

Tessa Towner, Chairman.

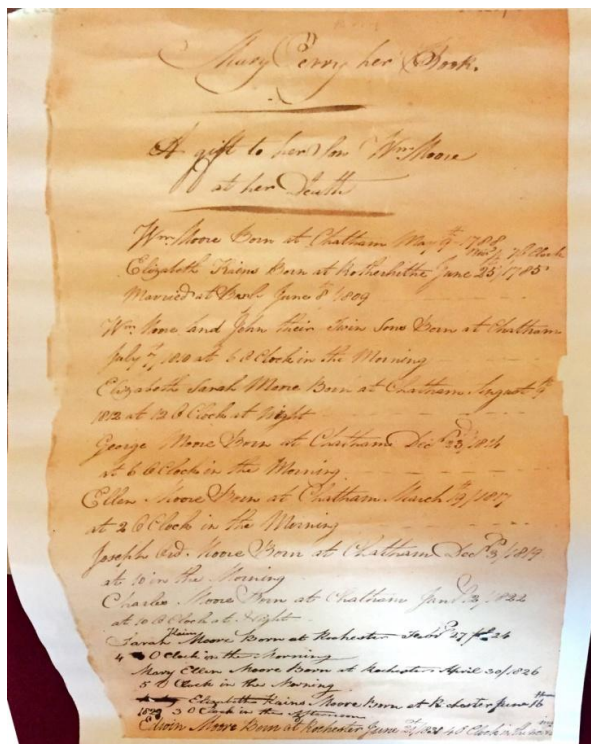


I cannot believe that we are approaching the end of another year. But what a year it has been for FOMA!

Our work continues helping ease the transition for the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre (MALSC) with the forthcoming move to the former library site in Bryant Road, Strood. We reported in the last *Clock Tower* that we had agreed to purchase an Uscan fiche/film reader for the new site. Shortly after this our Secretary, Odette Buchanan approached the City of Rochester Society, of which many of us are also members, as she knew they were able to provide grants for these sorts of things. Imagine our surprise when we received an email from Bob Howe, their Honorary Treasurer confirming that they had agreed to offer FOMA a grant! The ability to help MALSC in this way has given the FOMA committee a real impetus to see what else we can do and as a result Rob Flood and Amanda Thomas have been putting plans in place for a spectacular fund raising event early in 2017. This will also be an opportunity to celebrate FOMA's first ten years supporting MALSC and Medway's rich heritage. Information about the event will be circulated very soon.

Whilst sorting things out in the archives prior to the move, an interesting discovery was made - a huge leather bound bible, published in 1813, which had been given many years ago to Chatham Library by an unknown donor. Our Archivist, Alison Cable asked me if we could try to trace the owners of the book so that we could return it. On a loose leaf inside (see right) was written 'Mary Perry her book. A gift to her son William Moore at her death.' There then follows a list of Rochester and Chatham's Moore family members from 1788 to 1831, their dates and times of birth.

I set to work online and with records at MALSC; after about a week I made a breakthrough with a Public Member tree on Ancestry. The names matched! Fortunately this online facility enables researchers to contact the owners of published trees and I immediately emailed Peter Moore in Gosport. To say he was thrilled by my message was an understatement and we set about organising a visit to Rochester.



We were delighted on the afternoon of 20 October 2016 to host a reception in the Members' Room at Rochester's Guildhall Museum (see page 43). Elaine Gardner baked one of her legendary cakes and Amanda Thomas brought sandwiches and sausage rolls all the way from her home in Hertfordshire! It was an exciting moment when Simon Lace, Medway Heritage Services Manager presented Peter with the bible. Afterwards we took Peter and his friend Annie Fatet on a tour of Rochester High Street to see where the Moore family had once lived and later they came with us to the preview of the *Hidden Treasures, Fresh Expressions* project at Rochester cathedral. It was quite a day!

To conclude, I would like to wish all of you a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year from everyone on the FOMA Committee.

Shorts Brothers Tunnels

Clock Tower Editor, Amanda Thomas writes:

In September some of us received a mysterious message from FOMA Committee member Rob Flood inviting us on a visit of the Shorts Brothers Tunnels: ‘The tour takes about 2½ hours and the terrain is tough going at times. There are no toilet facilities and the tunnels are pitch black so you’ll need a good torch. Stout footwear and a couple of layers are good ...’ Not my kind of thing, but FOMA Vice Chairman Elaine Gardner leapt at the chance and spent a fascinating afternoon in one of Rochester’s least known *tourist attractions*. The tunnels were originally built during the Second World War by seaplane manufacturer Shorts Brothers as part of an underground factory complex and air raid shelter. The network of tunnels is extensive and we can only hope that more will be done to improve and promote this valuable part of Medway’s industrial heritage.



Photograph by Elaine Gardner.

Secretary's Report

Odette Buchanan



Warm greetings all – getting mighty chilly now, isn't it?

This past quarter has been full of interesting and exciting things to do with FOMA.

First up, along with all local historians, we have enjoyed this year's Guildhall Lectures remembering the 950th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings. We had a return visit from Dr Marc Morris, delivering in his usual, erudite fashion, a reminder why 1066 is the most important date in British history. However, Simon Lace, Medway Heritage Services Manager, had managed to source yet another brilliant speaker – Dr Hugh Doherty, lecturer at the University of East Anglia - who entranced us with his breadth of knowledge and dynamic delivery on the Battle of Hastings. Our own Jeremy Clarke, Education Officer at the Guildhall Museum filled in a lot of gaps in my knowledge of Anglo Saxon England, its economic and political structure as well as its customs and way of life. All such a contrast to the life the Normans imposed upon the indigenous population post-1066.

Unfortunately on 20 October Emeritus Prof. Trevor Rowley had to cancel at the last minute. Following some phone calls from Guildhall staff, Hugh Doherty dropped everything and travelled at high speed (rather like Harold and his army!) to fill the gap. Em. Prof. Rowley had been due to speak on Bishop Odo, the man behind the Bayeux Tapestry. Once again Dr. Doherty demonstrated his amazing knowledge of Medieval history, entertaining us with a brilliant lecture on William's half-brother and his influence on the government of England and the background to the tapestry. Apparently the talk was composed on the train on the way.

The day of that last lecture was very exciting and full for the FOMA committee. In the afternoon we attended the presentation to Peter Moore of his long-lost family bible (see pages 3 and 43). Following this we all adjourned to the Cathedral to join the throng for an early evening reception and *Private Viewing* of the newly refurbished Crypt and the new permanent display for the *Textus Roffensis*; our Archivist Alison Cable had placed the book on the display with her very own (gloved) hands. Many other wonderful documents and artefacts are also on display as well as contributions from local artists such as Wendy Daws. What a lot to marvel and mull over!

The next event was the Quiz just two days' later on 22 October. This was again a sell-out with a hall full of quizzers who enjoyed Elaine's usual thought-provoking and stimulating questions.

I hope you all have a peaceful and happy Christmas and a healthy and wealthy New Year - see you in 2017!

FOMA Talks

Amanda Thomas



London Labyrinth

On 13 September 2016 Dr Kathy Chater presented her talk (see page 42), *London Labyrinth*, a guide to the highly complicated records of London and recently absorbed parts of Middlesex, Surrey and Kent. Considering this was the hottest September day since 1915, the turnout at Frindsbury parish hall was not bad, and those who attended were in for a treat, as Kathy is hugely knowledgeable.

Most family historians have to dip into the London records at some point, but it can be a daunting prospect. There are over 600 local archives in the capital, 29 per cent of the total number in the UK. The most prominent of these are the National Archives (TNA) at Kew, the County record offices for Greater London, Surrey, Kent and Essex, individual boroughs (e.g. Hillingdon), and two privileged jurisdictions. These are the City of Westminster (with archives situated near Victoria Station) and the Duchy of Lancaster (at the TNA) which include Clapham, Enfield and Edmonton.

However, many other places – such as museums - hold records and artefacts. The British Library, for example, houses the entire collection of the Oriental and India Office, including the records of the East India Company. Since premises at Collingdale closed, the national newspaper archive may also be viewed at the British Library, but be aware that many items are in storage and have to be pre-ordered.

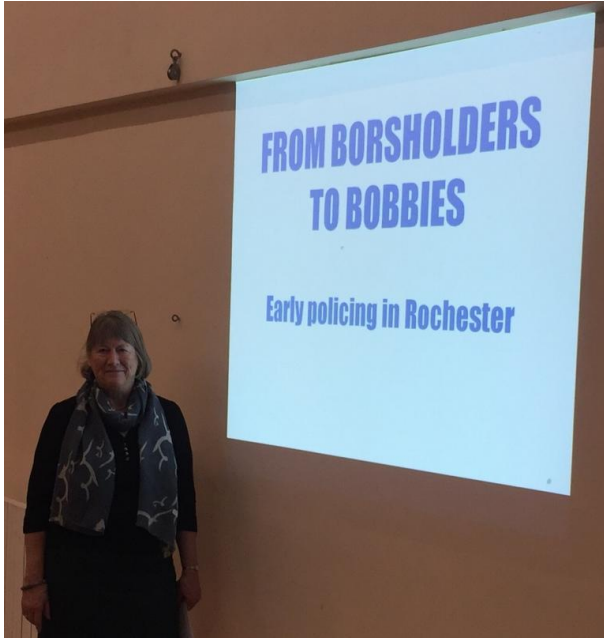
It is worth understanding how London has evolved as this will facilitate any search. Before 1888 the areas outside of the centre of the capital were Middlesex (to the north) and Surrey and Kent (to the South); Essex was separated from the metropolis by the River Lea. In 1900 the Metropolitan Boroughs were created and in 1963 Greater London and the GLC. Since then further outer areas have been absorbed. For this reason some records will be held locally and others further afield, such as at the London Metropolitan Archives (LMA). Many records from Kingston Upon Thames, for example, are held at Woking and some records from places such as Bexley and Greenwich, which used to be in Kent, will be held at Maidstone.

The key is to plan your research trip before leaving. Check the A2A website, telephone or email the archives and “don’t forget your London bus map and Freedom Pass!” Kathy declared, which caused considerable hilarity in the audience - and some discussion about bus passes.

From Borsholders to Bobbies

Elaine Gardner’s talk on early policing in Rochester was an absolutely fascinating insight into the history of Rochester’s police force which began in the thirteenth century with constables or Borsholders, though the first named list Elaine found was from 1662. The talk was based on research conducted at the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre.

The police force proper came into being as a result of the 1834 Municipal Corporations Act and Rochester’s began in 1837. The talk contained lots of interesting anecdotes and stories as well as hard facts from surviving documents. Many of these had to do with the financing of the service – which extended to Strood - and revealed how cost-cutting was as important in the past as it is today. Elaine also discussed how certain suppliers appeared to have been favoured for the manufacture of uniforms and all manner of items needed by Rochester’s policemen. Whether this was because they were the best at making these goods or were friends of those doing the ordering is unclear. However, she also touched on how the wage and pensions system worked and remuneration was not always as fair as it should have been.



Elaine Gardner, photograph Amanda Thomas.

Most illuminating of all was the number of policemen who were caught drinking in local pubs when they were supposed to be on duty. In 1837 Thomas Tiltman was dismissed on multiple drink charges and in 1913 PC Shedd was demoted for imbibing drinks and cigars at the expense of the landlord in the Maidstone Arms. Sadly the punishment for some policemen, including Shedd, was a cut in their official length of service cut, which ultimately affected their pension.

From the end of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, Rochester's police force was guided by Chief Constable Alfred S Arnold. Arnold served the police for 52 years, though not all of his career was in Rochester; Elaine commented that when he retired in February 1931 Arnold's pension must have been close to his annual salary!



From the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre's Couchman Collection: postcard photograph of Ehrich Weiss [cf. Weisz] alias Harry Houdini, escapologist and magician (left) and Alfred S. Arnold, chief constable of Rochester, both sitting on bench in Rochester Castle gardens with Castle Hill, Moat House and shrubs in background, former wearing greatcoat with cloth cap in lap and looking to right of camera, latter wearing lounge suit and bowler hat, holding walking stick in right hand and looking at camera. c. February 1911; DE402_1_080(U).

MALSC's First Project with Ancestry

Alison Cable, Archivist



In the last *Clock Tower* I was delighted to announce that we had gone into partnership with the family history website Ancestry.co.uk to make our pre-1916 workhouse registers available online and on 25 August the database was released. This was great news for researchers - the selection of 54 volumes from the three Poor Law Union collections (Medway, Hoo and Strood Unions) turned out to contain over 200,000 records of named individuals. You can view the collection at <http://search.ancestry.co.uk/search/db.aspx?dbid=60655>

This is our first project with Ancestry. We started with the workhouse records as I knew that this would be fairly straightforward. The records had been inherited by Medway Council (so no copyright or ownership worries), the registers were fully catalogued, microfilm copies existed, and most important, the registers are very *name-rich*. That said, this project has still taken *two years* to come to fruition.

I first approached Ancestry in late 2013 to see if they would be interested in working with us and a representative from the London office came along to Strood to meet with me soon after. We agreed on a cut-off date of 1914 (adhering to the 100 year rule, as suggested by Data Protection legislation), with the exception of registers of death, for which we could extend the cut-off date further. I drew up a list of candidates and was then asked by Ancestry to roughly calculate how many records (in this case, one line entries about named-persons) would be found in each volume. Much counting ensued, closely followed by a great deal of administration: not least a legal agreement that had to be perused, honed, checked, and signed. I also took the precaution of asking the Advisory Team at the National Archives to cast their eye over the proposal before we submitted the signed forms.

In due course, the microfilms were bundled up and collected and sent over to the United States to be digitised; this only took three or four weeks. It was (understandably) the indexing that took months and months ... and more months. Regular updates were submitted to me by Ancestry and launch dates for Spring 2016 were mooted, and passed, and then finally, another visit was organised in the summer of 2016 to discuss the August launch.

Our corporate communications team sprang into action and we received good local publicity. Ancestry meanwhile undertook their own publicity which included my writing a one-off blog for their website.

<http://blogs.ancestry.com/ancestry/2016/08/26/workhouse-records-can-lead-to-other-avenues-of-research/>

MALSC is very excited to be one of the first (after London and Cornwall) local record offices to publish their workhouse records on Ancestry.

In the next issue of *The Clock Tower* Betty Cole will be starting a new series on the history of the workhouse at St Margaret's, Rochester.

Charles Larkin 1775 - 1833

P.J. Salter



Pat Salter worked at the Guildhall Museum Rochester and at MALSC for over 20 years. She is a well known author and works include *A Man of Many Parts - Edwin Harris 1859 – 1938*; Pat is also a FOMA Vice President.

Part 1

Introduction

Charles Larkin was born into the *Age of Reform*, an era that was to shape his life. He seems to have been a controversial figure. Henry Smetham, in his *Rambles Round Churches Vol. 3* described him as:

‘... a man whose political opinions - and, apparently he had a lot of them ... were in advance of his time. He also wore rather heavy controversial boots, and trod with hasty weight and vigor on many mental tender corns, with a violence that appears to have left painful and abiding impressions.’

Larkin confirmed this view when he informed his audience, at a political meeting in 1831: ‘I am in the habit of forming a strong opinion and of acting up to it.’¹ At the same meeting he described himself as, ‘an old reformer, as the steady and although weak, yet I hope the consistent and uniform, friend to Reform from my earliest days.’

The *Rochester Gazette* reported in their obituary of Charles Larkin that they had seldom witnessed a death that had caused such universal regret. This was reinforced the following week when an account of Larkin’s funeral described the ‘universal expression of sorrow evinced by the thousands congregated’ between Boley Hill and St. Mary’s Church at Gillingham Green as his funeral procession of several coaches of people and one hundred and twenty on foot, passed through the streets where shops were closed.

So whose corns did he tread on and why? Why (according to Smetham) was there opposition to his burial in the *City Valhalla*?

Charles Larkin was born in 1775, the fifth child of Edmund Larkin of Chatham and Catherine Martin of Gillingham. They were married at St. Mary’s, Chatham, by licence on 18 October 1765, where two years later their eldest child, Mary was christened on 23 August. The next three children were christened at Gillingham: Ann 6 June 1769; Edward 14 May 1771; William 7 April, 1773. However Charles and his youngest sister Catherine were christened at St. Mary’s Chatham on 2 April 1775 and 11 February 1779 respectively.

Catherine Larkin was already a widow when in Gillingham on 16 September 1789, her son Charles was apprenticed to Samuel Baker,* a Freeman of Rochester, as a carpenter and joiner. Having completed his seven year apprenticeship, Charles was also enrolled as a Freeman, though he did not remain a carpenter and joiner for very long. Over the next forty years he was described variously, as Coachmaster, Auctioneer, Surveyor and Appraiser, Insurance Agent, Licensed Victualler, and Political Agent. During twenty six of those years he also served in the Cobham Yeoman Cavalry.

On 21 April, 1800 Charles married Elizabeth Hall in St. Mary’s Church, Chatham and they went to live on Boley Hill, Rochester where their three daughters were born. They were christened at St. Nicholas Church, Rochester: Betsy on 27 November 1806, Catherine 25 June 1809 and Mary on 2 July 1811.

Betsy's life is a mystery and no further reference to her has been found. Catherine married Benjamin Worthy Horne, heir to a wealthy coach master, of Highlands House, Mereworth and 33 Russell Square, London, at St. Nicholas Rochester on 4 November, 1830. Having inherited his father's business, Horne was able to extend it and by 1847 he was the largest coach proprietor in the area. One of the *extensions* may have been his father-in-law's coach business; the firm eventually merged with Pickfords. At the same time Horne was also astute enough to invest in the new railways. Part of his wealth was expended in 1869 on repairing and re-inscribing his father-in-law's memorial on Telegraph Hill. Mary married John Foreman on 8 July 1836, three years after her father's death.

In 1797, at the age of twenty two, Larkin enlisted in the Cobham Yeomanry Cavalry having been *appointed by the Corps*.² In 1794, during the country's fears of revolution, volunteer regiments were raised when requested and Kent was divided into two regiments, East and West. The Cobham troop, part of the West Regiment, was raised by Lord Darnley in 1796. Their motto was *Liberty, Loyalty, Property* which in view of Larkin's later career was appropriate.

An extract from *The Times* newspaper in October 1798³ describes the Cobham Yeomanry Cavalry as:

' ... highly spoken of for their excellence in manouvering and particularly for their skill in sword exercise. At a late display of skill in sword exercise which took place in Cobham Park, for a prize given by Lord Darnley, no less than thirty gentlemen appeared as competitors. The winner was Mr. Brown.'

The Muster roll for 1821 records that Sergeant Larkin was one of the troop mobilised on 8 June and 19 October. He was still a sergeant when he resigned in May 1822 despite being referred to occasionally in civilian life as *Captain*. Both Kent Regiments were disbanded in 1827.

Notes

*This is likely Samuel Baker (1761-1836), builder ancestor of Michael Baker (page 16), See also Issue 12, *The Clock Tower*, (November 2008), *Which Mr Baker? or By Nine Votes to Eight* by Michael Baker.

1. *Rochester Gazette* 25 January 1831.
2. Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre: U565/023 Record Book.
3. MALSC: U565/F581.

On page 28 Pat Salter's series *Roll out the Red Carpet* nears its conclusion with *The Twentieth Century, Part One*.

Memories Of Prefabs

Odette Buchanan



Odette is a retired teacher and, of course, FOMA Secretary. She is fascinated by local history and is actively involved in many aspects of this. She was a City of Rochester Society visitors' guide, a steward and guide at Restoration House, she has researched and presented as talks many aspects of local history, especially Broom Hill. Her book, Broomhill – Strood's Hidden Gem was published in 2013 by the City of Rochester Society, (available at: www.city-of-rochester.org.uk/shop/broomhill-stroods-hidden-gem/). Her book, Two Gentlemen of Strood, (short biographies of Henry Smetham and Rev. Caleb Parfect) is also published by the City of Rochester Society. She has produced sundry interpretation boards around Strood and was involved in the now completed England's Past for Everyone Victoria County History Project. and the HLF funded Valley of Visions Strood Community Trail.

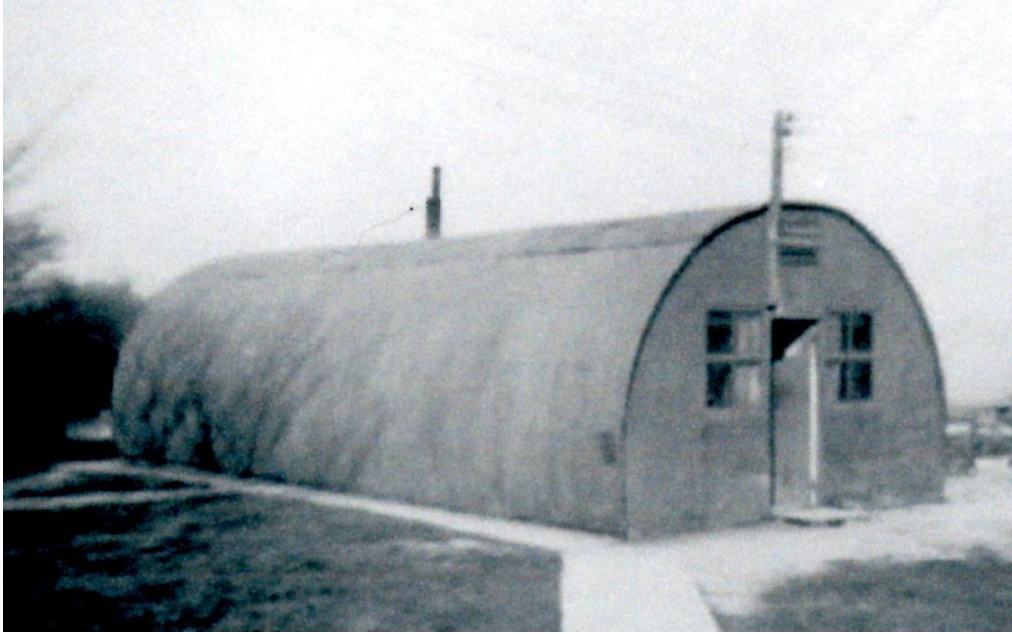
This year it is 70 years since the first post-war prefabs were built. In this series of articles although mention is made of other prefab sites around Medway, Odette has concentrated her research on those erected on what is now Broomhill Park in Strood.

Part 1



*An exterior view of a typical prefab;
Illustrated London News, 1945.*

Many people think that there wasn't a housing shortage until after the Second World War but housing was in short supply at the beginning of the war. Conscription and armament production halted house building. By 1945 this shortage had become desperate; the King even mentioned it in his speeches of 1942 and '43. Bombing had rendered 25% of housing stock uninhabitable and by the end of the war many people were either cramped in with relations or living in temporary accommodation such as Nissen huts. Coupled with that when the men were demobbed from the armed services there was a *baby boom*; the population grew by a million.



A Nissen hut.

Lack of housing in the Medway towns was very severe. *The Chatham News* of 28 July, 1946 reported that there were over 2,700 on the waiting list and the situation was getting worse. Those waiting were awarded points according to need. Under Strood Rural District Council (Hoo Peninsula and outlying villages) the maximum number of points one could collect was 69. These covered criteria such as quality of accommodation, overcrowding, length of residency in the area, overseas service, length of wait, work situation, disability, and a catch-all called 'special circumstances'. Ex-service men setting up home for the first time were allocated five points and a maximum of six were allocated for families separated due to lack of accommodation. There were 650 on the waiting list in Strood where the population in 1939 was about 20,000.

So by 1946 thirteen suitable sites were identified within SRDC area, covering 45 acres for permanent housing plus six sites covering 7½ acres for temporary housing. The council hoped to build 180 permanent and 66 temporary houses in the first two years. The newspaper report said that one site was ready and another nearing completion. Erection of the prefabs was expected as soon as the Ministry delivered the houses. Permanent sites had been approved for Higham, Shorne and Meopham. Tenders were out and were due in within the next two months, in Strood temporary houses were to be up by September.

Prefabricated chalet-type dwellings were seen as a quick, temporary solution. It was envisaged they would have a life of about ten years, by which time proper housing would have been built. Central Government organised the supply of components and granted contracts for their manufacture. The contractors were aircraft producers and 50,000 prefabs were ordered, spread between five centres: Bristol Aeroplane Co., Hawksley's Ltd., two Vickers-Armstrong Ltd. Factories and the Blackburn Aircraft Co. Ltd.. A traditional, brick-built house cost about £510 but 5,000 prefab components could be produced for around £550. Production peaked at around 5,000 a month.

All the sites around Medway were assembled by local labour. The Council also paid German prisoners of war (PoWs) to erect prefabs and/or lay foundations and prepare sites but not at Broomhill in Strood. Across England there were so many PoWs involved in the construction of prefabs that when they were all repatriated in 1947 their departure contributed to the temporary housing project being wound down.



PoWs digging prefab drains.

Apart from the PoWs, there was a shortage of both skilled and unskilled workers and this was exacerbated by high absenteeism; on 4 February 1946 Rochester Council reported that nearly half of the labourers and 28% of the whole workforce were absent. Another problem during construction was the thieving and pilfering of components from the sites. Sometimes 24-hour guards had to be employed and Chatham Borough Council had to increase their insurance cover because of persistent theft during the building of eight houses in White Road.

The prefabs arrived on site ready to be assembled, complete with insulated aluminium walls and roofs, a fitted kitchen, indoor lavatory, separate bathroom, fire with integral hot-water back boiler, detached coal store and bike shed. The rooms were all a good size with a hall, living room and two bedrooms. After each site was prepared, utilities laid on and the roads made up they could be erected in about 3½ hours - including lino on the floors, curtain rails, and even a bell and knocker on the front door. They just needed the water and electricity connected up!



The final stages of prefab erection, Illustrated London News, 1945.

Bibliography and Acknowledgements

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MALSC Prefab display, 2009.

Ordnance Survey maps 1930 – 1962.

Gregg Stephenson – *Palaces for the People in Post War Britain.*

Strood Rural District Council archives.

Odette Buchanan extends grateful thanks to the patient and helpful staff of Medway Archives and Local Studies. She also wishes to thank the many Friends of Broomhill and residents of Strood for all their interesting and informative memories. She wishes to thank the owners credited for their permission to reproduce the illustrations used. Any infringement of copyright is entirely accidental; every care has been taken to contact or trace all copyright owners. She would be pleased to correct in future editions any errors or omissions brought to her attention.

Travels of a Tin Trunk

Michael Baker



Michael Baker's interest in family history was started by a great-uncle who once unrolled a family tree on the dining-room table. It was seven feet long. After a career in Electrical Engineering, including 20 years overseas, he opened some boxes in the attic at Owletts, the family home in Cobham ...

In his issue of *The Clock Tower*, the fascinating story continues of what Michael found in the tin trunk belonging to Alfred, the brother of Michael's grandfather, Herbert Baker.

Part 2: Tonbridge School and Gibraltar

I discovered the brothers went to a Dame's School in Rochester and among other skills Alfred developed an ability to draw.

The tin trunk revealed its earliest evidence - an ink drawing, made when Alfred was only 11 with the title *I wish she would move*, created in July 1875. He captured the detail of the boat's rigging, and I love the humour of the warmly dressed observer unwittingly guarding the clothes of the lone swimmer.



I wish she would move, A W Baker July 1875.

Herbert and Alfred vied with each other at sports and athletics, “like twins,” their Mother said. There was plenty of Cricket because their father, Thomas Henry, ran the village team with a game every Saturday and evening practice once a week throughout the summer and he wrote about it (Ref 1). The boys had ample opportunity to play for the village and for Tonbridge School, where Alfred followed Herbert into Judde House in January 1876. Alfred was in the school’s Rugby football XV from the age of 15 and at 17 was in the cricket XI under Herbert as captain. He also kept a meticulous list of his score in every cricket game and his averages for each year.

More records in the trunk tell me that at Tonbridge in 1879 he won the under-15 high jump with a leap of 4ft 6½ and the school competition with another of 5ft 6½ in 1882. He was Captain of Rugby football and took second place in eight athletic events in 1882.

That was his last school year. Herbert had left and Alfred was prominent on the cricket field, both as a batsman and a useful second fast bowler. That last cricket season at Tonbridge saw him score 527 runs at an average of 31 and he took 22 wickets at 8.4 runs per wicket. When Herbert returned to the school with a visiting team Alfred had the thrill of having him caught at cover point, one of four wickets he took in the innings. The contents of the trunk were coming into their own.



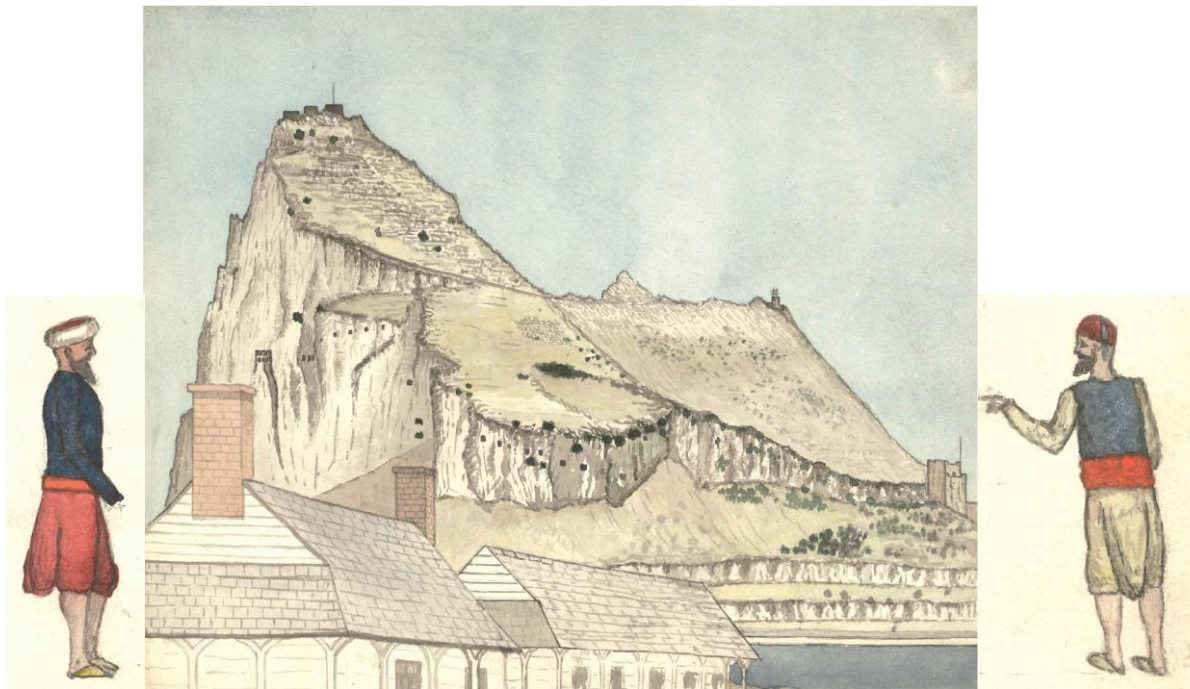
Tonbridge Cricket, 1881. Herbert, Captain in centre, Alfred over his left shoulder.

Prowess on the sports field taught young men to lead. Their academic record was of lesser account: they were capable and strong. Being younger sons, there was neither a farm to inherit nor a parental occupation to follow. Herbert had chosen architecture “because he could draw”. Alfred could too, but the physical activity of soldiery was his choice. He was a cadet at the Sandhurst Royal Military Academy for 12 months from February 1883, passing out with good marks in military law, administration, tactics, topography and reconnaissance, fortification, drill, gymnastics and riding. The fee his father paid was £125 and not until he reached the rank of Captain ten years later did Alfred’s salary reach that figure.²

Sandhurst gave him the qualification, but what a young officer needed was a commission into a regiment. Did his father buy it? The earlier practice of buying a commission had been formally abolished in the 1860s under the Cardwell reforms, but other writers suggest that it had not died out. I could find no suggestion of any payment. Was Alfred of sufficient merit to be offered a commission? Whatever the reasoning, he chose not a Kentish but a newly forming regiment, the Durham Light Infantry. This regiment’s 1st Battalion was the former 68th of the British line, established in Durham. The 2nd Battalion, which Alfred joined, had been recently formed from the 106th Foot, originally part of the East India Company’s army.

The British Army in 1884 had many commitments; to keep the peace at home, in Africa, in India and it had to be in readiness in all those places. The two battalions of a regiment each had 500 officers and men when at full strength, one *at home* and the other abroad. While *at home* a battalion recruited, trained and prepared itself and after two or three years it would be posted to allow the other battalion home. Alfred as soon as he was commissioned found himself aboard ship to Gibraltar to join his battalion. With a bank account established with Holts' in London³ to receive his pay, he sailed on the *S. S. Malabar* on 2nd April 1884. He was 20, an officer only 8 weeks.

The Rock of Gibraltar, 1885



From Alfred's sketchbook.

Alfred's first year of active service was a quiet time for the British garrison and he would have been learning the ropes as a junior officer. Garrison life can quite quickly become humdrum, but his sketches show that he explored the Rock, the Moorish Castle and took time to be precise with pencil and watercolour. I will spare you the bullfight, but among the 15 or so drawings from this time are everyday scenes, perspectives of the buildings and people in the dramatic landscape. Through his eyes we can enjoy Gibraltar a century ago.

And there was cricket. He played 25 games in the summer of 1884 in Gibraltar, against other regiments and civilian teams. Clearly his cricket improved: he scored 850 runs at an average of 33 and took 67 wickets. Here is a sample of his meticulous records. Indeed his enthusiasm caused the DLI to start a regimental cricket book, which Alfred himself kept up for its first few years.

1884.

Date	Match	Runs	Wkts	Place
May 23	Infantry Brigade v Rest	54*	-	Gibraltar
May 30	North v South	{ 1	7	"
June 6	Public Schools v Rest	7		"
June 10	Capt. Hughes v Civilians	20		"
June 20	Single v Married	53*		"
June 27	Officers v N.C.O's & Men	59		"
July 1	2 nd Durham L.I. v Civilians	{ 38	6 for 10	"
July 12	2 nd B. Durham L.I. v 1 st Berkshire Regt	4		"
July 15	2 nd B. Durham L.I. v R. Dublin Ins ^{ts}	103	3 for 18	"

Part of Alfred's own cricket record (Diary 3) for 1884.



From Alfred's portfolio, undated.

In this picture cattle are being driven ashore; the scene could be anywhere until one notices, at the extreme right, the sentry. Is this the view looking north from Gibraltar, with a single guard on duty at the border? If so, how different today; this is the site of the airport. The floating ballerina suggests other distractions from garrison life.

From Alfred's portfolio, 1885.



A Brief Guide to the Life of Alfred William Baker

When?	Rank	Where Was He?	Doing What?	Other Events
6 Mar 1864	Birth	Owletts, Cobham		1869 Suez Canal opened
1873-75		Rochester	At a Dame's School	1870 Franco-Prussian war
Jan 1876		Tonbridge School	Judde House	England took half share in Suez Canal
Summer 1879		Tonbridge School	School rugby football team	Gladstone is Prime Minister
1880		Tonbridge School	School cricket team	First Boer war in South Africa
Summer 1882		Tonbridge School	Left Tonbridge School	
Feb 1883	Officer Cadet	Royal Military Academy Sandhurst		
Feb 1884	Lieutenant	Sandhurst	Completed; joined Durham Light Infantry	
Feb 1884 - Feb 1885	Lieutenant	Gibraltar	In garrison	Khartoum, death of General Gordon

Notes

1. Alfred's notebook and diary D3 and *The Tonbridgian*, page 487, July 1882, also page 498.
2. Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst Register, The National Archives (PRO) WO 151.
3. Alfred's bank book R2.

Jottings By Waghorn in 1849

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.

Thomas Fletcher Waghorn, one of Snodland's most famous residents, was the pioneer of the overland route to India via Egypt. In 1888 a statue was erected of him in Railway Street, Chatham.

I was contacted recently by Andrew Buttrey, who told me that, on clearing out the office of his late father, he had found a small book, owned by Thomas Waghorn. It was locked, but he had a key made for it to reveal 'Letts's Pocket Diary and Almanack for 1849'. There are very few entries, but information concerning Waghorn's life in 1849 is also extremely sparse, so anything that can be added to that is helpful. I am most grateful to Mr. Buttrey for permission to write about it here and for very kindly sending scans of all the entries.¹

The diary (pictured) measures just 4 x 2½ inches, so could easily be carried in a pocket. On the brass clasp is engraved (as illustrated), 'LIEUT¹ WAGHORN R.N. / 34. Cornhill', which is interesting because George Wheatley had taken over Waghorn's business early in 1848, but at new premises: 156, Leadenhall Street. Evidently Waghorn still retained use of his former office.



It is not clear what purpose the diary served, since there are a mere thirteen entries and the sparse contents are not in themselves sufficient to trace Waghorn's activities. However, most concern debts and payments, totalling around £475, and help to put some clothing on Waghorn's claims for losses after the Trieste experiments.² All entries are transcribed here - with the proviso that I have failed to identify some words in Waghorn's always difficult scrawl! These appear within [].

January '27 Sat: Owed Wheatley 13. 11. 9 & 2. 10 = [£]16. 1[s.] 9[d.]'

February '3 Sat: Grindlay £20. 0. 0.'

[This is the first of four payments to Grindlay and Co., who had premises at 16 Cornhill and who had themselves published *Hints for Travellers to India, detailing the several routes* in 1847. They were agents for passengers and mail using the Overland Route, but by this time Waghorn no longer controlled that. It is possible that he used Grindlay's to print some of his material, such as the 'memorials' he addressed to Parliament, although Smith, Elder and Co. had previously printed most of his pamphlets. More likely he had used them for some of his travelling arrangements.]

February '7 Wed: wrote letters to Hume Cobden Horsman Salomons Melvill'

[Hume and Cobden were both MPs who supported Waghorn's claims to Parliament for money to allay his debts. Horsman is unknown to me in any Waghorn connection, but is perhaps Edward Horsman (1807-1876), MP for Cockermonth at this time and later Chief Secretary to Ireland. A David Salomons was among the more generous subscribers to Waghorn's testimonial of 1846 (£21), and Melvill is presumably Sir James Cosmo Melvill, chief secretary to the East India Company between 1834 and 1858. It is likely that some if not all of these letters were among the appeals Waghorn was making for money to assuage his debts.]

February '19 Mon: Nicoll (renew) / for 3 mo[nth]s - & 3 more £39. 14s.'

February '23 Fri: Juilnoy / pay all if possible £51. 12s. 6d.'

[Both these entries look like debts to Frenchmen and suggest Waghorn was trying to pay them as best he could.]

March '16 Fri: See Jones [advance bill]'

March '23 Fri: Jones - £61. 3s. 6d./ see Private Letter Book - must pay at / least half - a week's advance'

[The list of subscribers to Waghorn's testimonial includes 'John Jones, Esq., 6 Regent St' and 'Messrs. Jones, Lloyd and Co.' who both subscribed £10. 10s. 0d.]

April '4 Wed: Grindlay £20. 0s. 0d.'

April '21 Sat: Buyant £225. 0s. 0d. / p/a'

[This entry does not appear to spell Bryant and is perhaps another Frenchman?]

June '4 Mon: Grindlay £20. 0s. 0d.'

June '8 Fri: [?] London early / circulars -'

August '4 Sat: Grindlay £16. 9s. 8d.'

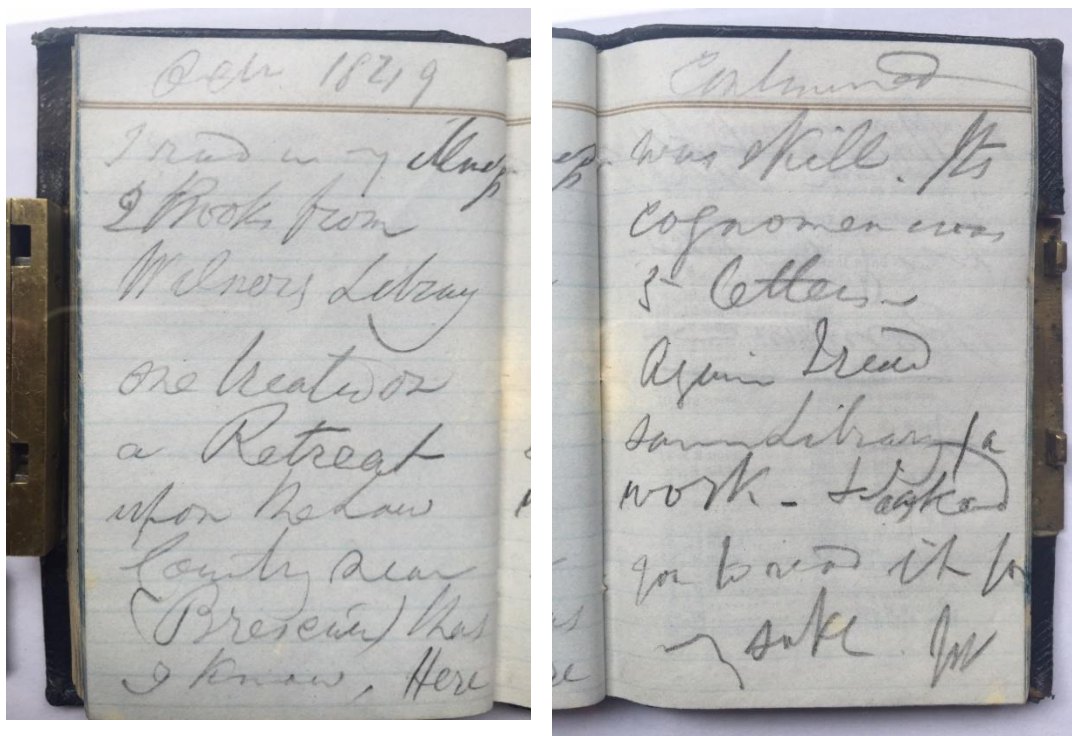
October '29 Mon: Embarked at Southampton / for Malta - dep[arte]d £2. 0s. 0d.'

[As a kindness, and in spite of Waghorn's bitter remarks that they 'deprived [me] of the advantages of this creation of my own energy [Overland mail], and left with it a ruin on my own hands', the P&O Company gave him free passage to Malta in the hope that this would restore him to full health. He sailed in the *Euxine* and 'Arrived at Malta' on 9 November. Between 10 and 20 November he was 'Staying there', but a couple of vertical pencil strokes replacing the 'D[itt]o' at 20 to 21 November make it unclear exactly when he left. On 14 November he 'Paid Hotel £4. 0s. 8d' and another 14s. 4d. is entered alongside the entry. Since he did not arrive back in England until Christmas Day, he must have stayed elsewhere on the island for a week or so. He returned on the *Indus*, which *The Times* reported left Malta on the evening of 3 December 'after having been detained three days waiting for the Marseilles portion of the outward India and China mails, which up to the date of the letter [4th December] had not arrived.'³

At the end of the book are blank pages for miscellaneous notices and three here are filled with jottings as shown. Waghorn's script became increasingly impenetrable as he grew older and seems to have been written at a speed reflecting his non-stop energy. Possibly too his illness was affecting his writing here. Some words have defeated my attempts to transcribe them, but the entries do not add any substance to his story. Any solutions are welcome!

[Heading] 'Oct^r 1849 // Continued

I read in my illness / 2 Books from / [?Milners] Library / one treats on / a Retreat / upon the Law / [?] [?dear] / [(Brese..r)] that / I know. Here / was [..ill]. Its / cognomen was / 5 letters - / Again I read / same Library / a / work - & I asked / for [?you] to read it for / [?my] sake [W?] I [Nun..] title / was [?] one / Romance



Notes

1. These have been added to the Waghorn Collection at Snodland Millennium Museum.
2. In 1846 Waghorn experimented with finding the best route across Europe for transporting mail, causing him considerable personal financial loss. By 1847, however, he had shown that a route via Trieste was some 13 days faster than via Marseilles.
3. *The Times*, 13 December 1849. NB the embarkation was on 29, not 20 which is incorrectly given in my book.

You can find out more about Snodland's fascinating history and it's famous son, Thomas Fletcher Waghorn, on the newly re-vamped website www.snodlandhistory.org.uk. Andrew's other articles on Waghorn can be found in earlier copies of the *Clock Tower* on the FOMA website (<http://foma-lsc.org/journal.html>):

In Search of Thomas Fletcher Waghorn (1800–1850), May 07 (Issue 6), *Who was Waghorn's Father?*, Aug 07 (Issue 07), *A Waghorn Discovery*, Aug 09 (Issue 15), *Thomas Fletcher Waghorn Revealed!* (with Amanda Thomas), Nov 12 (Issue 28), *Zeal Unabated: The Life of Thomas Fletcher Waghorn*, May 16 (Issue 42).

In Issue 42 of *The Clock Tower* (May 2016) Andrew Ashbee discussed Snodland Museum's 1911 Project. This can now also be found on the website (www.snodlandhistory.org.uk) together with other files such as All Saints Church and Churchyard memorials and the earliest surviving admission registers for the National Schools: Girls 1883-1920; Boys 1906-1916; Mixed Infants: 1909-1916.

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.

This is the last in the series.

Conscientious Objection

Part 4: Media Reporting of Conscientious Objection in the Medway Towns, 1916-1918

Much newspaper reporting, both nationally and locally, was heavily biased against Conscientious Objectors during the Great War. We will here examine if the two main Medway journals, *The Chatham News* and *The Chatham Observer*, were as vitriolic in their coverage as many other weekly provincial papers. Indeed some went as far as refusing to cover the local tribunals or naming the appellants; e.g. Canterbury and Sittingbourne. In other places they were refused entry to the tribunals and thus could not report on the proceedings had they wished to, e.g. Gravesend. Coverage in the Medway Towns was fairly unique in that there were two separate newspaper owners and this offered a more diverse opportunity of reporting events than that of other towns. Only Tunbridge Wells really had anything similar in coverage and was dominated by one journal.

Did the local editions succeed in offering the public a wider and more impartial version of events during 1916-1918? After March 1916 all the Medway tribunals were held in public and allowed full newspaper reportage. Both *The Chatham News* and *The Chatham Observer* gave quite detailed coverage of the tribunals in their first year, but rarely added any commentary or observation on the cases, i.e. reporting was by and large factual. However greater prominence was given to those claiming exemption on the grounds of conscientious objection (CO). This was to a degree to be anticipated as it was a novel concept. Although the newspaper crosshead drew attention to the CO cases, they were not particularly portrayed as unpatriotic or cowards, which was the case in many of the other provincial papers owned by the Kent Messenger Group. In August 1914 *The Chatham News* declared that an anti-war Socialist demonstration at Gillingham was both unpatriotic and misleading. *The Chatham Observer* decided not to comment upon the matter, but both newspapers were less than sympathetic to Rochester's Liberal MP when he voted against the two Military Service Bills in Parliament pertaining to the subject of conscription. Author (and FOMA member) Brian Joyce concluded that 'both local newspapers took him to task for this, mainly on the grounds that he was cutting himself off from local opinion...'¹

Outside the tribunal and court cases, *The Chatham Observer* was fairly condemnatory of conscientious objection. This journal was owned by the MacKay family during the Great War. On 4 March 1916 they commented that 'the local Tribunals are in for a very busy time in this district as a large number of claims for exemption have been received. From the reports of the proceedings, which appear in another part of this issue, it will be seen that some very interesting cases have been

dealt with by the Tribunals, and on the whole they appear to have held the scales of justice very evenly.’ However the second part of the editorial questioned why Rochester Tribunal ‘decided to take the claims of conscientious objectors in camera. There is no class of case that required more careful scrutiny than these, and the more publicity that is given to them the better will the bulk of residents be pleased.’ The newspaper editorial initially took the stance that the tribunals were operating in a fair and judicious manner towards applicants. This changed in tone, however, when it spoke about the COs. According to the columnist, they required public scrutiny as well as that already undertaken by the tribunal. He goes on to state his understanding of genuine objectors, ‘though at the same time I believe they are mistaken in their views over the present war, but I have no sympathy with those who at the eleventh hour have been suddenly converted to similar principles. To my mind it smacks too much of an attempt to evade active participation in the struggle, and I am only sorry that some local people are doing what they can to assist them.’ Although this columnist made his position on COs perfectly clear, there is no reference to being unpatriotic or cowardly. This was their actual by-line for the first CO tribunal cases reported in the same issue:

‘Cases at Local Tribunals
Reporter objecting to Saving Life
Four Brothers claim exemption
Many interesting cases.’²

The reporter in question was Charles Daniels of *The Chatham News*, owned by Parrett & Neve. This was probably one of the more dramatic by-lines describing COs, but, given that this young man worked for the opposition newspaper, was not so vitriolic in nature as many found in other Kent journals. Daniels’ own employers headed his case with ‘Love your enemies’ and reported just the facts of the case. A few weeks later they published an anonymous letter from an International Bible Student in support of COs; all the evidence points to the correspondent being Charles Daniels.³

They therefore gave space to their reporter to reply to an article that appeared a week earlier. At no stage do they condone or condemn their employee, but allow him to state his views.

At the same time as the above letter was produced by *the Chatham News*, *the Chatham Observer* decided to drip a little more poison in its *Tittle Tattle* (gossip) column:

‘Some of the conscientious objectors who have appeared before the Local Tribunals have cut a sorry figure and it may fairly be assumed that a desire to shirk military service had greater weight with the applicants for exemption than any well-founded conscientious objection. A man who earns his living by assisting to provide war munitions, and then turns round and says he had conscientious objection to war, has a very elastic conscience. I do not envy the lot of such men if they are called upon to serve in the Non-Combatant Corps’.

The Observer has here permitted someone to air their views of the weekly tribunal and condemned dockyard workers for having a CO. It was a position many munitions or defence workers found themselves in and their cases were generally arbitrarily dismissed without even hearing any evidence.⁴

A further headline by the same paper on 20 May 1916 is quite revealing on its stance on COs:

‘Conscientious Objectors
Strood Council Will Not Employ Them’⁵

Although a number of council members did ridicule the notion of employing COs in local government, the overall chamber decided to carry the motion and employ COs if required. As time went on *the Chatham Observer* devoted less time to the subject as both the number of cases dropped after the initial surge and other more pressing war stories emerged. By December 1916 in the case of the arrest of Joseph Posner, a Jew from Chatham, they could only muster up the headline: ‘Another Conscientious Objector’.⁶

The Chatham News appears to have taken a different slant on their reporting. Whilst the tribunal and court coverage was fairly impartial, they tended to emphasise the case of mistaken COs and went to great lengths to correct any possible error. In the case of the arrest of a Strood absentee in August 1916, the paper was at pains to point out he was not a conscientious objector. Similarly it printed an explanation on 23 October 1916 given by T J Fahey: ‘My attention has been drawn to a cutting from

the local paper referring to me under the Heading of “Certificate of Exemption Withdrawn”, and as I consider that the bald facts as stated therein are likely to create an unfavourable impression in the public mind as regards my patriotism.’ He goes on to emphasise, ‘I am not a conscientious objector’ and states he had already served 12 years with the Royal Engineers as well as being about to re-join them.⁷ A week later the banner headline reads:

‘Conscientious Objector’s Great Mistake
Atonement by a Rochester Man’

James Little, a Rochester teacher, was refused exemption by the tribunals and arrested as an absentee. However he wrote a letter to Rochester Education Committee in October, which the mayor felt should be published. The wording of his apology was: ‘From the day I joined I have endeavoured to do my best to atone for the great mistake I made’.⁸ *The Chatham News*, rather than *the Chatham Observer*, saw fit to publish part of the letter. Again there is an emphasis on mistaken identity and the need to remove the tarnished image of these three young men. Little rose to the rank of Sergeant in the army and was one of two local ‘conscientious’ objectors to die for his country during the Great War. (see FOMA’s online De Caville Index, <http://foma-lsc.org/wwi/index.html>). Ironically *The Chatham Observer* published a similar case in April 1917, concerning schoolteacher Charles Palmer of Gillingham, who had also rescinded his CO status and joined the army voluntarily. In this case they were merely reporting council business and had nothing really to say about Palmer’s change of heart; the headline just read: ‘The Conscientious Objector’⁹

The Chatham News had a wide coverage of COs, allowing the Society of Friends (Quakers) to place peace notices in its edition as well as an advert to apply to them for advice and assistance at tribunals.¹⁰ On 5 August 1916 *The News* published a long piece entitled, ‘Chatham conscientiously objects’, which was covered in Issue 42 of *The Clock Tower* (May 2016). This was reporting an incident at the Lower Chatham Barracks against COs, but was very graphic in its coverage. However the newspaper was quite clear in acknowledging this account as coming from an independent anonymous contributor, thereby distancing itself from the actual content.¹¹ *The News* also printed a protest by the No-Conscription Fellowship against the way the tribunals were being conducted in both Rochester and Gillingham, being particularly scathing of the intolerant attitude of the latter tribunal.¹²

Whereas the *Chatham Observer* seemed to run out of steam on CO by 1917, *The Chatham News* continued its coverage of both local tribunal cases and any interesting titbits from across the country that it deemed fit to keep its readership’s interest in the matter. Amongst these were cases from: Llanelli in Wales, five sons from Hertfordshire and the arrest of two COs at Milton Barracks.¹³ Yet the journal was not above criticising its local MP, E Lamb, for voting against the disenfranchisement of COs in Parliament. Argus (the nom de plume of the journalist) stated, ‘the people who claim the rights, but fail to exercise the duties of citizenship.’ The following week they were, however, prepared to balance this viewpoint with a letter from the Quaker councillor, Robert Dale. He wrote a passionate epistle and countered the above claim: ‘I deny that these men have failed to exercise the duties of citizenship, but, on the contrary, claim they have set a high example to many who would condemn them.’¹⁴

By 1918 the *Chatham Observer* was again reporting some unusual local cases and with more impartiality. In April 1918 they covered Rochester mayor’s receipt of an anonymous letter, challenging the non-enlistment of Edwin Gill, which asked, ‘Is it due to family influence?’ Gill was part of a local shipbuilding company and had originally put in a claim for conscientious objection, which was dismissed. On trying to join up he was rejected as medically unfit. The mayor asked for this letter to be published as he was fed up with receiving, what he considered was, whinging correspondence from writers who were too cowardly to put their names to.¹⁵

Another bizarre case covered by the paper was that of George Stockley of Rochester: ‘Butcher’s novel Objection’. In this case the headline could have been a lot more bold and sarcastic. Stockley claimed CO status, because ‘the earth has become too populated and it has become necessary to eliminate a portion of the people. That being so, and I having in no way helped to bring such a condition about, I consider I should not suffer the consequences’.¹⁶ This was not considered a ‘serious’ case by any of the local papers, but was so odd, and in a sense justified their view that COs were evasive or cowardly, to make it a case worth drawing to the attention of their readers.

Perhaps the strangest appearance at a tribunal was by Peter (Israel) Paton, a Jezreelite from Gillingham. In May 1916 Paton's long flowing locks, a feature of the sect, made for some interesting by-lines: 'He neither cut his hair nor shaved' was one of the more printable ones.¹⁷ Today the term 'conchie' is well established and frequently used, but in the Great War it was a rather derogatory expression for a CO. The only reference in print I have found in all the Kent and many other local county provincial newspapers of the period to a 'conchy' was in *the Chatham Observer*, referring to Albert Waterton, an artist, from Denton near Gravesend.¹⁸

By and large the *News*' coverage was fairer to COs than that of *the Observer*, yet neither of their reporting was particularly vindictive towards these people or accused them of being cowards. The charge of being unpatriotic was one, however, that neither journal could resist making or felt pressurised by its readers to level when there had been heavy losses on the Western Front in 1916.

Notes

1. *Chatham News* 22/8/1914; B. Joyce, 'Medway Towns Conscientious Objectors' (MA dissertation, Middlesex University, 1988) p.3.
2. *Chatham Observer* 4/3/1916.
3. *Chatham News* 4/3/1916 & 25/3/1916.
4. *Chatham Observer* 25/3/1916 .
5. *Chatham Observer* 20/5/1916.
6. *Chatham Observer* 23/12/1916.
7. *Chatham News* 26/8/1916 & 23/10/1916.
8. *Chatham News* 28/10/1916.
9. *Chatham Observer* 29/4/1917.
10. *Chatham News* 24/4/1915 & 19/2/1916.
11. *Chatham News* 5/8/1916.
12. *Chatham News* 18/3/1916.
13. *Chatham News* 23/6/1917, 28/7/1917 & 1/12/1917.
14. *Chatham News* 24/11/1917 & 1/12 /1917.
15. *Chatham Observer* 13/4/1918.
16. *Chatham Observer* 28/9/1918; also covered in the *News* and *South Eastern Gazette*
17. *Chatham News* 13/5/1916.
18. *Chatham Observer* 20/4/1918.

Roll out the Red Carpet

P.J. Salter



Pat Salter worked at the Guildhall Museum Rochester and at MALSC for over 20 years. She is a well known author and works include A Man of Many Parts - Edwin Harris 1859 – 1938; Pat is also a FOMA Vice President.

We are delighted that Pat Salter has given us permission to serialise her book, Roll out the Red Carpet, which will later be published in its entirety on the FOMA website. The book is a compilation of work originally undertaken by Pat for an exhibition at MALSC and gives a fascinating insight into royal visits to the Medway Towns over the centuries, from Anglo Saxon times right up to the present day. Thanks to Rob Flood and Phillip Dodd for helping to make publication possible.

Introduction

The red carpet has been rolled out, literally or metaphorically, for royal visitors to the Medway area for centuries. However, the red carpet has not always been a celebratory one. Wars, sieges, rebellions and invasions have been occasioned by, or resulted in, carpets of blood. The Medway area has been inhabited since ancient times but the first royal visitor that we know of, with any certainty, was Aethelbert, King of Kent, in 604 and the latest, at the time of writing, that of the Princess Royal in March 2011.

Twentieth Century

Part 1

The beginning of the new century once again brought royal visitors to the area. On 26 July 1905 King Edward VII attended two opening ceremonies locally. As Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Engineers he unveiled a War Memorial at the Royal Engineers' Barracks, Brompton dedicated to the Royal Engineer Units that had served in the South African War 1899 – 1902.

The King, accompanied by Queen Alexandra, moved on to the newly-built Royal Naval Hospital, Windmill Road, Gillingham which he opened with a golden key.¹ The hospital, built to replace Melville Hospital at Brompton (subsequently the Royal Marines hospital) was designed by Mr J.T.C. Murray and built under the supervision of Sir Henry Pilkington. It covered an area of thirty-nine acres and cost £800,000.

In 1918, World War One casualties in the Hospital were visited by King George V and Queen Mary. Accompanied by two of their children, Prince George and Princess Mary, they toured eleven wards where they stopped to talk to many of the sick and wounded. One man from the *Iris*, James L Cowgill, was asked by the King what the action at the Zeebrugge raid had been like. He replied that *it was very, very bad sir but it was well worth it.*

King George V was also one of the first members of the Royal Family to visit the Women's Royal Naval Service at Chatham. The King inspected members of the W.R.N.S. who were drawn up on parade in Dock Road as he walked from the Dockyard to The Royal Marine Barracks.

In July 1922 the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII) unveiled the Naval War Memorial on the Great Lines. It has a rectangular column of Portland stone about one hundred feet high, rising from a base surmounted by buttresses and crowned with a large copper sphere supported by emblematic figures representing the four winds. Immediately below these figures are four prows of ships carved in stone. On the base and buttresses are bronze panels bearing the names of those members of the

Royal Navy, the Royal Air Force, the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, the Royal Naval Reserve, the Mercantile Marine Reserve and civilians of the Chatham Command who fell in the Great War of 1914 to 1918.²

Later that year Princess Marie Louise, a grand-daughter of Queen Victoria, was in the area. A member of the Royal Red Cross, she took a particular interest in the nursing service. She was also active in the work of her mother's foundation, the Princess Christian Nursing Home at Windsor. On the morning of 23 November 1922 she arrived in Gillingham to open the new naval maternity nursing home for pregnant wives of local servicemen. The Princess named the home Canada House in recognition of the financial assistance provided by the dominion.

Canada House was designed by Mr C.W. Thompson of Rochester and built by Messrs. Skinner and Sons of Chatham. Princess Marie Louise opened the door with a silver-gilt key, enamelled with the Naval Crown, Globe and Laurel, the Royal Arms and the Imperial Crown, the work of Messrs. Croneen of Gillingham. After a tour of the building the Princess was presented with the key in an oak casket made at the Naval Barracks.

Princess Marie Louise returned to the Medway towns in 1935 when she made a visit to the Dean of Rochester, Dr. Francis Underhill. The Dean and Mrs Underhill hosted an informal garden party at the Deanery where a representative company of people from the Medway Towns were presented to the Princess. While at the Deanery, Princess Marie Louise also signed the ancient *Custumal* which contains the names of many illustrious and distinguished visitors.

On 29 June 1927 Prince Arthur of Connaught, a grandson of Queen Victoria, and his wife (Princess Alexandra, Duchess of Fife) made an official visit to Rochester. The programme for the day included the official opening of the Foord's Almshouses, lunch in the Guildhall, a visit to St Bartholomew's Hospital and the opening of the Fair, in aid of the hospital, in Rochester Castle Gardens.³

After a reception and speeches at the Guildhall the royal party moved on to the newly built Foord's almshouses in Priestfields which were financed from a bequest in the will of Thomas Hellyar Foord who had died in 1917. After being introduced to trustees and staff, the Prince and Princess crossed the quadrangle to the central hall where the official opening was performed by the Prince. Following a tour of the buildings with the architect, Mr E. Guy Dawber, the royal party left for lunch at the Guildhall.

After lunch the Prince and Princess visited St Bartholomew's Hospital where they toured the wards (Mark, Spong and Watts) and the operating theatre, and were presented to various dignitaries and staff. The royal party were then given a tour of the hospital including the new extension, where they were accompanied by the Architect Mr Herbert Reed and Mr T.N. McDermott, Consulting Engineer.

The opening of the Fair by the Princess, in the Castle Gardens in aid of the Hospital, was delayed for a while by torrential rain. Twenty minutes late, the official ceremony took place *on a platform near the sundial, with the grey walls of the ancient castle towering above the verdant trees and shrubs forming a picturesque background.* After the speeches the Princess was presented with a bouquet of roses by Joan Treacher, daughter of the Rev. H. Treacher, and the royal visitors were given a tour of the fair that began with the show provided by Councillor and Mrs G. Tyrwhitt Drake of Maidstone and *Nero* their celebrated lion.

A great celebration of the ancient history and modern industry and trade of Rochester brought Prince George (later Duke of Kent) to Rochester in 1931. The Civic Week took place between 22 and 27 June. Each day had a different designation⁴ and official visitors:

- Monday – Royal Day – Official opening of the week by Prince George (Duke of Kent);
- Tuesday – Civic Day – Lord Mayor of London with Sheriffs and Mayors from three counties
- Wednesday – Clergy Day – Bishop of Rochester
- Thursday – Industrial Day – Sir Herbert Austin and other prominent industrialists
- Friday – Aviation Day – Col. F.C. Shermadine, Director of Civil Aviation
- Saturday – Dickens Day – Sir Henry Fielding Dickens

The official programme listed displays and entertainments, a Fancy Dress Ball, a competition for the best window display and *all citizens* were requested to give the Duke *a royal and enthusiastic welcome*.

From Monday to Friday a Historical Pageant took place in the Castle Gardens relating the history of Rochester since Roman times. The Prologue which illustrated *allegorically, the function and nature of the Pageant* as told by Fame, who crowned the Spirit of Rochester, Clio the muse of history, Elves, Hours etc.. The Spirit of Rochester was played by three different people: Miss Betty Wheatley, Miss K. Walter and Miss Sybil Thorndike.

Episode Eight related *Dickens' Last Vision of Rochester*, a collection of scenes of Rochester from Dickens' novels, and was followed by the Epilogue, a procession of all the pageant characters and *Representatives of Modern Industries*.

Prince George was in the Medway area again in 1933. On 26 July, on behalf of the Prince of Wales, President of the Shaftesbury Homes, the Duke officially inaugurated the *Training Ship Arethusa* as the new home for the training of boys in the Royal Navy and Merchant Service. Built in 1911 when it was named the *Peking* the ship was sold to the Shaftesbury Homes for £6,250. The name of the vessel later reverted to *Peking*. *Arethusa* was a nymph in Greek mythology who became the lover of a river god.

The previous *Arethusa* served in the Crimea where she sustained considerable damage at the Battles of Sebastopol and Odessa, after which she was repaired at Malta. In May 1874 she was taken to Greenhithe to be used as a training ship for homeless and destitute boys with an average age of 14 to be trained in seamanship. Replaced by the *Peking*, it was broken up in 1934 and its water nymph figurehead taken to Upnor and placed on the seafront opposite the ship.

Two years later the Duke was back again. He had accepted an invitation from Dean Underhill to be the first Patron of the newly formed Friends of Rochester Cathedral and was at the cathedral for the Friends' inaugural service that was held on 2 November 1935.⁵

The Duke's widow, Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent made many visits to the Medway area. On 9 October 1945 she visited the W.R.N.S at Chatham. Twelve years later, having succeeded her husband as Patron of the Friends of Rochester Cathedral, the Princess was present at the annual Friends Festival Day. In 1959 she was back with the Royal Navy at Chatham when she launched H.M Submarine *Oberon*. Following the launch she flew by helicopter to Rochester, where she landed in the King's School playing field and was escorted to Rochester Cathedral for the Friends' Festival Service and an inspection of the restoration work.

The last visit of Princess Marina was again at the cathedral, for the Friends Festival Day in 1968, a few weeks before she died.

Notes

1. Stewart, Joyce: 'From Melville to Medway', Local History Leaflet No. 2, Gillingham Library.
2. Presnail, James: *Chatham, The Story of a Dockyard Town*.
3. *Rochester, Chatham and Gillingham News*, 1 July 1927.
4. Official Programme.
5. Welsby, Paul: *The Cathedral from 1820*, Faith & Fabric.

Huguenot Museum Update

Amy Dimmock



Amy Dimmock is the new Learning and Community Engagement Officer at the Huguenot Museum, Rochester. Amy studied Classics and Archaeology at the University of Kent before completing her Museum Studies MA at Leicester University. She returned to Kent to begin her museum career as Assistant Curator at The Royal Engineers Museum in Brompton. Amy is passionate about history and crafting and is excited to be a part of the Huguenot Museum team!

It's been a busy time at The Huguenot Museum with lots of events and activities. We had a very successful Beginners Crochet workshop with Judi Arnold in September where everyone even got to take home a goodie bag to continue their newly learnt skills. The Huguenot Museum also welcomed Mike Fitzgerald back for a Bookbinding workshop which was thoroughly enjoyed by all!

The Saturday Club will be taking a Christmassy theme on the 3 December 10.00 to 12pm with ribbon wreath making and decoupage Christmas cards. Make sure to book your place to avoid disappointment, £4.00 per child.

Story Time for under 5s continues every Thursday 10.00 to 11.00am until Christmas with special seasonal books just for December.

For adults we also have some exciting events coming up including a talk by Tessa Murdoch Secrets of the French Hospital Silver on 10 December 3.00 to 4.00pm, £10 a ticket. We also will be joining up with Rochester Film Festival for a French Film Night also on the 10 December (7.00 to 10pm) showing *Joyeux Noel*, which tells the story of the Christmas Truce during the First World War. You can even get in the Christmas spirit with a glass of wine beforehand! Tickets cost £7.50 adults, £5 for concessions, please book by visiting www.rochesterfilmsociety.co.uk

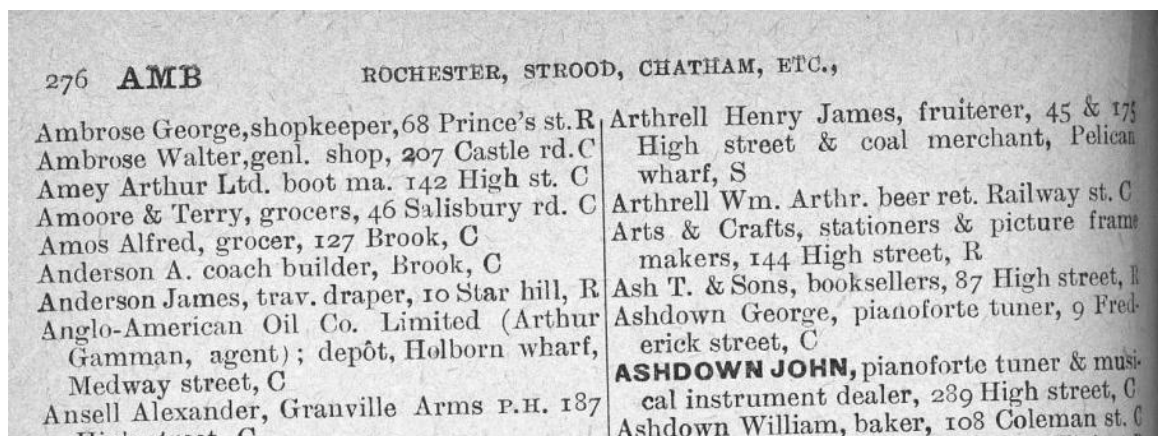
In other news the Museum welcomes its new Director, Dr Dinah Winch, who comes to us from Elizabeth Gaskell's House in Manchester.

For further information and to book all events please call 01634 789347 or visit www.huguenotmuseum.org

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.

In the last issue of *The Clock Tower* (43, August 2016), MALSC's Archive and Local Studies Assistant, Alison Thomas concluded her series of articles about advertising and the businessmen of the Medway Towns, *Keeping Up With the Victorians*. In this she mentioned Henry James Arthrell:



'This page from the commercial listing of the 1908-1909 directory shows coal merchant Henry James Arthrell with premises at Pelican Wharf. He is also listed as a fruiterer with shops at 45 and 175 High Street, Strood.'

FOMA member, Ian Smith has sent us this article with further information.

H J Arthrell & Sons

Ian Smith



Following the item in the August issue of *The Clock Tower* I thought readers might be interested in the life of Henry James Arthrell, my great grandfather.

Henry was born on 19 July 1867 in Wrotham, Kent. The eldest son of 12 children born to Henry James Arthrell (1843 – 1923) and Elizabeth Clarke Church (1848 – 1922). The census for 1881 shows that Henry Junior was living with his parents in Temple Street Strood; he was working as a chemist's messenger. In about 1895 Henry started his own transport business which was still running at the end of World War Two. On 25 December 1889 Henry was married to Emma Kent who had been born on 6 June 1869 in Wouldham, Kent.

During his lifetime Henry had a number of jobs including a labourer, master greengrocer, haulage contractor, coal merchant, and running a restaurant. He was also a local independent councillor on Rochester City Council representing Strood Ward. His grandson, Raymond Howard was also a lone Liberal councillor on the Rochester Council during the 1960s.

Henry owned the greengrocers business on the corner of Cuxton Road and Strood High Street (pictured) as well as a shop in Rochester High Street at the foot of Two Post Alley, which he later sold to his son in law A.F. Howard. He had a market garden at Gore Green Higham from 1910 to 1915 and ran Arthrell's Coal Merchants but sold it to three brothers from London and allowed them to continue trading using his name. But following a fine for selling short weight bags of coal, Henry placed a notice in the local paper to disassociate himself from the firm. Arthrell's coal was still trading in the Medway Towns until the early 1960s.

During World War 1 Henry ran a lorry driven by a gas balloon to save on petrol. He was a committed Christian and preacher and helped to establish Borstal Baptist Church and Frindsbury Baptist Church and was the lay leader of the Gospel Mission Church in Brompton Lane Strood for 12 years. Henry was associated with the Church when it met in the Levy's hall before the present church was built. He also served as the lay pastor at Higham Congregational Church for a number of years and had been president of the Rochester Free Church Council, as well as a local preacher in the Methodist church. Henry was a staunch total abstainer and was very keenly interested in temperance work and at one time led the largest Band of Hope meetings in Kent.

Henry and Emma celebrated their Golden Wedding on 25 December 1939, seven months before her death. They had ten children, two did not survive adulthood, and 13 grandchildren. The two eldest daughters married two Howard brothers and the two youngest daughters married two Wicker brothers.

By the end of his life Henry was the Company Chairman of his Haulage business running 24 lorries all over the country. Emma died on 13 July 1940 at St Catherine's, North Halling and Henry died on 17 October 1948 also at St Catherine's, North Halling. On the day of his death Henry had worshiped in the morning, as usual, at the Gospel Mission Church in Brompton Lane, Strood and his death was sudden and unexpected.

Before moving to Halling Henry and his family had lived at 4 Goddington Road, Strood from where he ran his haulage business, and at 140 Cliffe Road, Strood.



The Arthrell shop on the corner of Cuxton Road and Strood High Street; from the collection of Ian Smith and now held at the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre.

News and Events

Calendar of Forthcoming Events and Exhibitions

Friends of Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre

Talks

14 March 2017, 7.30 pm,

A Rat's Tale

A talk by Rob Flood.

11 April 2017

FOMA AGM

Full details in the February 2017 issue of *The Clock Tower*.

Booking is not required for FOMA talks. Until further notice all events are at Frindsbury Parish Hall, Church Green, ME2 4HE. 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.

Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre

Saturday, 10 December 11.30 am to 2.30 pm

Grand Sale of Surplus Stock.

Please note this will be the last event before the move to Bryant Road, Strood.

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. For Satnav please use ME2 2AD.

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.

Until further notice, our postal address is Medway Archives Office, c/o Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4TR.

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.

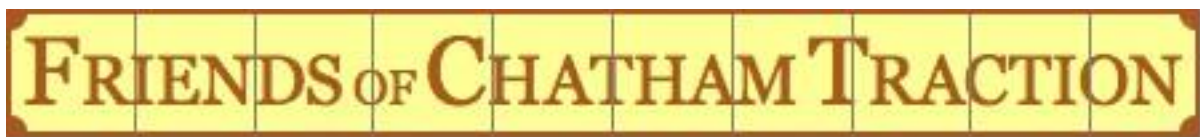
Work to restore one of Rochester's most treasured landmarks resumed in spring, 2016. The £2 million Heritage Lottery Funded project to conserve Eastgate House was paused in July 2015 due to the voluntary administration of the main contractor, Fairhurst Ward Abbots. Medway Council awarded completion of the project to construction company Buxton Building Contractors Limited. Founded in 1924, Buxton has vast experience working with historic and listed buildings, and has also worked on the Heritage Lottery Funded *Hidden Treasures, Fresh Expressions* project at Rochester Cathedral.

Further information can be obtained at: www.friendsof-eastgatehouse.org on Facebook on 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; a copy of the membership form is also available on the website.

The Friends of the Guildhall Museums

www.friendsoftheguildhall.com

The Friends of the Guildhall Museums is a group which supports the work of two important but very different elements of Medway's heritage - the Guildhall Museum in Rochester and the Old Brook Pumping Station in Chatham. Supporting the Guildhall Museums will help conserve our local history for generations to come through specialist events and opportunities designed to educate and inspire, telling the stories of the Medway Towns. For all events see www.friendsoftheguildhall.com/events/



The Friends were constituted in 2007, with aims centred on the restoration of the sole surviving Chatham Traction bus, GKE 68 of 1939. The Chatham & District Traction Company had operated bus services over Medway's former tram routes from 1930 to 1955, when it was absorbed into Maidstone & District. The bus, a once-familiar piece of Medway's fabric, is to come alive again as a resource for the study of local and social history.

Buses were central to life in the Towns for many decades, taking people to school, shops, work or play. Studies might look inward to the company's people and facilities, or outward to its services and locations served, and how lifestyle changes influenced its development.

To support the educational aim we are collecting relevant material to form an archive of local transport history, including an oral history collection. We would be happy to receive any items – photographs, artefacts, ephemera – relating to Chatham Traction, its predecessor trams or local bus operations up to 1970 (the year of withdrawal of the last Chatham Traction vehicle).

Grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Rochester Bridge Trust have allowed completion of two fundamental stages – the reconstruction of the body structure and overhaul of the engine. We are now seeking further funding to complete the restoration and to prepare our organisation for its educational role.

We offer talks to interested bodies, and organise occasional events to which the public are invited. For more information contact Richard Bourne (Chairman); 31 Usher Park Road, Haxby, York YO32 3RX; 01904 766375, or 07771 831653. Email Richard@thebournes.me.uk.

Or see our website at www.chathamtraction.org.uk.

The City of Rochester Society

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

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

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.

HUGUENOT MUSEUM

discover your story

Huguenot Museum Main Events

10 December, 3.00-4.00 pm.

Secrets of the French Hospital Silver,

A talk by Tessa Murdoch, Deputy Keeper at the Victoria and Albert Museum and Huguenot Museum Trustee; £10.

December 10, 7.00 – 10.00 pm

French Film Night: *Joyeux Noel*.

Join us at the museum for a Rochester Film Society screening of *Joyeux Noel*, which tells the story of the Christmas truce during the First World War. Get in the Christmas spirit with a glass of wine before the screening. To book please visit www.rochesterfilmsociety.co.uk ; £7.50 adults and £5 for concessions.

Family Events

The Saturday Club.

10.00am – 12.00 noon; £4 per child or £35 per year.

Do you like getting messy and having fun? Come along to the Saturday Club to take part in different arts and crafts on the first Saturday of each month; 8+ years. Booking is essential - see below.

3 December: Christmas ribbon wreaths and decoupage Christmas cards.

Children's Cinema: French Film Club

Join us for morning screenings (10.00am – 12.00pm) of classic children's films with a French twist. Bring your own food and drink and don't worry about the noise! £3 per person. To book visit www.rochesterfilmsociety.co.uk

Huguenot Museum: Story Time

Bring your under 5s along every Thursday morning to have fun with props and games as we bring a different story to life each week. From Room on the Broom to Owl Babies and the Very Hungry Caterpillar. Baby change facilities, toys and play mats available- and even tea for the grown-ups. **Pick up a loyalty card and get the 5th and 10th sessions free.** See our website (www.huguenotmuseum.org) for a full story list. £3.50 per child, adults free. No need to book, just turn up!

The Huguenot Museum is open Wednesday – Saturday 10am – 5pm on the top two floors of 95 High Street, Rochester, Kent. Entrance is £4 for adults and £3 concessions and can be validated for 12 months with gift-aid. For more information or to get in touch visit www.huguenotmuseum.org, call 01634 789347 or email learning@huguenotmuseum.org Unless otherwise indicated, for all booking call 01634 789347.

Friends of Broomhill

Broomhill Park has been awarded a sixth consecutive Green Flag; the Award recognises the best green spaces in the country. The Park has again been awarded 'Outstanding' in the RHS S.E in Bloom competition.

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.

Task Days

First Sunday of September, October, November, December. Meet at King Arthur's Drive Car Park 11.00 am. Bring your own tools or tools provided. Two hours of free, healthy fun!

For further details see park notice boards, www.friendsofbrommhill.org.uk, find us on Facebook or contact David Park, Secretary on 01634 718972, email: davidpark1999@yahoo.co.uk

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.

8th December 2016

Society Christmas evening.

9th February 2017

Aveling and Porter, a talk by Jim Preston.

9th March 2017

Gravesham Round and About, a talk by Christoph Bull.

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

The Royal Engineers Museum, Library and Archive

Prince Arthur Road, Gillingham, Kent, ME4 4UG

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

During 2016 the Royal Engineers Museum is upgrading the heating and lighting systems. This means the main Museum building is closed from 13 May; the Bridging Gallery and Temporary Exhibition are still open. Because of this reduced space admission is FREE in 2016; there will still be a wide range of children's activities and the Somme exhibition will also be available.

Due to the building works at the Museum the main car park is closed. There is an overflow car park that can be found using the signs; please note this is a five minute walk from the main site.

Events

January 2014 - November 2018, First World War Battlefield Tour Groups.

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

June 25 - December 20, Exhibition: *Sappers and the Somme*.

This exhibition will commemorate the contribution of the Royal Engineers in supporting the Army at the Battle of the Somme.

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.

ADMISSION IS FREE DURING 2016 DUE TO THE RENOVATION WORKS.

The Rochester Bridge Trust

Further information from <http://www.rbt.org.uk/>

The Bridge Wardens' lectures are held in the medieval Bridge Chapel, 5 Esplanade, Rochester ME1 1QE, unless otherwise indicated. Refreshments available from 6.30 p.m. Lectures begin promptly at 7.00 p.m. Tickets are free but places are limited so **MUST** be booked in advance from Sue Reilly by email to sue@maxim-pr.co.uk or by telephone on 01892 513033.

ICE Kent & East Sussex Historical Engineering Group (KESHEG) lectures are held at various venues around Kent and East Sussex. To register for information about events, please email kesheg@gmail.com

Brompton History Research Group

www.bromptonhistory.org.uk/

Brompton village is a complex civilian area in the heart of a military world. To the south and east lie the Chatham Lines, a series of fortifications built to defend the Chatham Dockyard. To the west lies the Dockyard itself and to the north Brompton Barracks, home of the Royal Engineers.

For more information email bromptonhistoryresearchgroup@gmail.com

Gillingham and Rainham Local History Society

The Society meets on the second Friday of each month from September to June at Byron Road School, Gillingham, ME7 5XX (car parking at the rear, accessed from Milton Road) on the second Friday of each month (September to July) 7.00pm with meeting starting at 7.15 pm.

9 December 2016, *From Backstage to Front of House*, a talk by John Short;

13 January 2017, *Textus Roffensis*, a talk by Michelle Lees;

10 February 2017, *The History of Colour*, a talk by Toni Mount.

New members and visitors are always welcome; annual membership £20, visitors £3 per meeting. For further information, contact Val Barrand on 07947 583327 or email lupusrufus@sky.com



Blue Town Heritage Centre, The Criterion Music Hall and Cinema

www.thecriterionbluetown.co.uk/#!/criterion-music-hall/cb3i

The present Heritage Centre and café are on the site of two earlier establishments. Originally the New Inn in 1868, the site became The Royal Oxford Music Hall. The following year the building, situated a few doors down from the court house, became The Criterion public house, which included to the rear a music hall called The Palace of Varieties. This offered "rational amusement for all classes" including, in April 1876, a one armed juggler! In 1879 the earlier building was replaced with a brick built one. The Heritage Centre is packed with items, memorabilia and artefacts, including an upstairs area dedicated to HMS *Victory*.

Open Tuesdays to Saturdays 10am - 3pm and for events. Entrance £2.00 and includes entrance to the Aviation annexe at Eastchurch. Entrance is free to Friends. To become a Friend costs just £5.00 a year, for this you receive information before it goes onto the website and invites to special Friends-only events, plus a regular newsletter.

Today the main space at the centre is occupied by the Criterion Music Hall, one of just a few remaining authentic Music Hall buildings, lovingly restored by Jenny and Ian Hurkett and their unbeatable team of volunteers. The Criterion stages professional Victorian style music hall shows (three seasons a year), cinema every Friday and theatre and live music shows; it is also available for private hire. Booking on 01795 662981 or by visiting the website: <http://www.thecriterionbluetown.co.uk/#!/criterion-music-hall/cb3i>



The latest information can be found at:
www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/

Information from Paul Tritton, Hon. Press Officer, KAS; paul.tritton@btinternet.com

About The Clock Tower

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

Editorial deadlines

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

The copy deadline for Issue 45 of *The Clock Tower* is Monday 30 January 2017, with publication on Wednesday 22 February 2017.

Publication date

The fourth Wednesday following the editorial deadline.

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

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Front Cover Accreditations and Website Information

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

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

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

Further Information

Further information on the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre can be obtained on the MALSC website www.medway.gov.uk/malsc or by writing to Medway Archives Office, c/o Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4TR. Telephone +44 (0)1634 332714; fax +44 (0)1634 297060; email: malsc@medway.gov.uk

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

Membership enquiries should be directed to the Membership Secretary, Betty Cole, 98 The Wharf, Dock Head Road, Chatham ME4 4ZS, Kent. Telephone: 01634 892976; email: betty-cole@outlook.com

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London Labyrinth



On a very hot evening on 13 September 2016, Dr Cathy Chater visited Frindsbury to present her talk, *London Labyrinth*. She is pictured (centre) with FOMA Vice Chairman Elaine Gardner (left) and FOMA Chairman Tessa Towner (right). See page 3. Photograph, Amanda Thomas.

MALSC's First Project with Ancestry

On 25 August 2016 the Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre began a new partnership with the family history website Ancestry.co.uk with the online release of a database of MALSC's pre-1916 workhouse registers. See page 8 for more details. Pictured here are MALSC Archivist Alison Cable and Deborah Collins, a researcher in the history of the Poor Law in Kent. Deborah is one of MALSC's most regular users of the Poor Law Union records.



Photograph courtesy of MALSC.

Bible Mystery Solved!



On 20 October 2016 FOMA hosted an afternoon reception in the Members' Room at Rochester's Guildhall Museum to return the Moore family bible to the original owner's descendant, Peter Moore. See page 3 for more details. From left to right: Peter Moore, Simon Lace, Medway Heritage Services Manager, Tessa Towner, FOMA Chairman.



**A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM EVERYONE
AT FOMA!**