

# Memories

Share your memories of Medway  
at our friendly reminiscence sessions



No need to book—just turn up!

Free event 2-3.30pm at Medway Archives Centre;  
small charge for refreshments



- Tuesday 4th June 2019: World War II and Evacuation
- Tuesday 18th June 2019: Working at Winget's and Short's
- Tuesday 2nd July 2019: Railways, trams and omnibuses
- Tuesday 16th July 2019: Prefabs and council housing
- Tuesday 30th July 2019: Pubs, clubs and restaurants

Medway Archives Centre, 32 Bryant Road, Strood.

[www.medway.gov.uk/archives](http://www.medway.gov.uk/archives)

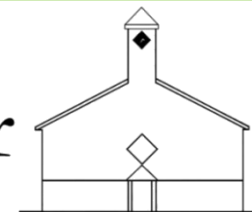
Phone: 01634 332714

 Medway Archives and Local Studies

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# The Clock Tower



Issue Number 54: May 2019  
£2.00; free to members

The Friends of Medway Archives  
Excepted Charity registration number XR92894

## Thanks, Odette!



At the FOMA AGM on 2 April 2019,  
Odette Buchanan retired from her position as Secretary.  
More on the AGM inside.

PLUS two new series!

Betty Cole and Norma Crowe: *Voices from the Dockyard*  
and  
Dr Andrew Ashbee: *Lives of Rochester Cathedral Choristers*

If undelivered, please return to:  
Medway Archives Office, c/o Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road,  
Chatham, Kent, ME4 4TR.

## FOMA at the Rochester Hub

On 12 March 2019 FOMA took part in an event to mark British Science Week, part of the STEM Learning initiative to support science, technology, engineering and mathematics in education. It was held at the Medway Adult Education Centre at the Rochester Hub and was an opportunity to showcase our work and the latest project with Medway Council, *Soldiers Stories on our Streets*. Pictured below are Elaine Gardner and Christopher de Coulon-Berthoud, and (right) the posters which were produced by the project.



## Albert Edward Godfrey Howes, (Sept. 1897 – Oct. 1917)

Another moving story from the FOMA De Caville Index is featured in Elaine Gardner's article on page 23.



*Minty Farm Cemetery, Belgium*

*Photographs kindly supplied by Tony Gray.*



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## Events at the Medway Archives Centre

More information on page38.

Short Brothers in Rochester

an illustrated talk by  
Philip MacDougall

Wednesday 3 July 2019 at 2.30pm  
tickets £4.00  
phone 01634 332714 to book your place

Medway Archives Centre, 32 Bryant Road, Strood.  
www.medway.gov.uk/archives  
Phone: 01634 332714

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## Chairman's Letter

Elaine Gardner



Already the FOMA AGM and Easter have passed and we are heading for the May Bank Holidays as I write this. It is not just the weather that has been changeable, changes are taking place within FOMA too.

As I said at the AGM we are changing both the venue and evening for our talks. We have decided to move our venue to the Lower Hall at St. Nicholas Church Strood as it is more central, especially for those who use public transport, with buses through Strood stopping either outside, opposite in Commercial Road or round the corner outside the Post Office in North Street. There is also car parking in the evening via the entrance in Gun Lane (see page 4 for more details). Since the second Tuesday of the month was not available we have decided to change the day too and, for this year at least, we are giving the second Friday of the month a try, hoping it will not clash with other societies to which our members belong. Our first event at St Nicholas will be on Friday 14 June when the ever-entertaining Christoph Bull will be our speaker.

Another change is that Odette Buchanan has retired as FOMA Secretary. She was elected to this post at the AGM in April 2008, (see *The Clock Tower*, Issue 10, May 2008) when I too was elected to the committee, and she has been providing a great service to FOMA ever since. Sadly, we are now without a Secretary! Surely one of our many members can come and join us to take over from Odette? It is not an arduous task – we have six committee meetings a year with minutes and agendas and the occasional correspondence to deal with.

Thanks in part to our work with Abby Found on the *Soldiers Stories on our Streets* project our membership has grown with some 10 or 11 new members just in the past six months. We look forward to hopefully seeing them at both FOMA and MAC events. It is always great to have new input and ideas in order to flourish as a society.

Alas, we have also lost two of our earliest members since the start of the year. Mai Zobel, who joined FOMA in 2006 and who regularly attended our events and activities died in February in her 92<sup>nd</sup> year. As a teacher at St Nicholas Infants School, or in her role as a cub leader with the Scout movement, or Morris dancing at the festivals I suspect many of our local members will have known Mai and will miss her.

Then we heard on 14 March that Pat Salter, another of FOMA's founding members had died the previous day. She had moved from the Guildhall team to work as part of the local studies team when MALSC was first established and has been one of FOMA's Vice - Presidents since its inception – (see *The Clock Tower*, Issue 1, April 2006). Stephen Dixon's and Jean Lear's wonderful tributes to Pat can be read on pages 5 to 8. Then at the beginning of May we heard that Peter Burstow had died; a synopsis of the wonderful contribution he made to FOMA is on page 8. Our sincere condolences go to the families of Mai, Pat and Peter. They will be missed.

I would like to conclude with my sincere thanks to Odette for her many years as FOMA Secretary and know she will continue to support us for many a year yet! Thanks Odette.

## *New Members*

A warm welcome to new FOMA members Carole Mapley, A.C. Mumin, Cynthia Powell, J.V. Blackburn, Peter Joyce, Duncan Mead, and Lucinda Moore.

## *FOMA's New Venue*

Elaine Gardner

As stated in the Chairman's letter, FOMA is locating its talks and Quiz Nights to St Nicholas Church, Lower Hall, Strood. For those of you not familiar with it, St Nicholas Church is situated in Strood High Street, between the Gun Lane/Cuxton Road junction and North Street, facing you as you come around the one-way Commercial Road to reach that end of the High Street.

Buses coming from Cuxton Rd or down Strood Hill stop outside, while those going towards those directions stop in Commercial Road. Buses to and from Frindsbury and the Hoo Peninsular stop in North Street and it is possible to walk through the Asda car park to reach the Lower Hall entrance at the back of the church.

By car you can gain access to the church car park via what is left of Edward Street, a turning off Gun Lane close to the railway bridge, on the right as you come from the traffic lights at the Gun Lane/High Street junction. Please note that you cannot, at the present time turn into Gun Lane from the Frindsbury Road as it is one-way. If you are coming from that direction you will need to turn right into Cliffe Road, then first left into Martin Road and left at the T-junction with Brompton Lane.

The post code for the High Street entrance of the Church Hall is ME2 4TR and the post code for the Edward Street entrance and the car park is ME2 4UG.

## *About The Clock Tower*

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

### Editorial deadlines

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

**The copy deadline for Issue 55 of *The Clock Tower* is Monday 29 July 2019, with publication on Wednesday 21 August 2019.**

### Publication date

The fourth Wednesday following the editorial deadline.  
*The Clock Tower* is printed by Barkers Litho, Unit 18 Castle View Business Centre, Gas House Road, Rochester, Kent, ME1 1PB; telephone: 01634 829048, email: [info@barkerslitho.co.uk](mailto:info@barkerslitho.co.uk)

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### Front Cover Accreditations and Website Information

The logo for *The Clock Tower* was designed by Bob Ratcliffe.  
The banner design (incorporating the logo) and the title *The Clock Tower* were designed by Alexander Thomas.  
*The Clock Tower* is also available at [www.foma-lsc.org/newsletter.html](http://www.foma-lsc.org/newsletter.html)  
*The Clock Tower Index* (<http://foma-lsc.org/journal.html>) is updated by Nic Nicholas.

### Further Information

Further information on the Medway Archives Centre can be obtained on the MAC website <https://cityark.medway.gov.uk/> or by writing to Medway Archives 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](mailto:malsc@medway.gov.uk)

General enquiries about the Friends can be obtained from the FOMA Chairman: Elaine Gardner, 102 Valley View Road, Rochester, ME1 3NX, Kent; [emgardner@virginmedia.com](mailto:emgardner@virginmedia.com); 01634 408595

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](mailto:betty-cole@outlook.com)

Library and Archives: essential building maintenance is taking place but a limited service will be available from early summer 2018 – please check the website [www.re-museum.co.uk](http://www.re-museum.co.uk) for more details.

## Events

February 5 – June 23: *The Sapper as Artist* will showcase some of the thousands of rarely-seen paintings, drawings and sketches in the Museum's archive.

May 15 - July 7: *Medway in Time*. The Museum is proud to present works inspired by the area's history and heritage, created by Medway Adult Education.

June 1 - June 9: *The Royal Engineers and D-Day*. 75 years on from the D-Day landings, we look back at the Royal Engineer's role in this pivotal episode in history.

July 9 - September 1: *Shocking Electricity*. See the exhibition room transformed into a laboratory with weird and wonderful experiments to spark the imagination as the Museum plays host to a series of extraordinary and entertaining demonstrations for all ages.

## The Bridge Study Centre

Bridging has been an essential part of warfare for thousands of years. In this gallery the full history of military bridging is explored. Hands on activities from our Sapper Workshop and dressing up are also available for kids.

**Opening hours: Tuesday – Sunday 10.00am to 5.00pm, last entry 4.00 pm; Bank Holidays: 10.00 am to 5.00pm, last entry 4.00 pm; CLOSED MONDAYS. Admission: adult – £8.40, child (Aged 5-16) – £5.70, concessions – £5.70, family ticket (2 adults and 2 children) – £22.50; children under 5: free.**

## Blue Town Heritage Centre, The Criterion Music Hall and Cinema

[www.thecriterionbluetown.co.uk/#!criterion-music-hall/cb3i](http://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>

## Obituaries

### Pat Salter



Patricia obtained the post of Senior Archives Assistant at Rochester-upon-Medway City Archives in August 1989, joining Helen Ford, City Archivist (1987-1989) and briefly holding the fort until my appointment on 1 February 1990. She was ably assisted for some time by Jenny Brown (nee Sivyer), Archives Assistant. Patricia had previously been Senior Museum Assistant at the Guildhall Museum in Rochester, where she supported Michael Moad, Museum Curator. During her time with the Museum she obtained a degree with the Open University.

Whilst at the Guildhall Museum, formerly the Town Clerk's office and home of the historic council chamber of Rochester City Council, and at which the Rochester City Archives were held until 1989, she developed her affection for archives and the Rochester City Archives in particular. It was therefore no surprise that when the new archives repository was set up at the Civic Centre in Strood she should accompany them. Associated with her love of the City Archives was a love of the history of her adopted city, Rochester.

Patricia and her husband Alex invited me to dinner at the Six Poor Travellers' House in Rochester High Street of which they were custodians (for Richard Watts' Charity) shortly after my arrival. I very much appreciated their gesture. Patricia was therefore doubly involved in the formal care of and access to Rochester's heritage, architectural and documentary, not counting her service to the City of Rochester Society and talks at the Archives and Local Studies Centre and elsewhere.

Supervising the original public searchroom 1990-1993, a tiring responsibility but one she relished, Pat welcomed many visitors including long resident local characters like Bob Fry, who with two particular friends formed a trio she nicknamed French, Fry and Puttifer, whose moniker could easily have come from a Dickens novel.

Although most visible in the public searchroom, Pat was also highly active in the behind the scenes and largely unobserved work that goes on in any archival repository. This work included stocktaking in which she undertook backlogs of work based on her knowledge of the collections, to improve the efficiency of the document production system as well as improve storage arrangements.

She completed a task she had begun while still at the museum, the cataloguing of the core maps, plans and drawings of the Rochester City Archives (the MP/B series).



*The Rochester-upon-Medway City Archives staff (from left to right): Kate Woollacott, Manager, Rochester upon Medway Studies Centre, Jenny Sivyer (formerly Brown), Public Service Assistant, Stephen Dixon, City Archivist, Greta Paterson, Heritage Officer, Patricia Salter, Public Service Supervisor. This image was taken from The Clock Tower article, Twenty Years of MALSC by Stephen Dixon, Issue 31, August 2013).*

Patricia was closely involved in the planning of the Rochester upon Medway Studies Centre (RUMSC), especially its new searchroom and other improved facilities. She was appointed Public Service Supervisor with enlarged responsibilities when RUMSC opened in April 1993. Her services were especially in demand in the preparations for opening RUMSC and during the early and middle stages of the protracted negotiations, which somehow managed to penetrate down to service level, that led to the forming of the Medway Council unitary authority in 1998. She retired in 1997.

I am indebted to Pat for her advice and information as a newcomer, her fund of anecdotes about Rochester history and her irreverent humour, especially when it came to castigating bureaucrats.

Stephen Dixon, 14.03.19;  
City Archivist 1990-1998 and Borough Archivist 1998-2008.

## Brompton History Research Group

[www.bromptonhistory.org.uk/](http://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](mailto:bromptonhistoryresearchgroup@gmail.com)

## Strood Fellowship

Strood Fellowship meet every third Monday in the month, 7.30pm, at St Nicholas Church Hall, Edward Street, Strood (first right off Gun Lane to car park). Admission £2 for members or £3 for non-members (including tea and biscuits), £5 Annual Membership. We are interested in the history of Strood and surrounding areas and have outings to local historic buildings. For more details ring J. Weller on 01634 309033 or Len Feist 01634 717135.

## HUGUENOT MUSEUM

discover your story

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](http://www.huguenotmuseum.org), call 01634 789347 or email [learning@huguenotmuseum.org](mailto:learning@huguenotmuseum.org) Unless otherwise indicated all events can be booked at the Huguenot Museum reception, over the phone on 01634 789347 or via our website: [www.huguenotmuseum.org](http://www.huguenotmuseum.org)

For an update, see page 34.



The latest information can be found at:  
[www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/](http://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/)

## The Royal Engineers Museum, Library and Archive

Prince Arthur Road, Gillingham, Kent, ME4 4UG

**SEE THE WEBSITE** [www.re-museum.co.uk](http://www.re-museum.co.uk)  
**FOR FURTHER DETAILS.**



The Royal Engineers Museum is Kent's largest military museum, with a designated collection of historical and international importance. Open Tuesday to Sunday, 10am to 5 pm, last entry 4pm.

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](mailto:Richard@thebournes.me.uk).

Or see our website at [www.chathamtraction.org.uk](http://www.chathamtraction.org.uk).

The latest news can be found at:

[http://www.chathamtraction.org.uk/updates/190401\\_Update\\_48.pdf](http://www.chathamtraction.org.uk/updates/190401_Update_48.pdf)

[http://www.chathamtraction.org.uk/updates/2019\\_Appeal\\_leaflet.pdf](http://www.chathamtraction.org.uk/updates/2019_Appeal_leaflet.pdf)

## Gillingham and Rainham Local History Society

Twydall Evangelical Church, Goudhurst Road, Twydall, Kent. ME8 6LQ.

The society meets on the second Friday of the month, from September to June (no meeting in January), from 2.30 - 4.30 pm.

Friday 14 June - Quiz Afternoon.

We have monthly talks and visits are arranged throughout the year. Tea and coffee is available before the meeting for a small charge. New members and visitors are always welcome; annual membership £20, visitors £3 per meeting.

For further information, please visit the website [www.grlhs.org](http://www.grlhs.org)

Or contact Val Barrand on 07947 583327 or email [lupusrufus@sky.com](mailto:lupusrufus@sky.com)

## The Chatham Historical Society

Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month, except January and August, at St Stephen's Church, Maidstone Road, Chatham, ME4 6JE. There is a small car park to the front of the church and access is via Maidstone Road. Alternative parking is available in nearby roads including Maidstone Road. Please do not park in the bus bay; there is disabled parking and step free access to the hall.

Wednesday 12 June 2019 - *Exploring Chatham's Chapels* - Catharina Clement

Wednesday 10 July 2019 – *Windmills of Kent* - Andy Wood

Wednesday 11 September 2019 - Society Evening: *Newcomb Diary Project Part II*

Doors open at 7:15 pm for a 7.30 pm start; meetings finish at 9:00 pm. All meetings are open to the public, and visitors are very welcome. No need to book; just turn up and pay at the door! Members £1, visitors £3; annual membership is £10 and can be paid on the night. Further information is available at [www.chathamhistoricalsoc.btck.co.uk](http://www.chathamhistoricalsoc.btck.co.uk)

Pat Salter, (Vice President, FOMA) died on 13 March 2019. She had been unwell and confined to her flat for several months before her death, but she remained cheerful and interested in what was happening around her. Visiting Pat was never dull and the conversation always ranged far and wide, with laughter never far away.

After wartime evacuation to Wiltshire, Pat moved back to Kent and on leaving school she took a Catering qualification in London. She was an enthusiastic and adventurous cook and her shortbread was long a staple of MALSC events and more recently, she and two friends made sweets for a stall at the Motor Neurone Disease Association Christmas bazaar. After her marriage she settled in the Medway Towns and gradually became immersed in the local history of the area. While working in the local Post Office she researched and mounted an exhibition on the History of Gillingham. Later, she worked at the Rochester Museum, and as part of its small team she played an active role in the move from Eastgate House to the Guildhall. She worked at Medway Archives Office until her retirement in the 1990s.

It was while she was working at the Guildhall Museum that she *discovered* Edwin Harris, whom she treated with a mixture of respect and healthy scepticism, although she defended him so enthusiastically to others that when she retired she was presented with a t-shirt emblazoned with 'I ♥ Edwin and Member Edwin Harris Appreciation Society'. After mounting an exhibition on him, she wrote *A Man of Many Parts* (which is still available for purchase from the City of Rochester Society or MAC!). Edwin Harris was interested in anything and everything connected with Rochester, and the Medway area and in that way Pat followed in her *hero's* footsteps.

Pat compiled definitive notes on the Freemen of Rochester and exhibitions on *The Best Family*, *Royal Visits to Medway*, and *Richard Watts*. The latter became a more personal interest when she and Alex were custodians of the Six Poor Travellers house in Rochester High Street. During that time, she developed the small walled garden at the rear of the house so that it became a peaceful haven away from the busy High Street – especially during the Dickens Festivals. It is good that the tradition she began is being continued.

With fellow garden enthusiasts and like-minded friends she played a part in walking tours of some of Rochester's private gardens and in preparing exhibitions on *Gardens in and around Rochester*, *Charles Dickens and his gardens at Gads Hill Place*, and *People, Plots and Plants*. All executed in the days before desk-top publishing, when *cutting and pasting* involved using scissors and glue – and lots of laughter!

After retirement, Pat spent several years working in the cathedral library until her increasing arthritis made that work too painful. While there, she compiled a children's trail around the cathedral and an exhibition called *Look up in Rochester Cathedral*.

Pat took an Open University course and degree, which reignited her interest in and love of art and music, both of which she was able to enjoy from her armchair, and which meant that there was never a shortage of subject matter whenever her friends visited. On one occasion when we arrived with a picnic lunch, visiting paramedics coping with the aftermath of a fall joined in the discussion!

I only worked with Pat as a volunteer, but I have been told by those who did that she was 'generous with her knowledge and a kind but firm tutor' and that 'her knowledge and loyalty and support were appreciated by all her colleagues'. She has donated her notes and her books to MAC in the hope that some will be added to library stock and that the remainder will be bought by other local history enthusiasts who will use and enjoy them as she did.

Jean Lear, March 2019.

### Peter Burstow



Peter was a FOMA member for many years and a regular at talks and other events. We have fond memories of his charming manner and formidable knowledge of local history, having written and photographed a history of the fortifications in the Borstal area in about 2007. Peter was an enthusiastic contributor to *The Clock Tower*, and his articles included, *Borstal's Wartime Umbrella* (Issue 9, February 2008), and *Shorts Brothers Remembered* (Issue 12, November 2008). He will be missed.

Amanda Thomas.

I remember Peter well because when I was only 16 I worked at Mackay's the bookbinders in Fair Row Chatham. Peter and his wife both worked there too in the 1950s and unbelievably he remembered me from those days without any prompting. We often chatted about the works and offices in Fair Row. They occupied most of the street. I loved working there and can still remember how to bind a book although I was in the office.

Betty Cole.

## Friends of Broomhill

Broomhill Park has been awarded a seventh 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

Task Days are the first Sunday of every month except January, from September to April, inclusive, from 10.00 am to noon. Meet in King Arthur's Drive car park. Hot drinks afterwards. Bring your own tools or we have plenty. Help us keep our Green Flag status for the eighth consecutive year and our RHS S.E. in Bloom status of 'outstanding'. IT'S FUN IT'S FREE and IT'S HEALTHY.

The Friends Of Broomhill would like to thanks all those who contributed so generously towards the purchase of the Old Orchard. We now look forward to the hard work of realising our ambition for this to remain a green and inviting place in perpetuity for everyone without fear of development.

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



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).



## Eastgate House

Opening hours are Wednesday to Sunday, 10am to 5pm (last admissions 4.30pm); Mondays and Tuesdays CLOSED. For large group visits and special events it may be possible to open the house on Mondays and Tuesdays. Please contact [eastgate.house@medway.gov.uk](mailto:eastgate.house@medway.gov.uk) for further information. Adults: £5.50, Concessions (inc. Friends Group): £4, Under 5s: free, Family Ticket: £15. Groups of 10 or more: 15% discount and school groups: 15% discount on concession price.

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. Further information can be obtained at: [www.friendsof-eastgatehouse.org](http://www.friendsof-eastgatehouse.org) on Facebook on [www.facebook.com/eastgatehouse](https://www.facebook.com/eastgatehouse) and on Twitter <https://twitter.com/EastgateHouse>. To join the Friends of Eastgate House, please contact Terri Zbyszewska, The Membership Secretary, FoEH, 31 The Esplanade, Rochester, ME1 1QW or at [tzbyszewska@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:tzbyszewska@yahoo.co.uk); a copy of the membership form is also available on the website.

## The Friends of the Guildhall Museums

[www.friendsoftheguildhall.com](http://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/](http://www.friendsoftheguildhall.com/events/)

## The City of Rochester Society

'The City of Rochester Society was founded in 1967 to help conserve the historic City as a pleasant place to visit. The Society is still active today, helping to improve the environment and quality of life in Rochester for residents and visitors alike.' Taken from the City of Rochester Society website, [www.city-of-rochester.org.uk](http://www.city-of-rochester.org.uk), where further information on the society, its events and how to join is available. All talks are at The Moat House, 8 Crow Lane, Rochester, ME1 1RF; there is a small charge for events to defray expenses.

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! Tours are 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.

## The Rochester Bridge Trust

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

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

## Mai Zobel

Mai Helen Rose

Late Brett née Windsor ('91)

Wednesday 14 September 1927 – Sunday 17 February 2019.

After sitting on the bank waiting patiently for several years, when the ferryman finally arrived, Mum berated him for his tardiness then tried to push the boat away before finally taking her place on the journey to the next great adventure.

Feisty to the last. In loving memory our mum.

*Medway Messenger*, 7 March 2019.

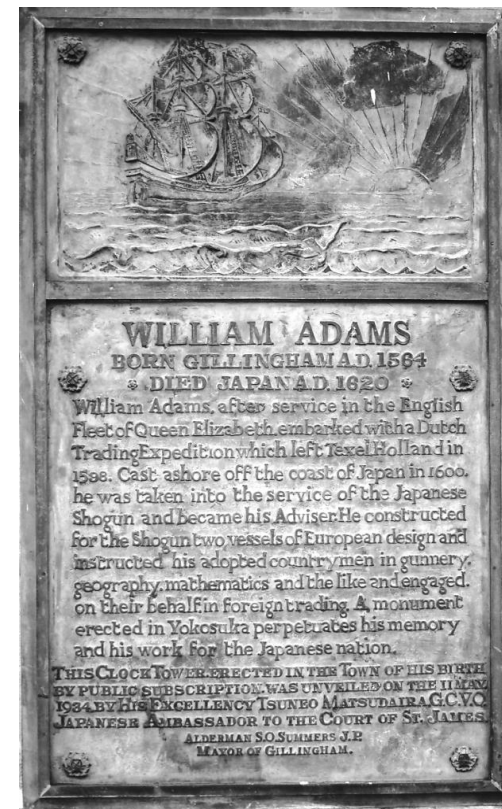
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## Attention Will Adams Descendants!

Do you think you might be a descendant of the sixteenth century explorer Will Adams? Sue Haydock ([susanjhaydock@aol.com](mailto:susanjhaydock@aol.com)) is co-ordinating claims from the UK for DNA cross-matching. Claims of descendency should be accompanied by as much documented family history as possible, and with supporting documentation.

See page 28 for the full story and for further information.

*Photograph by Sue Haydock.*



## The FOMA AGM

Amanda Thomas



The 2019 FOMA AGM was held on the evening of 2 April at Frindsbury Church Hall, with the usual good turnout. We were delighted to welcome formally to the committee Christopher de Coulon-Berthoud (pictured), but very sad to say goodbye to Odette Buchanan as Secretary. In the past year Tessa Towner and Simon Lace had also stood down as committee members, and Elaine thanked them for all their support and help. Elaine Gardner presented Odette with a beautiful bouquet of flowers, as pictured on the front cover, and thanked her for everything she had done over the years. We are pleased to say Odette will remain on the FOMA committee.



FOMA Chairman, Elaine Gardner gave an excellent overview of the past year. There have been some interesting highlights, including GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation), which created a lot of work for the committee, and we were grateful that members were so cooperative and understanding. Alex Thomas has now also updated the website to include a Privacy Policy and, following committee consultation, he also amended the Rules and Constitution to include the new name of the Medway Archives Centre (MAC) and FOMA. Elaine additionally reflected on the loss of many supporters and friends over

the past year, including committee member Bob Radcliffe, FOMA Vice President Pat Salter and member Mai Zobel.

The final months of 2018 saw the last FOMA World War One exhibition: *Men of the Medway Towns; The Ultimate Sacrifice 1918*. Five exhibitions have been staged in all to commemorate the centenary of the Great War, all organised by Elaine and Tessa Towner, to whom Elaine extended her thanks. In addition in 2018, FOMA worked with Abby Found, Medway Council's Heritage Development Officer, on the *Soldiers' Stories on our Streets* project which used to the full the resources of the FOMA online De Caville Index and helped to raise awareness of those who died with schools and the general public. On display were the huge posters which have been produced as a part of the project. Copies will continue to be on display at MAC and will also be kept there for research purposes.

Wednesday 3 July, 2.30pm,  
*Short Brothers: the Rochester Years.*  
A talk by Philip MacDougall.

The Short brothers moved their successful business to Rochester in 1913 due to their interest in developing seaplanes. The Medway was an ideal place for testing. The business relocated to Belfast in 1948. We are delighted to now have the model of the Short Mayo Composite (1937) on display in the foyer of MAC (see photograph). We also have a collection of plans, drawings, photographs and ephemera to view by appointment.



## Reminiscence Sessions

Share your Medway memories - bring along your old photos of the Medway locations and landmarks!

FREE but booking advisable as places are limited (01634 332714)

Tuesday 18th June: Working lives: Winget and Short Bros

Tuesday 2nd July: Railways, trams and omnibuses

Tuesday 16th July: Prefabs and council housing

Tuesday 30th July: Pubs, clubs and restaurants

2.00 - 3.30pm, Medway Archives Centre; small charge for refreshments

32 Bryant Road, Strood, Rochester, Kent, ME2 3EP (previously the old Strood library). Contact our expert team if you require further information on 01634 332714. For further details see the MAC Facebook page [www.facebook.com/malsc/](http://www.facebook.com/malsc/), the FOMA website ([www.foma-lsc.org](http://www.foma-lsc.org)) and Facebook page [www.facebook.com/fomalsc/](http://www.facebook.com/fomalsc/)

If you would like to make a Local Studies donation please e-mail the local studies Librarian at [malsc@medway.gov.uk](mailto:malsc@medway.gov.uk)

Current electoral registers are now at the Medway Archives Centre and can be viewed by appointment; please telephone 01634 332714.

**Please note that due to staffing levels, Medway Archive Centre will only open on Saturdays between the hours of 9.00 – 12.30pm commencing 5th May 2018 until further notice. Opening hours Monday to Friday remain as advertised 9am – 5pm (closed Wednesdays).**

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

**Unless otherwise stated, all events take place at the Medway Archives Centre, 32 Bryant Road, Strood, Rochester, ME2 3EP.**

## News and Events

### Calendar of Forthcoming Events and Exhibitions

## Friends of Medway Archives

### Talks and Events

Friday 14th June, 7.30 pm,  
*The Thames from Dartford to Grain*,  
A talk by Christoph Bull

Friday 13th September,  
*Frozen Medway (the winters of 1895, 1947 & 1963)*,  
A talk by Dave Burton

Saturday 28th September  
Quiz Night.

£8 for members and non-members. **BOOKING REQUIRED** (see below).  
Please do your best to get a table of friends together!

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

FOR DIRECTIONS TO THE NEW VENUE PLEASE SEE PAGE 4.

**Under the new data protection laws we are advised to tell you that photographs may be taken during our events. If you do not wish to be included in a photograph, please advise a FOMA committee member on your arrival.**

See our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/fomalsc](http://www.facebook.com/fomalsc)) and our website ([www.foma-lsc.org](http://www.foma-lsc.org)) for all the very latest information on FOMA and Medway heritage.

## Medway Archives Centre

March 18 – June 11,  
Medway's Women: feted, infamous and forgotten.  
Exhibition in the foyer.

June 17 – September 17,  
Short Brothers in Kent - the Rochester years.  
Exhibition in the foyer.



Amanda Thomas later explained how the *Soldiers' Stories on our Streets* project also raised some issues regarding data protection. Alex Thomas had realised that the project presented an urgent need to protect FOMA's intellectual property rights over the De Caville Index. We were very fortunate to secure the expertise of a specialist lawyer who, as a favour to FOMA, oversaw the drawing up of a contract which we jointly signed with Medway Council. Following this, the online index became known as the *FOMA De Caville Index*.

Following the speeches, members were able to peruse the posters with refreshments, including a wonderful selection of cakes produced by Elaine Gardner. To follow are the reports from Cindy O'Halloran and Norma Crow, and also, as requested by members, the report from Alex Thomas, the FOMA Webmaster, who was unable to attend the AGM.

## Archive Report to FOMA AGM

Cindy O'Halloran, Senior Archive Assistant

The last 12 months have been challenging due to our lack of an Archivist in post, however we have managed to keep up production of documents and allow access to collections since Alison left us last April. Despite the Archivist's post being advertised last summer, response to the vacancy was poor and a suitable candidate was not forthcoming. Duncan Mead has assured us that the post will be re advertised very shortly. Duncan and I had a very useful meeting with Hannah Jones the SE representative from National Archives to discuss the way forward with recruitment. A big thank you to FOMA for supporting us and chasing Richard Hicks over the delay in filling the vacancy. Whoever takes up the post will be on a steep learning curve and I know that FOMA will be willing and able to form a new relationship with the lucky candidate.



Demand for archival material has been high over the last year with researchers champing at the bit and over 1037 individual items have been produced for researchers. This compares to 440 items produced in the previous year during our settling in period. I have also continued to support other Medway Council departments with requests for information relating to historic buildings, ancient woodlands and building control plans. Depositors have been able to access their own material and withdraw items as required in the usual way. Hopefully our service users have found that it has been "business as usual". Norma has worked her socks off trying to cope with the demand to provide talks and display material for Medway Council clients and schools often at extremely short notice.

Whilst we have been so short staffed, a lot more work has fallen on the shoulders of our very capable assistants who have stepped in to cover staff sickness, vacancies and holidays. Norma and I would not have coped without their wholehearted efforts. They have also taken over the project management of our special drop in history days and have produced some outstanding research for the Saturday events and put together some fantastic exhibition material which has helped raise our footfall significantly. The Chatham High Street day brought in 72 visitors, Hempstead Shopping Centre and Village 51 and Women in Medway another 70 attendees. These events draw in visitors who are not regular users of MAC and many of them have returned for a second visit.

Last but certainly not least, our volunteer helpers from FOMA, Kent FHS, plus our few independent helpers, have been hard at work notching up an impressive 676 hours at MAC this year. A big thank you to everyone all for your contributions to keeping up our visitor numbers and for helping with exhibitions, talks and research. We know that our callers value your time and expertise as do all the MAC staff. Thank you all so much.

## Local Studies Report, 2 April 2019

Norma Crowe, Local Studies Librarian.

In the year since the last AGM Medway Archives centre has been open for business, thanks largely to our wonderful hard working staff and super volunteers. It is almost a year since Alison left us and we still await her replacement. I wish to put on record the massive contribution made by Senior Archives Assistant, Cindy O'Halloran, who has acted as Centre Manager and Archivist in the last 12 months, using her vast knowledge of the collections and Medway's history to great advantage. Without her and the goodwill of all staff members, Medway Archives Centre would not have increased footfall, access to archive documents and been able to participate in several Medway-wide events and projects.



## Mystery Photograph

22.02.19

I have a family album and bible after my parents passed away and found this photo and others in the album. The photo was taken in Strood Kent as it is written on the back but I know very little else. The gentleman bears a striking resemblance to my great grandfather and might be his brother as there are facial similarities. My great grandfather was David



Williams born in Sirhowy, Bedwellty South Wales in 1849. He was one of six brothers namely, William born in Cardiganshire in 1838, Thomas born in Cardiganshire also in 1839, James born in Merthyr 1842, Evan born in Bedwellty in 1851, and Benjamin born 1857, who died aged 12. Their parents were James and Mary Williams who settled finally in Rhymney, Bedwellty but were from the Cardiganshire area.

My great grandfather I remember my mother telling me, emigrated to America along with a brother in 1871 but married Ann out there in Scranton and returned to Wales in 1872 where they raised their family. The brother apparently remained in America, in Ohio I think, and lived his life there.

I have no idea who this man is, but I thought the girls could be his grandchildren as he looks too old to be their father.

I don't expect to find anymore of my family tree with just this little information to go on, but hey who knows, someone might recognise them.

Sherrill Williams.

The Natural Resources Institute (NRI), a department of the Faculty of Engineering and Science of the University of Greenwich at Medway, is celebrating 125 years since the founding of its predecessor organisation – the Imperial Institute (II) in South Kensington in 1893.

The II was founded to support agricultural development in Britain's colonies, which supplied food and raw materials for British industries. Over the years its names and purpose have evolved so that in the 1970s and 80s the Tropical Products Institute was the scientific arm of the Overseas Development Administration and then the Department for International Development. In the 1990s the Institute was made a government agency before being sold to the University of Greenwich, along with the site it had moved to in the former Chatham naval barracks in Chatham Maritime in 1988.

Not surprisingly we have a huge archive of materials relating to agricultural, social and scientific developments and discoveries of local, national and international interest but not the time and resources to do a lot with it. In around 2000 a documentalist was engaged to produce a brief history of the formation of the II and its evolution to the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which makes interesting reading. It would be good to fill this out and update it.

NRI's work have taken its staff all over the world and we have strong links with government departments, research organisations, universities, NGOs and agro-food businesses all over the world. There are also links to Chatham dockyard. Once I was working in Mutare, Zimbabwe and a craft-shop owner mentioned he'd grown up in Chatham and his dad had worked there! I also had the opportunity to work in Antigua and visited the old naval dockyard there, where Nelson was stationed, which looked similar to bits of the dockyard here.

We would be very interested in finding a group of people who'd be interested in finding out more about our history from the archives, possibly as a regular activity of a group of interested, retired people.

Is this something that might be of interest to a group like FOMA or others?

With best wishes,

Claire.

Claire Coote, Principal Scientist/Teaching and Learning Leader/Agrinatura Focal Person CDAIS project, Bangladesh.

PLEASE CONTACT CLAIRE DIRECTLY IF YOU ARE INTERESTED:  
Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich, Central Avenue, Chatham Maritime, Kent ME4 4TB, UK. E-mail: h.c.coote@gre.ac.uk Web: www.nri.org

We held special Saturday events at the centre during the year on Chatham, Hempstead and Women of Medway. These special Saturday events have proved popular, and we have noticed that they are attracting new audiences as well as old friends. The standard of the displays has been consistently high, with research and presentation carried out by staff members. We are grateful for the support given by FOMA members at these events and our talks.

Partnership working enables us to showcase many of our resources and collections. Much that we do is in support of events organised by other council departments. During this last year we have produced exhibitions and displays for Council open events: *Focus on Walderslade*, *Focus on Strood*, *Focus on High Halstow*, and Women's suffrage.

In the autumn much of our effort was directed to the Heritage Team's World War One commemoration project: *Soldiers' Stories on our Streets*. The wonderful FOMA De Caville Index was the basis of this initiative to capture in a visual way the extent of the sacrifice by Medway's men in the 1914-1918 war. We utilised our printed resources maps to identify streets and images of the men. A huge amount of work was done by Elaine [Gardner], alongside Abby Found [Medway Council's Heritage Development Officer], and Jeremy Clark from the Guildhall Museum. Some very successful education and learning sessions were held in schools and at the Centre. And some additional names have been added to the De Caville Index.

We thank FOMA and Elaine in particular for compiling the fourth annual exhibition commemorating the *Men of Medway* who fought and died in 1918. These exhibitions were a massive and important undertaking. We also thank FOMA for bearing the cost of design and production.

2018 ended with MAC hosting the Bridgeworks exhibition devised by the Rochester Bridge Trust. We were delighted to offer the Bridge Wardens an additional Medway venue for this ingenious display from December until early March. It filled the entrance hall and again attracted people who had not visited before.

Liaison with the Kent Family History Society continues with our regular Tuesday and Thursday helpdesk. Two volunteers – Brenda Paternoster and Hilary Blandford – are running family history training sessions in April and May.

And what of the year ahead? Alongside our regular exhibitions and support for council events we have several special Saturdays and talks planned. The next will be June 8 on *Undiscovered Rochester*, with a talk by Rob Flood. Book to avoid disappointment! [This event will have now taken place.] Our special Saturday event next March will focus on women's organisations and particularly Medway's Women's Institutes.

I have begun engaging with the Guides and Brownies to offer local and family history challenges and assistance with badges if required. The first session will be held in May.

We will begin holding regular reminiscence sessions in the foyer on Tuesday afternoons starting on 21 May. We thank FOMA members for their interest and the support we have been offered to date. We are also thinking of exploring the history of Medway properties with the help of volunteers. Please ask if you would like to find out more.

Thank you FOMA for your interest and support. The staff at MAC know how much you help us to promote the centre and our collections and to engage with people near and far.

## Website and Social Media Report, Annual General Meeting 2019

Alexander Thomas



The Friends of Medway Archives website continues to remain popular among members and non-members alike. This report presents the available statistics, the highlights and the various relevant updates and developments, over the past 12 months.

## Website and Facebook Statistics

### The Visitor

The website statistics demonstrate the website is benefitting from returning users. At present the average visitor to the website makes one to two visits a month and views, on average, 40 individual pages.

### The Traffic

More generally, over the last four months, December 2018 to March 2019, the website has attracted, on average, over 19,000 hits or over 850 visits. December was the most popular month with 997 visits and 12,969 hits. In contrast, February proved the least popular with 798 visits and 8,924 hits.

	Visits	Hits
December 2018	997	12,969
January 2019	858	12,825
February 2019	798	8,924
March 2019	809	41,989
Average	866	19,177

The Facebook page has remained stable over the same period with an increase of 8 likes. The page currently enjoys 196 likes and 205 followers. I am very grateful to Rob Flood and Amanda Thomas for keeping this page updated and keeping users engaged.

Rachel running another workshop using stamps, stencils and cut outs to create a one-off print on 22 June. Exploring the theme 'I would save', Rachel will be encouraging visitors to consider the question, 'What would you take with you if you had to suddenly leave your home?' We will also be joined by London theatre company Phosphoros Theatre, for a performance of their current show *Pizza Shop Heroes*, starring refugee and asylum-seeking actors.

What have the French done for us? In March, Geoff Rambler explored this question on his guided walk of Rochester High Street followed by tea and cake in our museum created specially by The French Hospital. Geoff explored how our relationship with the French - both collaborative and competitive, friendly and hostile - shaped Rochester. He is running a further two guided walks in our next programme on 7 September and 26 October.

We had a wonderful evening for our *Museums at Night* event in which historian Sara Pennell gave a talk about the impact Huguenots had on dining. We could finally share our latest acquisition, a 1727 sauceboat by Anne Tanqueray, the earliest known woman Huguenot silversmith. We will have the sauceboat on display in June.

For more information on all of our events please head to our website [www.huguenotmuseum.org](http://www.huguenotmuseum.org) or phone us on 01634 789347

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## Readers' Letters

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

## Research Opportunity

Dear Elaine [Gardner, FOMA Chairman],

The reason for writing is to ask your advice as someone involved in local history documentation. I believe you are involved in FOMA.

## Huguenot Museum Update

Hannah Birkett



*Hannah Birkett is the Learning and Community Engagement Coordinator at the Huguenot Museum. Previously she has undertaken various roles including primary teaching, freelancing for Historic Royal Palaces, outdoor learning in environmental centres and an educator for Kent Wildlife Trust. Hannah develops the programme of events at the Huguenot Museum as well as running their learning programme, delivering school, family and life-long learning sessions.*

What a busy few months!

Since January, our galleries have been home to three epic pots by ceramicist Claudia Clare. This special display, *Travelling West* shared the experiences of a Kurdish refugee travelling from Iran to the United Kingdom, Claudia Clare visited the museum and led an artist's talk in March. These pots have been the source of inspiration for so many parts of our programme, including our February half term activity, in which children could create their own clay pots inspired by the exhibition.

Another fantastic special exhibition was *Altered Textiles*. We had four days of displays and demonstrations in which this group of artists shared their expertise, demonstrating a range of techniques from embroidery to printing. The artists provided an insight into their *Travelling Journals*, beautiful artworks which had been passed week by week to include a new piece of work by each member.

As you can see we have had a focus on textiles this spring inspired by our collections and that's continuing into the summer! We are partnering with Rochester Art Gallery for our next special exhibition in July, *Bizarre and Curious Silks*, for which weaver Hannah Robson will run a two-day weaving workshop on 19 and 20 July along with family activities run by artist Lydia Brockless on 27 July and 22 August!

Speaking of workshops, we had a fantastic printing session in February with artist Rachel Moore. Running over two Saturdays, we explored the designs of master weaver James Leman. The printing continues this year in Refugee Week with

## Updates and Highlights

### Updates

The FOMA website is composed of various types of pages that use different scripts, including HTML (Hypertext Mark-up Language) and PHP (PHP: Hypertext Preprocessor). Increasingly the content on many of these pages is generated using databases on the website's host server, such as the access control system, the FOMA De Caville Index as well as the FOMA and MAC Events pages. These databases can be updated through protected administrator pages on the FOMA website itself. Records on all these databases have been added to, edited or deleted at some point - to a greater or lesser extent - over the past year. The Index database has been altered on many occasions. Since the website does not utilise Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) to encrypt the communication between the website and the server there are legal limits as to what can be stored on these databases.

### Developments

#### GDPR adherence

Due to the lack of SSL encryption, Google Forms was used in 2018 to collect the permissions needed under new Data Protection regulations. This provided a trusted, reliable and convenient solution that allowed answers to be quickly downloaded and merged with the existing FOMA membership list held by the Membership Secretary, Betty Cole.

#### FOMA De Caville Index Intellectual Property Recognition

The data held by the Index is freely available to the public through the consultation of various sources. The Index structure, however, brings this otherwise disparate data together, and is the intellectual property of FOMA. This was recognised legally in 2018 by Medway Council. In preparation for the start of the Heritage Lottery Funded Soldiers on our Streets project, Medway Council and FOMA agreed an Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Assignment contract. This agreement protects FOMA's most valuable asset, but also establishes an important precedent. Any organisation who wishes to utilise the Index as part of a project will now be asked to sign an IPR Assignment Agreement as a condition.

### Future Developments

I am developing a new database led web application that will enable:

- *The Clock Tower* to be published from any location easily
- Users to view detailed issue indexes
- Users to search, discover and view articles quickly
- FOMA to showcase the depth and wealth of articles within *The Clock Tower's* back catalogue.

## Voices from the Dockyard

Betty Cole and Norma Crowe



At the Volunteers' meeting in April 2018, MAC's Local Studies Librarian, Norma Crowe asked for people to transcribe some letters written in the 1970s by former Chatham Dockyard workers and published in the *Evening Post* in January and February 1973. The letters contained memories of life in the Yard earlier in the 1900s and some of the more amusing and interesting will be reproduced in *The Clock Tower* in this new series. Please note that the names of the authors of the letters have been omitted to protect their privacy; our thanks to Betty Cole, Norma Crowe and the volunteers.

## Rats (of one sort and another)

Letter No. 43

21.1.73

Perhaps you would consider the following for publication in your 'Dockyard Stories'. I am afraid it is rather long winded but I've tried without success to cut it down.

In the early thirties the best known and may I dare say it, best loved matalot for his escapades in the Chatham division of the R.N. was known as T.O.B. T.O.B. stood for Thief of Bagdad and when it came to pilfering from his Lords at the Admiralty or pitting his wits against those worthy members of the Admiralty Police he had no peer.

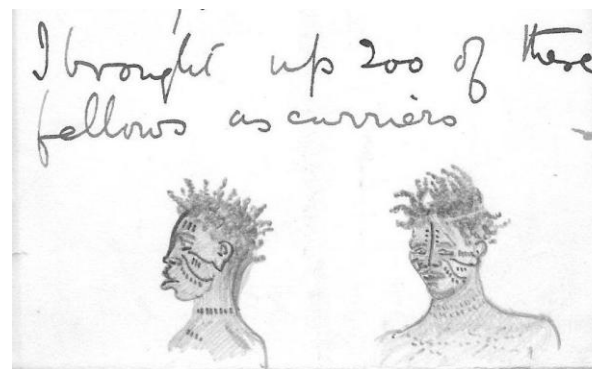
My favourite story about this character as with most revolves around his motor bike and side car, not for him the James Bond touch of a Masarati or Lotus Elan. Every month while in the Dockyard re-fitting he carried out 'Operation Prique Tobacco', the date and time of the operation being dependant on a dark night and a change of staff at the Gate selected.

## A Brief Guide to the Life of Alfred William Baker

When?	Rank	Where Was He?	Doing What?	Other Events
Feb 1898	Captain	Liverpool	Sailed for Nigeria	-
March, April 1898	Captain	Lokoja, R. Niger	Camp officer	-
April 1898	Captain	Jebba, R. Niger	Station Staff officer, building huts	-

### Notes

1. McCallum in Lagos to Chamberlain, 4 August 1897.
2. PRO document CO 879 including the Telegram McCallum to Chamberlain 19 Sept 1897.
3. AWB 1898 04 17 from R Niger north of Lokoja. His diary D11 recorded that the English-speaking Africans died too.
4. AWB 1898 03 18 from Lokoja, River Niger.
5. AWB 1898 03 20 and 1898 03 31. Also R4 game record with others shooting with him.





McCallum nevertheless suggested a Hausa battalion as well as a Yoruba (each with six British officers). He even prescribed red forage caps with chin straps for the Hausas in place of the fezzes and tassels for the Yorubas and consulted with others about their fifes and drums. The British were nothing if not thorough in their conception of what an army was.<sup>2</sup>

While the main group of Lugard's West African Frontier Force left Liverpool on February 5, 1898, Alfred and some others sailed 10 days behind them on the *S. S. Boona* leaving on the 16. They called at Tenerife on the 24 and reached Forcados at one of the many mouths of the River Niger on March 7. Transferring at once to the *S S Liberty*, a stern-wheeler, they continued to Burutu, where Alfred hired 'one good servant, Edward, wages 5/- a month', 15 years old and trained by a mission. He spoke English and knew his job. Alfred dined with the agent, 'who poor chap died of blackwater fever the next night, as have since all the other white men who were there, (despite) saying he had had it before and knew what to do if he felt it coming on'.<sup>3</sup> They proceeded upstream, reaching Lokoja by March 18. Alfred at once wrote home: 'at last we have arrived at our goal and a most damnable place it is now we have got here.... You should see us now: ten of the pick of the officers of the British Army are here packed into a mud hut, such as one's native servants live in India, drinking warm whiskey and water. Temperature in the shade in a draught 98 degrees and a tornado threatening which will probably walk off with the hut.' He was not under any illusions: 'the death rate of the (Niger) Company's white employees for the last year is 26 out of 56'.<sup>4</sup>

'Got nothing to do here yet, got no men. Had a church parade and being the senior officer in the whole place I had to do parson.' He was as usual shooting for the pot: 'partridge, guinea fowl and a sort of grouse close to camp. I brought up 200 of these fellows as curriers. They are cannibals... They are capital fellows though and full of fun, but I don't quite like the way they eye me at dinner time.'

By month end, 'I have had my head shaved to the skin like a monk and am covered with bites and prickly heat but they don't bother me a bit. There are redeeming features – one does not get enteric or cholera – living as we do here. In India we should all have had them long ago.'

He was drinking beer rather than tea and taking quinine. He was up at 3 am by choice to shoot and during a month at Lokoja his tally was 50 birds: Guinea fowl, partridge or francolin and sand grouse with an occasional pigeon or plover, all no doubt welcome additions to the pot.<sup>5</sup>

On approaching the Gate as a Liberty man (going ashore) he would cast over the side from his side car the Prique of tobacco attached to about 5 fathom (30') of

ginger string (spunyarn) which he towed behind him slowly to the gate. At the gate it was necessary to dismount and run the gauntlet of the eagle eyed police Sergeant and staff who were well versed in all the tricks devised by matelots to put his majesty's customs in the red.

Once cleared through the gate T.O.B. jumped back onboard his bike revved up and disappeared into the night. Onlookers always swore that as a few seconds later the Prique of tobacco appeared travelling through the gates at a rate of knots, a policeman would shout 'Christ Serge, did you see the size of that RAT'.

P.S. For the uninitiated the Prique of tobacco made up from leaf by the matelots was approx 12" long, at its centre about 3" in diameter and the spunyarn it was made up in would give it a furry appearance.

P.P.S. Not quite sure whether my spelling of PRIQUE is correct.

Letter No. 45

29.1.73

I remember many years ago, in the Yard, a little black and white terrier who used to work with the Yard Rat-Catcher. To the best of my knowledge this dog lived within the vicinity of Mill Road, Gillingham.

Every morning, as soon as this dog heard the Dockyard Bell ringing, denoting two minutes to starting time, he was off 'hell for leather' down the Kyper Pass [sic] and into the Yard to report for duty.

When the Bell was rung at Lunch Break (Mid-day) he would be off back home, until once again at the sound of the two minute Bell, he could be seen heading once again for the Dockyard gates, to resume duty.

I don't believe he was ever late once, and I have been told he was on the pay roll – he certainly deserved to be anyway.

Letter No. 32

23.1.73

In Memories of the Dockyard.

In 1933 and for quite a few years after, when to walk down the Kyber was like the

gold rush to the Klondyke everybody walked across from Mill Rd to the bottom of the old Naval Prison, on the right hand side of the road, then everyone turned left across the road to the right hand side down to the Barrack Gate, then a solid mass to the old Pembroke Gate which was 500 yds from the tram stop.

But the part I remember was the dog. Now this dog was owned by a person in Stafford St Gillingham and had no connection with the Dockyard, yet every morning at 6.45 this dog would go down the Kyber with the men and go into the Yard where he would report to the ratcatcher, and at 12 noon he would be waiting behind the Pembroke muster station with several maties waiting for the bell to ring, when it rang he ran out of the gate barking and chasing cyclists until he was home, but at 1.15 he would again be seen wending his way into the Yard across the Kyber, and at 4 PM you would again see this dog waiting at the same muster station to come out. This went on for years and was reported in the Local Papers when the poor old fellow retired.



*Pembroke Gate; Medway Archives Centre.*

## *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 Owletts' attic ...*

*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 11: Nigeria, 1898 (ii)

An official despatch from the Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain to Britain's Governor of Nigeria, Major Henry McCallum, stated in July 1897:

*'... the representations addressed to the French Government having failed to induce them to withdraw their forces from Boussa and other places, claimed under treaties with native authorities as falling within the British sphere of interest in W Africa, His Majesty's Government have been compelled to consider what steps should be taken to procure the evacuation from those places and to prevent further aggression from the French.'*

Britain claimed the 'land behind Lagos as far as the 9<sup>th</sup> parallel of north latitude' and that that had been recognised by France in 1889. However there was reason to think that this boundary was not being respected. The French had occupied Benin between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> parallels west of the Niger and were looking to the east as well. British posts were needed around Kyama between Nikki and Boussa unless already in French hands. We shall see that Alfred's job also entailed recruiting and training Hausa tribesmen as soldiers and so it is interesting to read Governor McCallum's comment to Chamberlain<sup>1</sup>:

*'... It would never do for the Chiefs and people of the interior to think that we hold out any inducement for Hausa slaves to leave their masters, as that would shake their faith in our integrity. These slaves are so well treated as a rule and have so much time at their disposal that the majority will prefer to remain where they are than exchange for a life of restraint and discipline.'*



*Photographs of the opening ceremony are from the Chatham, Rochester and Gillingham Observer, 18 May 1934; others are by Sue Haydock.*

## DNA Search

As an exciting codicil, the English cemetery in Hirado is currently (2019) being archaeologically excavated. Some of the bones and teeth discovered have been DNA tested and results show they are from north western Europeans. Some are the right age to match with the age and time of William Adams. In order to discover if these human remains are indeed those of Adams, researchers are looking for descendants.

**If you think you might be a descendant of William Adams, please contact by email the author, Sue Haydock, [susanjhaydock@aol.com](mailto:susanjhaydock@aol.com), who is co-ordinating claims from the UK for cross-matching. Claims of descendancy should be accompanied by as much documented family history as possible, with supporting documentation.**

## *Lives of Rochester Cathedral Choristers*

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.*



## Part 1: The Whiffin Family

It's curious how interest can be sparked by a word. Betty Cole's article on the burial ground at Chatham (*What and Why? 'Chatham Town Hall Gardens', The Clock Tower*, Issue 51, August 2018) mentioned Whiffin Avenue, not a road that I even knew existed. I am currently investigating the members of the cathedral choir for the Rochester Cathedral Research Guild and the Whiffin/Whiffen family of Chatham features prominently.

Thomas Whiffin [I], son of John and Mary, was baptised at St Mary Chatham, on 7 April 1778. He was one of three men appointed as Lay Clerks<sup>1</sup> at Rochester Cathedral on 1 December 1797, at a time when the choir was at a low ebb and Ralph Banks, who had been organist since 1792, was attempting to revive it. On 5 December 1803 Thomas married Sarah Easton at St Mary, Chatham, and they had three children, all baptised at St Mary's: John Thomas David (8 March 1805), Mary (8 May 1808), and Thomas [II] (22 March 1812). Sadly, Sarah died and was buried at St Mary's on 30 July 1818. and on 4 April 1820 Thomas [I] re-married. His new wife was Mary Ripsher, a spinster, of St Margaret's, Rochester, born in Cambridgeshire c.1787 according to the 1851 census. Three more children were born to them and baptised at St Mary's: Swan (born 5 July 1822), Margaret (baptised 2 February 1826), and George (baptised 4 December 1829). Ralph Banks had had the services of Thomas Whiffin and two other ex-choristers - Henry Smith and William Down – for much of his time as organist. Thomas [I] served until the end of 1839, some 42 years. When the three men retired, the Dean and Chapter granted them a superannuation pension of £20 a year each and took the opportunity to create two posts of pew-opener, with Whiffin and Smith as first appointments. They were to attend each Sunday, morning and evening and on other special days, with a fee of £10 a year.



*St Mary's Chatham; A.N. Hambrook of Snodland (collection of Snodland Historical Society).*

The censuses of 1841 and 1851 show Thomas [I] and his family living at the burial ground of St Mary, Chatham, where he was sexton, having been appointed in December 1816.<sup>2</sup> Contemporary maps reveal a building at the south-west of the new burial grounds, which was probably the family home where they lived. Thomas died in November 1854 and was buried on 1 December. Lay Clerks were generally the poor relations in the hierarchy of a cathedral, so it is surprising to find Thomas making a will – and in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, no less<sup>3</sup> – showing he was not on the bread-line and had money in ‘public stocks’ as well as life insurance policies. (It is worth noting that the *South Eastern Gazette* (5 December) pointed out that his post of sexton ‘was rather a lucrative one’ and there was no shortage of applicants to replace him.) Thomas’s four boys were all cathedral choristers at Rochester.

John Thomas David Whiffin, the eldest child, was baptised at St Mary, Chatham, on 8 March 1805. He became a chorister at the Cathedral in the autumn of 1814 and was formally appointed on 25 November, serving for six years until September 1820. On 27 June 1832 he married Elizabeth ‘Jeffer’ [Jelfer] at St Nicholas, Deptford, and they had four children, all baptised at St Mary, Chatham: Thomas (11 July 1834), Mary Ann (1 May 1836), Eliza Jelfer (8 April 1838), and Sarah (12 July 1840). On 25 Jan 1831 the *South Eastern Gazette* reported that ‘Thomas’, presumably John Thomas David, was appointed as parish clerk of Chatham in place of his grandfather, John, who had died.<sup>4</sup> At the 1841 census he was registered alone at Gibraltar Place, Chatham, as Parish Clerk, while his children were staying with members of his wife’s family in Deptford. She died in

taught mathematics, gunnery and shipbuilding and introduced Western civilisation. In recognition of his valuable services to Japan Iyeasu, the first Shogun of the Tokugawa administration, gave him peaceful residency and treated him with favour and cordiality’



Those attending the ceremony (pictured left and on page 30) included the great and the good of the time, many names still familiar to us today - Tweedie, Tyrwhitt, Redfern, and Boucher. Also in attendance was The Mayor of Gillingham, Alderman S.O. Summers, and mayors from neighbouring boroughs, as well as school children, boy scouts and girl guides. A great number of naval and military dignitaries added to the colour and dignity of the occasion, including Major W.W. Grantham, who was amongst the speech makers, and the vicar of Gillingham who conducted a short service. Following the ceremony the gathering adjourned to Woodland School for tea.

For those who wish to research further, there is an account of the unveiling in the *Chatham, Rochester and Gillingham Observer*, dated 18 May 1934.

A contemporary description of the tower comprises the following details. The William Adams Memorial was designed by the Borough Engineer and Surveyor, Mr. J.L. Redfern, A.R.I.B.A. It is a 25 feet high clock tower with 13 feet square, 10 feet high base; the tower rises from the centre of the base. The external facing is in Monks Park stone, with an internal brick backing, stonework was supplied and fixed by the Bath and Portland Stone Firms Ltd. The clock tower is electrically controlled and has four 26-inch faces; this was supplied by Gillett and Johnston of Croydon. The general building work was been carried out by the Works Department of the Gillingham Corporation. On the east, west and south faces of the base, the centre is brought forward and surmounted by a moulded hood to emphasize the bronze descriptive panels. These were created by Mr. H. Tingley. The principal panel facing the road is to the memory of William Adams and has an inscription and image of a ship sailing towards the rising sun. Drinking troughs for dogs were incorporated under the smaller side panels and these were bequeathed by the late Dr A.E.W. Burns, L.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

## What and Why?

### The Will Adams Clock Tower in Gillingham

Sue Haydock



*Born and bred in the Medway towns, Sue Haydock is a FOMA Vice President and currently lives in Rochester. She was a Guide Guider in Rochester from 1969 to 1987 and has participated in the Dickens Festivals since their inception. She is a member of the Dickens Fellowship and the Dickens Chalet Sub-Committee, and is Chairman of Friends of Eastgate House. Sue was a local councillor between 1997 and 2011, Mayor of Medway from 2004/5 and Honorary Mayor of Yokosuka, Medway's twin city in Japan. As Chairman of the Medway Japan Group and President of the Chinese Ying Tao Association, she is a regular visitor to Japan and is fascinated by the story of Will Adams.*

All things Japanese are coming to the fore just now, with the World Rugby Cup this year, and the Olympics in 2020, along with the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of our own intrepid explorer William Adams (1564 – 1620). I thought it timely to do a piece on the clock tower memorial (pictured) that sits on Sovereign Boulevard, aka ‘the top road’, in Gillingham.

The tower, pictured on the previous page, was built as a memorial to William Adams, known in Japan as Miura Anjin, or the Pilot from Miura. In the sixteenth century the sea voyage from Europe to Japan was perilous and took some two years. In 1600 the sole survivor of an original Dutch expedition fleet of five, the navigator ship *de Leife*, completed the journey. On board were Adams and 23 other souls. Adams was the first Englishman to set foot in Japan where he subsequently had a distinguished career advising the shogun Tokugawa Iyerasu. For his services Tokugawa honoured Adams with the title Samurai, and gave him the Japanese title of Miura Anjin. Adams died in Hirado in 1620 and was buried there.

Fast forwarding on to 1934 and Gillingham wished to mark the historical connection between Britain and the Land of the Rising Sun. The clock tower was built and on 11 May 1934 a grand ceremony was held to mark its unveiling by The Japanese Ambassador, His Excellency Tsuneo Matsudaira, who said:

‘I regard it as a great honour to have had the privilege of unveiling this monument dedicated to the memory of William Adams, pilot-major of Gillingham, an Englishman who made a profound impression on the intercourse between England and Japan ... He opened the first chapter in the history of Anglo-Japanese relations. There, as government adviser, he

1844 and on 8 July 1847 he married Frances Hosmer, a schoolmistress from Ordnance Place, Chatham. At the 1851 census the family were living at 17 Front Row; John died aged 45 and was buried at St Mary, Chatham, on 27 August 1851.

Thomas Whiffin [II] ‘junior’ was the second son of Thomas ‘senior’ and Mary and was baptised at St Mary, Chatham, on 22 March 1812. He served as chorister at the Cathedral from 1819 to 1830, the last six years as a senior, but that would make him 18 when he left, so he may have had some apprenticeship or other training as part of that. (However, another record states that he was a chorister for nine years – i.e. to 1828.) After an audition he replaced his father as a Lay Clerk around Christmas 1840 and at the 1841 census he was living at New Road, St Margaret, Rochester, as a music master, aged ‘25’, with his wife Harriet and daughter Emma. Ten years later the census has him in St Margaret Street, aged 38, professor of music, with just Emma, a scholar, now aged 16. In the 1840s, newspapers show him to have been particularly active with two groups: Brompton Harmonic Society, which met at the Two Sawyers Inn, Chatham, and an ad-hoc group which gave concerts at the Chest Arms. Thomas led the ‘orchestra’ as well as singing and the same musicians also made several trips to perform at Gravesend. Thomas also led the orchestra for the fledging Sacred Harmonic Society, directed by John Larkin Hopkins, the cathedral organist, at its first appearance on 26 April 1843. On 14 December 1854, newspapers reported on a concert in the Corn Exchange, Rochester, ‘by Gentlemen of Mr Whiffin’s Singing Class (extant 4 years)’ and cathedral choir members. The music comprised extracts from Handel’s *Messiah*, *Judas Maccabeus*, and *Sampson*.’ But six months later, on 23 June 1855, the Chapter Minutes record that ‘Mr Thomas Whiffin, after a service in the Cathedral as a Lay Clerk for upwards of 29 years, having requested to be allowed to retire from the office of Lay Clerk in consequence of declining health and inability to perform his duty, and having since duly resigned that office with all its rights and advantages, [he] executed a deed accordingly.’<sup>5</sup> Another Chapter minute of 29 Jan 1863 notes his death: ‘Application by George Whiffin for and towards defraying expenses incurred by the Funeral of his Brother, the late Thomas Whiffin, a retired Lay Clerk who died on the 15 November last [1862], and towards paying debts owing by him at his decease.’<sup>6</sup> The Dean and Chapter only allowed Whiffin’s salary to be paid to Christmas 1863. It seems likely that he was buried in the Cathedral cemetery, but no record has been found.

Swann Whiffin was born on 5 July 1822 and baptised on 7 August at St Mary, Chatham; son of Thomas and his second wife Mary. He was appointed a chorister at the Cathedral on 23 June 1832 and served until September 1836. At the 1841 census he was living with his parents at the Burial Ground, St Mary, Chatham, aged 18, as a chronometer maker’s apprentice. Ten years later he had completed his apprenticeship and was lodging at 1 Denmark Street, Islington. By 1861 he had moved to be near another port and was living at Barbican Terrace, Barnstaple, Devon. By 1871 he had moved back to Barnsbury Road, Islington, now aged 48, still unmarried, and living with his sister Mary and one servant.

In April 1873 he married Susan Elizabeth Mallett at Barnstaple. (His sister Margaret had married John Mallett of Barnstaple, silversmith, 1847 at St Mary, Chatham, on 30 Sep 1847, so there was a family link.) But all was not well, and perhaps this was a marriage to ensure he was cared for, for on 15 April 1874 he was admitted to the Bethlem Asylum, London, and died there a month later on 15 May, aged 52. His estate was administered on 12 June by his widow from their home at 10 Cloudesley Square, Islington, and was valued at 'under £300'. In contrast, when she died on 2 Jan 1897 at Marine cottage, Instow, Devon (near Barnstaple), her estate was £5,985 18s. 8d.

George Whiffin was baptised on 4 December 1829 at St Mary, Chatham, youngest son of Thomas and Mary. He served as a cathedral chorister between 1837 and 1843 and is next seen as a railway clerk in 1851, aged 21, lodging in Camden Town. But he styled himself as 'gentleman' when he married Elizabeth Bond, at St Marylebone, on 12 December 1857, his father having died in the meantime. Censuses show them moving around: Hampstead (1861), Croydon (1871), Broadwater, Sussex (1881), finally settling at Sutton, Surrey. He was then a 'public accountant' and eventually 'secretary to a company' and is often mentioned in contemporary newspapers as a man called in to oversee the liquidation of various companies. Clearly, he was highly regarded in business circles. When he died aged 75 on 30 October 1904, his estate was valued at £6,143 11s. 9d. Interestingly, probate was granted to Walter Ellis Mallett, gentleman, so links were maintained with that family.

The best documented member of all the Whiffin family is Thomas [III], son of John, who deserves his own account and will be featured in the next issue of *The Clock Tower*.

#### Notes

1. Singing men not in holy orders. Many were tradesmen of various kinds.
2. *South Eastern Gazette*, 19 Dec 1854.
3. TNA: PROB 11/2205, made 22 May 1852 with a codicil on 20 July 1853.
4. P305/1/83: John Whiffin, aged 80, buried on 5 January 1831.
5. DRc/Ac.13, p.581.
6. *Ibid.*, p.822.

In the shop itself there was a speaking tube from a bygone age. I only remember it being used once, when the manager demonstrated by blowing down it, or was it up? In the back showroom there was a large marble fireplace, which was of some value. An *expert* came in one day and tried to buy it but the manager realised it was valuable and refused to part with it. The showroom was very cold, as it too had a small gas fire like the kitchen but even older. I once refused to work in there as it was so cold. When this failed to get us some decent heating I explained that customers were refusing to use the changing rooms in there. Soon after that a new fire was installed, despite the secretary saying that it was our toast making that caused the large gas bills. As we had to have the meagre heating on anyway, we didn't understand this argument, and carried on making our toast regardless.

We were linked to Newcombe's as, I think, Eric Newcombe was one of our directors. Mr Trask, the owner of our shop building, was also something to do with them. I remember going there to take the school badges and braid that needed sewing onto the different school blazers. There was a work room right at the top of the old building where the ladies worked making the shirts and other bespoke clothing that Newcombe's were famous for. I don't remember if that's what they were doing when I went in the mid sixties. I did once find a roll of Newcombe's labels in the back of the cupboard under the stairs in our shop. There were also some bits and pieces from Charm's, the previous owners. I often think of that roll of labels when I see people drooling over designer *labels* nowadays.

\*\*\*



*The Will Adams  
Clock Tower in  
Gillingham*

*What and Why?  
Overleaf.*

Almost opposite the chapel is the Sir John Hawkins hospital. Sir John Hawkins (Knight) was the original promoter of the charity known as the Chatham Chest. A large fund derived from the voluntary contributions from all seamen employed in the British navy by advancing a certain proportion of their pay. It had its headquarters at Chatham and Sir John decided to erect a build a hospital in the town. He bought the site in 1594 and built the houses for ten pensioners, poor mariners or shiprights who had served in or for the navy. He obtained a royal charter from Queen Elizabeth I, and endowed the hospital with estates to provide income to support the inmates. For the rest of his life he managed the hospital and even chose the inmates himself. In 1789 the hospital was rebuilt as ten two storey cottages. There have been a number of changes since then, but the latest, in the 1980s, have returned the outside appearance to much as it looked in 1789. There are now eight self contained flats with modern facilities: the toilets are no longer at the end of the garden down by the river ! The Queen Mother opened the updated hospital in 1984.

The shop where I worked was, as I have said, The Young Man's Shop, at number 44. We sold school uniforms and other clothes for boys from about four to 16 years old. As time went on we did have a few fashion lines, and at one time sold *Beatle jackets*, two of which ended up in our one and only sale. We were nearly allowed to use a *By Appointment* sign as we supplied a school rain coat, a Robert Hurst I believe, for Prince Charles. As it was actually sold through Ogden's of Rochester, they got the credit.

We had a break in once. The newly acquired reefer jackets seemed to be the main attraction. All our stock was quite expensive, but these were very fashionable as well as being of very good quality. The intruders rigged up a line, hooked the clothes onto it and hauled the loot over the back wall. They were so laid-back that they even made themselves a cup of tea and *ate my Chumbles*, carefully squirrelled away in a tin. I have been scarred for life ever since, as you can tell from these jottings. The kitchen where this heinous crime took place was in the basement. It still had a large range in situ, which sported a compartment for hot water. Our hot water came from the kettle which Rose boiled. She filled it from the outside cold tap, which was at least under cover. Our gas fire, which we made toast by, was a three coned affair which must have been made around the 1920s. There was a very large dresser, which was probably Victorian. There was access to the back of the dresser by a door to the side. This could have been a pantry, I'm not sure, or it could have led to another part of the original building. Our building was on five floors. If you were in the kitchen you had to climb the stairs outside and a set of stairs inside to get to the loo. There was an accountant's office on this floor, and a room with a bath in it, which once overflowed. I can't remember what was on the next floor, but at the very top were the old servants' quarters, which were let out as a postal address. They had planned to let this out as accommodation / office space, but didn't find out until Rose had lovingly cleaned it, hauling numerous buckets of hot steamy water up from the basement kitchen, that it was not suitable.

## Albert Edward Godfrey Howes, (Sept. 1897 – Oct. 1917)

Elaine Gardner



the visiting of his grave at the end of World War One. The communication prompted further research into the family.

Albert's parents, Albert Edward Howes and Annie Elverton Boosey were married at St. Nicholas' Church Strood on October 1 1896; Albert was listed as a victualler. Their son Albert was born in the September quarter (July, August, Sept) 1897 and baptised on 3 October 1897, also at St. Nicholas'. The family address at that time was Grove Road, Strood.

Albert had a sister who is pictured with their mother visiting Albert's grave in Belgium at the end of the war (right). The St. Nicholas' baptism register has an entry for a Lillian Maud Howes on 21 April 1901, with parents listed as Albert Edward and Annie Elverton living in Cross Street, Strood. Lillian is listed on the 1911 census as part of the family, but there appears to be no birth registration for a Lillian Maud on the online BMD register (Births, Marriages and Deaths), only a Helen Charlotte born in Medway in the March quarter 1901. Is this an error? Was Lillian's birth not registered, (or simply not recorded by the online facility)? Was she registered with one set of names then baptised with another? Did she have a twin sister? Who knows ...



Albert and Annie ran a store supplying groceries and bottled ales and stout situated at 8 Glanville Road, just down from the Medway Archives Centre on the junction with Morgan Road (see right). The picture shows the couple standing outside the store with the shop boy. We don't know when this was taken, but Mr Howes died in 1926, and is buried in Strood Cemetery.



At some point in WWI Albert, the son, joined 7<sup>th</sup> Coy Royal West Kent Regiment (RWK); he would have been 18 in 1915.



In 1917 his battalion of the RWK were involved in the third Ypres campaign, which had begun in the July. They were involved in the Battle of Poelcapelle (pictured) which began on 9 October, the first move in the battle of Passchendaele. The dreadful weather had left the area a sea of mud through which the troops had to try and progress. It was a

disaster, with ammunition not reaching the forces, weary from fighting in the mud. The German forces also used mustard gas. Allied forces suffered 12,000 casualties, wounded, missing and dead. Albert survived, but on 19 October the company war diary records three officers and 200 ordinary ranks detailed to carry ammunition to the front line. It does not record what happened exactly but nine men lost their lives that day, including Albert.

Albert is buried in Minty Farm Cemetery, Belgium which was begun in late September 1917 (see inside back page). The 189 named graves are mostly of men who lost their lives in Flanders in late 1917 and early 1918. After the war, like many families, Annie and Lillian travelled to Belgium to visit Albert's grave. The picture taken there indicates this took place on 7 August, but the year is not shown. As the graves still have their original crosses it was probably 1919 or 1920 when many of the grieving families made the trip to mourn their lost sons or husbands. Sadly, many had no grave to visit since the numbers of unidentified or never-found casualties in the Flanders' mud of the Ypres campaigns are just names on memorials at Ypres and Tyne Cot.

*Photographs kindly supplied by Tony Gray.*

## *My West End*

Janet King



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

### Part 2

I passed Lawrence's on my way to visit St. Bart's chapel. As far as I remember it was a florist's, but on the census returns for 1871, Henry C. Lawrence was described as a seedsman and florist, and was aged 32. He was born in Cambridge in about 1840, the son of Charles, also a gardener. By 1981 three of Henry's children had followed him into the business, being described as assistant florists. The retail outlet at 2 High Street, Chatham was supported by a growing ground in Albany Road. The shop with its distinctive chinoiserie conservatory is now a restaurant.

The chapel of St. Bart's is of great historical significance, and if I'd had *some spare cash* when it was up for sale recently, I would have bought it. It has finally been decided that it stands in Rochester, as for a long time it was considered to stand astride the Chatham / Rochester boundary. I include it here as it was where I used to escape sometimes for quiet contemplation. It was started while Gundolf was bishop in the eleventh century, and completed between 1114 and 1124, in the time of Bishop Ernulf. It was an essential part of the original St. Bart's hospital, founded in 1078. It is a gem of Norman architecture and not generally appreciated locally. Hugh de Trottscliffe, one of the monks under Ernulf, was the chief architect. St. Bart's was supported by St. Andrew's priory until the dissolution, and then by the Dean. By Elizabeth I's reign support from the priory was lost.

The chapel is one of the earliest Norman churches and the oldest part is the east end. The most interesting feature is the round half-domed sanctuary, one of the few Norman apses remaining in the country, and could be the earliest. It contains the altar and three Norman windows, and is best viewed from the outside, which shows the stonework carved at the time.