

Richard Dadd

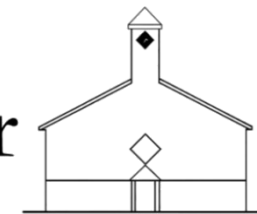


Born in Chatham, Richard Dadd (1817-1886) was a painter best known for fantasy scenes and the supernatural, including fairies. Prior to his mental breakdown and incarceration in the Bedlam and Broadmoor asylums, his work had been more conventional. However, following a tour of Italy, Greece, Syria, Palestine and Egypt, his behaviour became more erratic and unstable, culminating in the most terrible event. On page 21, Peter Cook explains what happened in Cobham Park, on the night of August 28, 1843.

Above left: a self-portrait of Richard Dadd pre-1843.

Above right: Frontispiece to Kentish Coronal (1841) edited by Henry Gardiner Adams, 1840; engraver Richard Dadd; Wikimedia Commons.

The Clock Tower



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The Friends of Medway Archives
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When Hollywood came to Rochester!



John Bunny, the star of Vitagraph Studios' 1913 film, *Pickwick Papers*, was once a household name, but his fame was surpassed by a young comedian from London named Charlie Chaplin. On page 16 Brian Joyce reveals what happened during the filming of *Pickwick Papers* in Rochester and how Edwin Harris got in on the act ...

ALSO INSIDE

Peter Cook looks at the life of artist Richard Dadd – see Part One on page 21.

PLUS!

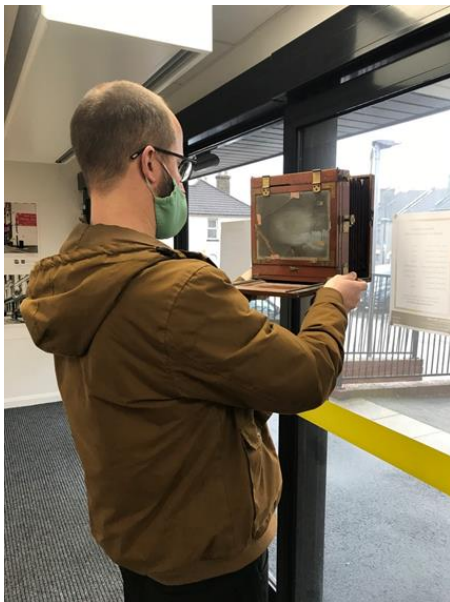
Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee AND Featherstones department store
We need your memories! See pages 10 – 12.

If undelivered, please return to:
Medway Archives Centre, 32 Bryant Road, Strood, Rochester, ME2 3EP.

Karise West

In his Secretary's Report (see page 7), Chris de Coulon Berthoud explains how one of the Archive Reminiscence Sessions at MAC resulted in some fascinating donations. One of these is the camera used by photographer Karise West at her photographic studio at 125 High Street, Rochester between 1923 and 1930.

Chris and Rob Flood were at MAC when Rochester-based Swedish portrait photographer, Rikard Österlund installed his latest exhibition in the foyer. Entitled, *Chatham Intra Photographers in the Victorian Era*, the exhibition looks at the first photographers in Intra's old High Street, including the studios and images, and who occupies the addresses today. There is also an explanation of the evolution of photographic techniques from 1852 to 1918, and the popularisation of studio portraits. The exhibition is free-to-view until 26 February 2022. At the opening, Rikard also took time to examine Karise West's camera.



Above: Rikard Österlund examines Karise West's camera in the foyer of the Medway Archives Centre; photograph by Chris de Coulon Berthoud

Left: Rikard Österlund; photograph by Rob Flood.



Karise West

In his Secretary's Report (see page 7), Chris de Coulon Berthoud explains how one of the Archive Reminiscence Sessions at MAC resulted in some fascinating donations and also some extraordinary information about local photographer Karise West who ran a studio in Rochester High Street in the early twentieth century.

Karise West also wrote, illustrated, and bound a history of Rochester, *Rochester Speaks*, which is held at the Medway Archives Centre. Among the hand-drawn illustrations in the manuscript are photographs taken by West, including one entitled *The Spirit of Rochester* (pictured).

The image, taken in 1947, shows June Blackburn wearing the gown first worn by Dame Sybil Thorndike in the 1931 Rochester Historical Pageant.



Image reproduced with the kind permission of the Medway Archives Centre.

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Chairman's Letter

Elaine Gardner



By the time you read this it is probably too late to wish you a happy new year, but I hope your year has had a promising start and that we all enjoy a better one than the past couple of years have been.

First of all, and this now almost seems like old news, we were absolutely delighted to announce in December that the Medway Archives Centre (MAC) has been awarded Accreditation Status by the National Archives. This was sent out by email to members, but some of you are not on that list and so the news may not have reached you. When Elspeth Millar was appointed as Archivist in 2019, her first aim was to apply for Accreditation. The Medway Archives Centre is a place of deposit, and she knew it was a priority to achieve this UK standard, in addition, it is best practice. Accreditation will help ensure MAC upholds national archive standards, and it will also encourage development and provide support for staff and the work undertaken at the Archive, including engagement with local communities. FOMA representatives also met the National Archives team during the application process to explain how we support MAC. Since then we have agreed to start an on-going relationship with the Friends of National Archives, the very first step of which is described by Alex Thomas on page 6..

FOMA started holding real talks, as opposed to virtual ones, toward the end of last year and although audiences were smaller than in the past it was lovely to be able to get together again. There seems to be a reluctance from people to start coming back to events in several of the other groups I belong to, which is understandable, but hopefully attendances will improve as we head into spring and summer. As I write, the talk in March is still to be finalised but in June our former MAC Archivist, Alison Cable is coming back to talk about some of the more interesting material she is finding in her role at the Rochester Bridge Trust archive, while in September *Richard Watt* is the subject of a talk by Geoff Ettridge. The March and September talks will be Friday evening events (7.00 for 7.30pm) at St Nicholas, but Alison's June talk will be a Tuesday afternoon event at the Medway Archives Centre (MAC).

On April 8 we will have the FOMA AGM, the first live one for two years -last year we held the AGM via Zoom – and we hope you will come along and support your

committee. The AGM is on a Friday evening, at 7.00 for 7.30pm in St Nicholas Church hall, Strood. Details are on page 40 and the AGM leaflet is also included in this issue; please ensure you bring this with you when you attend the meeting, as the only additional paperwork which will be circulated on the evening will be the accounts.

We often get requests from people who have found FOMA and *The Clock Tower* on the web and write enquiring about general and family history, but I think Rosario in Argentina must be one of the furthest places from which a request for information has come (see *Readers' Letters*, page 36). Who knew that a key figure in the development of football in Argentina, Isaac Newell, was baptised in St Nicholas Strood on May 15 1853? Well we should have known as in *The Clock Tower*, Issue 26, May 2012 we published 'Anyone for Football? Lionel Messi and the Higham Connection', part of a series entitled, *Little Gems* by MAC's Cindy O Halloran. We have reproduced this on page 14 as a reminder!

In 1853, Isaac Newell's father, Joseph Edward, a fishmonger, and his mother Mary Ann (née Goodger) lived in Taylors Lane, Strood; Isaac was the youngest of three sons. The year following his birth, 1854, Mary Ann died and then in February 1856 Joseph Edward remarried, to Susannah Chapman, aged 22. The family was still living in Taylors Lane but by 1861 the Newells had moved to 5 Higham Place, Higham. The father was still listed as a fishmonger with Isaac and William at school, while Isaac's eldest brother, also Joseph, was no longer living at home but listed as a servant living in the home of George Butcher, a market gardener in Higham.

In 1869 at the age of 16, Isaac emigrated to Argentina and started work as a railroad telegraphist with the Central Argentine Railway. Education was clearly important to him as later, together with his wife, Anna Margaretha Jochimsen, he established the Anglo-Argentine Commercial School. It was here that he also pioneered the playing of football in South America, introducing the official rules in 1884 and also the first ball specifically for the game. You can read more about Isaac (in English) on the website, PioneroDelFutbol.com I spent a morning earlier this week at MAC reading the file that is held on Isaac Newell and two very interesting books on Higham history, researched and written by Andrew Rootes and published in 2011/12. Amanda Thomas has also been working on the family tree and has discovered a little more about the family's Kentish origins. All of this research - which is still not yet complete - will help answer the queries raised by Mauro Emiliozzi. Of course, if you know more, then please get in contact!

Finally, our relationship with the British Association for Local History is now well established. We were delighted to see that the latest issue of their magazine, *The Local Historian* included a review (see opposite) by Reviews Editor, Heather Falvey of our November 2021 issue - and in particular the moving article by Brian Joyce (pictured) entitled, 'The Dock Road Tragedy', the last in our *What and Why?* series.

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.

Editorial deadlines

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

The copy deadline for Issue 66 of *The Clock Tower* is Monday 25 April 2022, with publication on Wednesday 18 May 2022.

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

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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 Dr Alexander Thomas.

The Clock Tower is also available at 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 Centre, 32 Bryant Road, Strood, Rochester, Kent, ME2 3EP. Telephone +44 (0)1634 332714; fax +44 (0)1634 297060; email: malsc@medway.gov.uk

General enquiries about the Friends can be obtained from the FOMA Chairman: Elaine Gardner, 102 Valley View Road, Rochester, ME1 3NX, Kent; emgardner@virginmedia.com; 01634 408595. All correspondence should be directed to the FOMA Secretary: Christopher de Coulon Berthoud, 4 Albert Road, Rochester, ME1 3DG, Kent; berthoud@blueyonder.co.uk

Membership enquiries should be directed to the Membership Secretary, Betty Cole, 98 The Wharf, Dock Head Road, Chatham ME4 4ZS, Kent. Telephone: 01634 892976; email: becole40@gmail.com

THE FRIENDS OF EASTGATE HOUSE
present

**THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR
AND TEMPLE MANOR**

A talk by our very own popular speaker
DR JEREMY CLARKE

EASTGATE HOUSE, ROCHESTER

MONDAY 28TH FEBRUARY 2022
2.00 P.M. for 2.30 P.M.

FoEH members £4; others £5

Light refreshments: Raffle

Book by phone 01634 721886 (pay on the door)

Email: alan.moss1@btinternet.com (pay on the door)

No facilities for pre-booking at the house



Brian Joyce

The article marked the seventieth anniversary of the tragedy when, 'In the early evening of Tuesday 4 December 1951, a bus ploughed into a marching column of Royal Marine cadets in Dock Road, Gillingham. Twenty-four boys aged between nine and thirteen lost their lives. At that time, it was Britain's worst ever road accident and it remains the greatest peacetime tragedy in the history of the Medway Towns.' If you haven't already read Brian's article, I strongly urge you to do so.

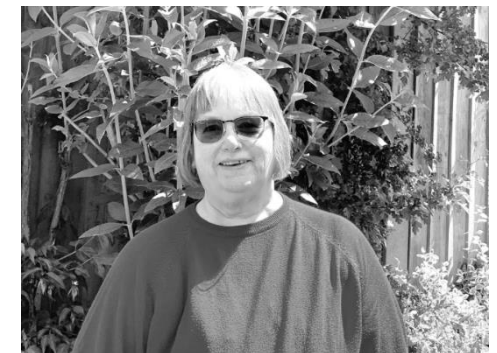
The Clock Tower is the magazine of the **Friends of Medway Archives**. November 2021 issue includes a comprehensive article marking the 70th anniversary of what became known as the Dock Road Tragedy. On Tuesday 4 December 1951 a bus ploughed into a marching column of Royal Marine cadets in Dock Road, Gillingham, killing 24 boys aged between 9 and 13. To mark the 50th anniversary, the late Prince Philip unveiled a memorial plaque close to the site of the accident, on Chatham Dockyard's perimeter wall. The majority of the boys were buried together in Grange Road Cemetery, Gillingham after a service in Rochester Cathedral. www.foma-lsc.org/index.html

photograph by Elaine Gardner opposite

News from the Treasurer

Jean Skilling

In anticipation of the FOMA AGM on 8 April 2022 (see the leaflet included with this issue), I am delighted to announce that Bob Howe has volunteered to be the Independent Examiner for our accounts. This is great news as Bob is a highly experienced in this field, and is also the ex-Treasurer of the City of Rochester Society.



Medway Archives Centre's Archive Accreditation and FOMA's Partnership with the Friends of The National Archives

Dr Alexander Thomas



Medway Archives Centre's Archive Accreditation

In late November 2021, the UK Archive Service Accreditation Committee awarded the Medway Archives Centre (MAC) accredited status for the first time. The new status is significant as it confirms that MAC meets and seeks to maintain the UK's ever-evolving high standards for collections' management and access. Accreditation also recognises the efforts shown by the Centre during the challenging times of the Covid-19 pandemic.

FOMA's Partnership with the Friends of The National Archives

FOMA is excited to announce that it has agreed a partnership with the Friends of The National Archives (FTNA). In the future, the new partnership has the potential to bring a wealth of new benefits to FOMA members from online access to FTNA events to FTNA publications. For the time being a series of new links to the FTNA website has been added to the FOMA website's link page (see <http://foma-lsc.org/links.html>).

Shaping the Future

MAC's archive accreditation, and FOMA's partnership with the Friends of The National Archives, mean FOMA members will become ever more knowledgeable about what constitutes best archival practice. FOMA members will have the opportunity to shape the future shape of these practices too.

New Members

A warm welcome to new FOMA members Mrs Natasha Boardman-Steer, Mr Terry and Mrs Beth Dansey, Miss Vanya Sharp.

Most larger items have already received attention and are ready to fit. An early need is to define the remaining tasks and arrive at material requirements. Some of the remaining work could be done by volunteers who have suitable skills. Applying livery and graphics will be the last task, and may need separate funding.

Funds & Donations - The Appeal

Just over £9,000 was received as donations during September and October, which was very welcome. We have a comfortable bank balance for day-to-day and moderate expenditure. However as mentioned above there are still some four-figure bills to come, so the Final Appeal is still "live"!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 5th March 2022
The Royal Engineers Museum.
Prince Arthur Road,
Gillingham, ME7 1UR. *
13.30 for 14.00, to 16.30

*Buses 101, 156, 182 to King Charles Hotel.

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

Friends of Broomhill

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

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



Future Events

We are busy preparing for future events, and wonder if you could help us? We will be holding a drop-in event on Saturday 2 April on the subject of Natural History (more details in the next bulletin!) Would you be interested in writing about your memories of nature in Medway? There has been so much environmental change locally during our lifetimes and these memories could be printed for our collections and displayed at our event. Whether it's your memories of the surrounding countryside, bird-watching, the nature table at school, picking wild flowers or just playing in local green spaces, we would love to hear from you.

Secretary's Report

Chris de Coulon Berthoud



One of the great pleasures of the archive at the Medway Archives Centre (MAC) is the unexpected connections which can be made when you least expect it.

I had first become interested in a Rochester-based author and photographer called Karise West last year when MAC's Nikki Pratt and Helen Worthy were poring over an image in a book which the Archive holds in its collection. The book, *Rochester Speaks*, is a bound manuscript of a history of Rochester written and illustrated by local author, Karise West. Among the hand-drawn illustrations are also photographs taken by Miss West, and the page that my colleagues were looking at included a photograph entitled, *The Spirit of Rochester* (see the inside back cover).

The image, taken in 1947, showed a girl wearing the gown first worn by Dame Sybil Thorndike in the 1931 Rochester Historical Pageant. The girl pictured, they told me, was June Blackburn, one of the fabulous team of volunteers who come and give their time at the Archive Reminiscence Sessions. It transpired that June's sister, Doris Howden, had for a long-time been employed as lady's maid to Karise West at her home in Strood until Karise's death in 1965, which is how June came to be photographed. I have since had a wonderful, long conversation with June about her memories of Miss West which will appear as an article here at a later date.

Following these conversations, June very kindly made donations relating to Miss West to the Archive including one exciting item which we received shortly before Christmas. It was the camera that she had used during her career as a photographer in her premises at a photographic studio at 125 High Street, Rochester between 1923 and 1930.

Fortunately, we were able to have the camera examined by an expert, Rikard Osterland – and as shown on the inside front cover. When Rikard came to mount his exhibition (detailing the first photographers and photographic studios of Chatham Intra, and available to see in the MAC foyer until February) he was able to tell us that the camera, a whole plate tailboard camera, appears to be in exceptionally good condition.

FRIENDS OF CHATHAM TRACTION



Since mid-September, and following the successful exhibition at the Medway Archives Centre - *The Medway Heritage Bus: bringing the past alive* - the Friends have been extremely busy!

Restoration work by the coachbuilders at Faversham on the Medway Heritage Bus (MHB), the GKE 68, was completed at the end of September. This was just in time to take the bus to be on show at Kent County

Agricultural Society's Heritage Transport Show at Detling on 10 October 2021. The bus got a lot of attention as we had asked the organisers if we could position it in the main exhibition hall (pictured).

But what now for GKE? The end of the coachbuilding phase is significant, as it brings to an end the financial pressure of monthly payments to SEC. (In practice, such pressure often brought discipline and the need to manage things so as to keep the job moving.) There are still some significant bills to come (Upholstery completion payment (£3k), SEC Final invoice (c.£4.5K), Bell Housing cover (c.£1.2k) etc.) but, such items apart, material costs for completion of chassis and electrics are expected to be relatively modest compared to the body work.

It was made by J. Robinson and Sons of 172 Regent St., London, opticians and camera makers whose business closed in 1898. This means it is possible that Karise had the camera from new if she first bought in when she was 19 years old. The camera is unfortunately missing the plate holders, and one sheet of glass is cracked, however it is hoped that these repairs can be sympathetically made in order for it to be once more operable.

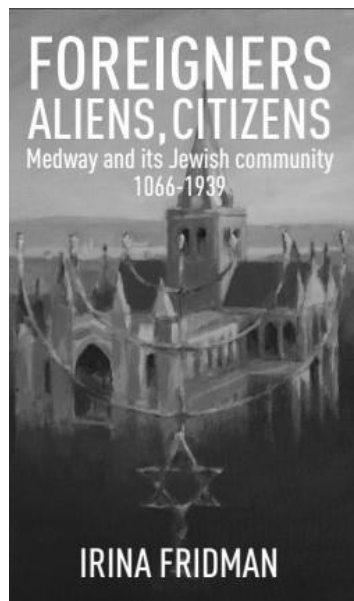
Book News!



Foreigners, Aliens, Citizens: Medway and its Jewish Community, 1066-1939

Having hailed originally from Russia, Irina settled in Medway in the early 2000s. After a stint of some 13 years as a Local Studies Librarian at the then Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre, Irina moved to a role of a Community Librarian at Medway Libraries. Her remit (among other duties) still includes local history – a passion that compelled her writing about the social history of the Medway Towns.

This book is a unique take on the social history landscape of the Medway Towns over centuries. It is an account of fascinating characters and moving human experiences, detailing the history of the Jewish community of Rochester and Chatham - the first non-Christian community in the area - and its relationship with the local Gentile community. The nature of this relationship was additionally influenced by legislation and military campaigns.



Available to purchase online and at all good bookshops; ISBN 979-8705970513

In this informative exhibition, curated by Rikard Österlund, discover details of the very first photographers in the old High Street Intra area, their studios and images, and who occupies those addresses today. This project looks back at a time when the High Street was bustling with sailors, theatres and breweries, and many photographers were competing for a share in this innovative trade. Learn how photographic techniques evolved between 1852-1918, the period when studio portraits first became commonplace, and find out why your Facebook profile picture might not be such a modern idea after all.

Saturday Drop-ins

At the beginning of February, we launched a series of regular drop-in events on Saturday mornings.

- Saturday 5 March - resources to help with house history research
- Saturday 2 April – a look at MAC collections with a focus on natural history.

Opening Hours and Visiting

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

Opening hours have returned to normal. Our reopening has been planned in a cautious way to ensure that we can review all of the practical issues involved in running the service safely. We will keep these opening arrangements under review.

We are now accepting drop-in visits for published materials and photographs if there is space in the search room. An appointment must be made to view original archive material and use microfilm or fiche readers

How to Make an Appointment

Email us at malsc@medway.gov.uk to make an appointment and to discuss which items you wish to consult. For original archive material you must give at least 3 working days' notice of your intention to visit. For all other material (such as books, maps, photographs) we just require 1 working day's notice. When you book we will ask for your name and contact details so that we can keep in touch with you about your appointment.

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

News and Events

Calendar of Forthcoming Events and Exhibitions

FOMA Talks and Events

All events are subject to change and to government guidance. Further information will be available on the FOMA website (www.foma-lsc.org), our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/fomalsc) and sent to members via email, where appropriate.

FOMA AGM
Friday, 8th April 2022,
7.00 for 7.30 pm;
St Nicholas Church Lower Hall,
Strood, Rochester, Kent, ME2 4TR.

Tuesday 7 June 2022, 2.30 pm; doors open 2.00 pm.

Title to be confirmed

A talk by Alison Cable of the Rochester Bridge Trust.

Alison will be talking about the role of the Bridge Trust looking at some of the more interesting documents created.

Friday 9 September 2022

Richard Watts - A man of his time and a charity of its time

A talk by Geoff Ettridge

Booking for FOMA events is not necessary and are 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) 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; 01634 408595.

Medway Archives Centre

32 Bryant Rd, Rochester ME2 3EP; 01634 332714; malsc@medway.gov.uk.

Events and Exhibitions

Chatham Intra Photographers in the Victorian Era

An exhibition curated by Rikard Österlund

Medway Archives Centre Foyer - until 26 February 2022

Available to view during Medway Archive Centre's normal opening hours (see below).

Medway Archives Centre News

Elspeth Millar



Hello *Clock Tower* readers!

Archive Service Accreditation

I am very pleased to share the news that Medway Archives Centre was awarded Archive Service Accreditation in November 2021!

Accreditation is the UK quality standard which recognises good performance in all areas of archive service delivery. Achieving accredited status demonstrates that we have met clearly defined national standards relating to management and resourcing, the care of our unique collections, and what the service offers to its entire range of users.

Being awarded accreditation is a huge achievement and demonstrates our continued commitment to developing, preserving, and improving access to the unique heritage collections in our care. It also provides recognition for the hard work of the Medway Archives Centre team, our stakeholders, volunteers, and partners who all contribute to the work of Medway Archives Centre. We aim to build on this achievement and keep developing our activities, particularly in capturing, preserving, and providing access to digital records, and in undertaking dedicated audience development planning and delivery.

Events and Exhibitions

We have a fantastic exhibition in the foyer area currently which has been curated by Rikard Österlund (see the inside front cover). *Chatham Intra Photographers in the Victorian Era* discovers details of the very first photographers in the old High Street Intra area, their studios and images, and who occupies those addresses today. This project looks back at a time when the High Street was bustling with sailors, theatres and breweries, and many photographers were competing for a share in this innovative trade. The exhibition is available to view during our normal opening hours until 26 February 2022.

We are launching a series of regular drop-in events on Saturday mornings. We kicked off on Saturday 5 February with a focus on Chatham Intra when there was a chance to

see some maps, photos, past exhibitions, and ephemera relating to the varied and fascinating history of the area. On Saturday 5 March, the focus will be on resources to help with house history research, and on Saturday 2 April we will be looking at collections with a focus on natural history.

Our first talk of 2022 was given by Rob Flood on Saturday 19 February for LGBT History Month. Rob took us on a virtual walk through Rochester and Chatham and explained how the Medway Towns were almost entirely responsible for the 1864 Contagious Diseases Act of Parliament. The talk also covered how the parts of Rochester and Chatham with historic links to local sex workers became home to not just the LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Queer +) communities of the Medway Towns but of the whole of Kent. Rob also discussed how a pub at the centre of these communities supported the Medway Gay Switchboard and became a safe haven for LGBTQ+ people.

Please keep an eye out via our newsletter and social media for news of other events in March and April.

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Medway libraries are celebrating the Platinum Jubilee in a variety of ways and at Medway Archives Centre we're planning some celebrations of our own ...

- We will be hosting two reminiscence sessions at MAC, one to share memories of the 1977 Silver Jubilee and another for the Coronation.
- There will be a *Call out for Memories* (photographs, printed ephemera, written reminiscences) of the Coronation, jubilees past or royal visits to Medway that can be emailed/posted/dropped into the Centre.
- Our Librarian will be running a *Call for Memories Roadshow* visiting town centre hubs, library branches and the mobile library to offer drop-in sessions to reminisce, collect donations and to promote the collections and services on offer at Medway Archives Centre. The roadshow will take place between March and early June and will include every public library access point in Medway to reach out to the whole community and gather a diverse range of resources and memories in this special Jubilee year. A detailed schedule and further information regarding donations of material will be released nearer the time.

Recent Material Donated to Medway Archives Centre

Archives:

- Ref. DE1311, Karise West material (provenance unknown) – various drafts of her publication *Rochester Speaks*. Karise West was a local portrait photographer in the 1920s and 1930s, running a photographic studio on

Sgt James Herbert Holmes 156 Sqdn RAF

A year ago, the Medway Archives received an email from Freerk Boekelo in the Netherlands regarding the crash in World War Two of a Vickers Wellington bomber on May 31, 1942. Holmes was on board and he and the other crew members are buried at the Public Cemetery at Vorden in Holland. It was a similar correspondence to that which we had first had with Henk van der Linden and the subsequent unravelling of the story of the First World War Live Bait Squadron.

Further to the publication of the correspondence regarding Sgt James Herbert Holmes, we heard again from Freerk Boekelo, as follows:

13 October 2021

In response to the subjoined email from Catharina Clement from Dec 2, 2020 I am pleased to let you know that I my (Dutch) concept about Sgt/Observer James Herbert Holmes is ready to published. The (final) English translation of the final story will be translated next week. As soon as possible I will send you the final story. Meantime I like to attend you on the webpage <https://omkijkpunt.nl/en/> and <https://omkijkpunt.nl/zwurfkei-als-herinnering-aan-crash-in-linde/> (last page unfortunately only in Dutch, but I guess Google-translate will be of sufficient help).

Best regards,

Freerk Boekelo.

Isaac Newell

31 December 2021

Hello, my name is Mauro Emiliozzi and I write from Rosario, Argentina. I lead a research group on the history of football in my country and I need to find information about Isaac Newell.

Isaac was born in Strood in 1853. At age 16 he settled in Argentina, and in 1903, in his honor, the 'Newell's Old Boys' Club was founded, from which emerged Lionel Messi and Marcelo Bielsa, among other prominent footballers ...

Before that, Isaac lived with his family in Higham. That is why I am interested in getting material, articles or publications on local history, around 1861 (what kind of schools existed, what Higham was like, population, economy, etc). Also, if possible, locate some specific information about the Newell family in Higham (address, father's employment). Family data are: Joseph Edward Savage Newell (Isaac's father) and Susanna Elizabeth Chapman (Joseph Edward's second wife).

This information is really very important, since Isaac Newell is considered here the 'pioneer of Argentine soccer'. I leave a brief review of the Newell's Old Boys Club in English: <http://www.pionerodelfutbol.com/p/english.html>

I hope to receive some information.

Thank you very much already!

Mauro Emiliozzi.

As Elaine Gardner explains on page 4, she and Editor, Amanda Thomas, have been doing some research on Isaac Newell, the results of which will be published in a future issue of The Clock Tower. This is not the first time, however, that Isaac Newell has come to our attention, as can be read in Cindy O'Halloran's article on page 14, 'Anyone for Football? Lionel Messi and the Higham connection', first published in The Clock Tower, Issue 26, in May 2012 and part of her Little Gems series.

If you have any further information, please contact Amanda Thomas at editor@foma-lsc.org

- Rochester High Street (Medway Studios Ltd). She later became an estate agent, owning 11 properties in Strood and Rochester, as well as writing a couple of historical pieces about Rochester, *Rochester Speaks* and *The Bailiff of Rochester*, both copies of these are held at the Medway Archives Centre. See also Chris de Coulon Berthoud's report on page 7 and the inside front and back covers.
- Ref. DE1315, *The Wallace Collection* – photo albums of performances by the Wallace Collection, a local theatre group based at St Stephen's Church Hall in Rochester (1976-1990), and photo albums of performances by the Chatham Amateur Operatic Society (1974-1981).
- Ref. DE1316, Nicole Mollett – original drawings and concept sketch work for a drawing work in response to the Rosemary Tonks (1928-2014) poem *The Drinkers of Coffee*, which was created for the *Gillingham POW!* Festival in September and October 2021.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee



70 years ago on 6 February 1952, HM Queen Elizabeth II acceded to the throne on the death of her father, King George VI. In the May issue of *The Clock Tower*, we will be featuring your memories of the Queen, including visits to the Medway Towns and how you celebrated previous Jubilees. It would also be lovely to hear how you are intending to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee!

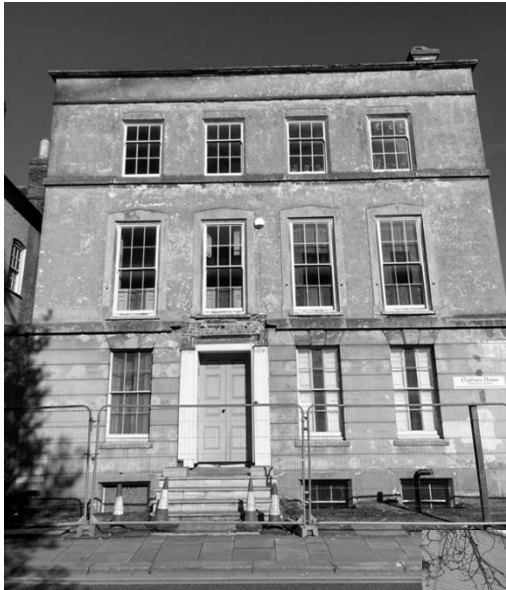
The deadline for the May issue is Monday 25 April; please send your memories/articles/ideas or plans (!) to the Editor, Amanda Thomas at editor@foma-lsc.org

Portrait of Her Majesty The Queen taken inside Nottingham's Council House, Lee Haywood; Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0

Call For Featherstones Memories and Photos!

FOMA member Natasha Steer writes:

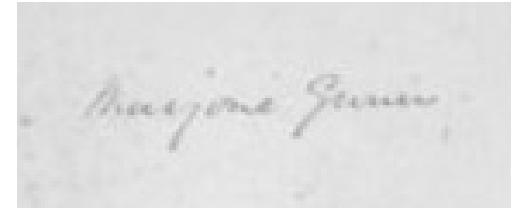
Work is well under way to restore the Grade II* listed Georgian 'Hulkes' mansion at 351 Rochester High Street, also known as Chatham House (pictured before and during work), as part of Historic England's High Street Heritage Action Zone Programme. The building was also used by retailers, Featherstones from 1936 until the 1980s as the 'everything for the home' department store. The more modern shop was 'wrapped around' the lower façade of Chatham House.



Creatabot and Future Chatham are running a reminiscence project and local residents are encouraged to send any related photographs and memories of the former Featherstones department stores to heritage@creatabot.co.uk. The photos and anecdotes will be used to inspire further community projects and also be added to the collections at the Medway Archives Centre.



For the first time I decided to see if I could discover who Marjorie Gunn was and found details about her in your *Clock Tower* journal. What fun! I have really enjoyed following up all that information and locating her on the census and in newspaper articles. I have attached scans of her signature and the postcard which was sent by 'M.E.' (I wonder who that was?) in August 1966, the year before Marjorie died.



I lived in England for ten years, mainly in Kent (Edenbridge) and probably bought the book in Hall's Antiquarian Book Shop in Tunbridge Wells. It appears to be a first edition from 1906 but I see I got it for the bargain price of 35p! It is really pleasing to know who it originally belonged to.

I still keep in touch with friends in Kent (formerly of Frindsbury which I see was where Marjorie's father was baptised) and am always interested to know about my adopted county.

Kind regards,

Elizabeth Yates (Melbourne, Australia).

A different Clipping sound is heard when the clippy gives you your ticket to who-knows-where-and-back-again.
A steam train in the distance is heard Chugging along,
its engine Chuffing,
taking the strain of the passengers pulled along to their holidays.

Transport of another kind makes a different sound as its engine is urged to judder into life by a handle that makes a Cranking noise,
ensuring the car is ready to take us for a ride.

Readers' Letters

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

The Diaries of Marjorie Gunn



In August 2012, in *The Clock Tower*, Issue 27, then Archivist Alison Cable (pictured) wrote in her column, Archives Update: 'I have recently re-catalogued the records of Cliffe Parish Council (to include additional material) and the diaries of Marjorie Gunn.

Since February 2021 (Issue 61 of *The Clock Tower*), we have published correspondence with Muriel Lhermé in France who was trying to find out more about Marjorie Gunn. Recently, we also received the following email from Australia.

23 January 2022

Hello Amanda,

I was looking at my copy of Rudyard Kipling's *Puck of Pook's Hill* recently and was reminded of the inscription 'Marjorie Gunn' on the flyleaf and a postcard which was inside the book when I bought it while living in England in the 1970s.

The Friends of Medway Archives Centre Christmas Event

On Thursday 16 December 2021 the Medway Archives Centre hosted a book sale followed by two afternoon talks which had been organised by FOMA. The talks were given by *Clock Tower* Editor, Amanda Thomas (pictured) and in the interval we were able to offer mince pies and a hot drink – with a background of forgotten medieval carols.

The first talk was entitled *Diseases in Victorian Times – with a footnote on Covid-19*. In this, Amanda explored the causes and effects of the most common diseases of the Victorian era. The talk included a discussion of the possible causes of the current Covid-19 pandemic and how lessons could have been learnt from the past.

Following the break, Amanda gave the second talk, *From Pagan Merriment to Puritan Misery. The Banning of Christmas in the English Civil Wars*. In this she discussed the ancient celebration of Christmas – including the astonishing evidence emerging from the recent archaeological project at Stonehenge - and how the development of Protestantism caused Christmas to be banned at the height of the English Civil Wars.



Cindy's Little Gems

Cindy O'Halloran

This article was first published in The Clock Tower in Issue 26, May 2012.



Cindy is Senior Archive and Local Studies Assistant at MALSC, responsible for the daily management of the searchroom and non professional staff. She has worked at MALSC for six years following 12 years in branch libraries and as a teaching assistant at a local primary school. Cindy's interests include reading, gardening and anything to do with history, her main passion being the 17th century and the English Civil Wars.

Anyone for Football?

Lionel Messi and the Higham connection.

Well, Amanda asked for something about Higham for this Dickens themed issue and Lionel Messi comes to mind. No, I really have not lost the plot but it's a long story that goes back to the year 1848...

In June of that year the Reverend Joseph Hindle married a couple, then resident in the Parish of Higham. Joseph Edward Savage Newell married Mary Ann Goodyer in an otherwise run of the mill marriage. A child of this marriage however, was to become a driving force in Argentinean football founding a club that years later would field players such as Maradona Gabriel Batistuta and Lionel Messi.

Joseph and Mary Anne Newell had three sons, Joseph (junior), William and Isaac. It is the youngest son who is the subject of this story. Isaac Newell was born in Taylor's Lane, Strood in 1853, and was baptised in St Nicholas. Unfortunately for the infant, his mother died shortly after in 1854. His father, left with three small sons, soon remarried. Joseph senior married Susanna Chapman in 1856, their marriage appears to have been childless. In 1861 the family were living at 5 Higham Place, Higham where Joseph continued in his trade as a Fishmonger. By the time of the 1871 census, Joseph and Susanna were living in West Malling and all of the boys had left home.

Isaac had left England sometime around 1869¹ and travelled to Argentina to find work. He started work on the British owned Central Argentine Railway² working as a telegrapher. During his employment he continued to study and graduated as a professor of English in 1878. He had married a German girl, Anna Jockinsen, in 1876 who had also graduated as a professor of English. They set up their own school, the

A Poem for the New Year

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.



To follow is a companion to Janet's last poem, 'Smells of Yesteryear', which featured in the last issue of The Clock Tower, November 2021.

Noises of Yesteryear

Early morning sounds included the Chink of the milk bottles, as they were put on the step,
followed by the Click of segs as the milkman stepped back to go to his float, empties in hand.

Together with the Clipperty Clopping of horses' hooves as they come down the road, the Call of the rag and bone man aloft the cart our ears doth greet.

The Chatter of house wives as they hang the washing out neatly on lines, whose pulleys Creak,
as well as the sound of coal Clumbering down the coal hole to later fill the scuttle and to be thrown on the fire,
Crackling in the grate.
Crackling of a different kind is heard as we tune in the radio to find *light, home or third*,
and only dissipates when the sound of Clicking records on the player kicks in.

The sound of the twin tub Churning joins in with a Cacophony of sounds as metal dustbins are emptied into the lorry,
and the Chumbling of a passing steam roller as it begins rolling the road.

The school bell Clangs, summoning the children to class,
and the Clonk of the knocker summons mother as she Clumps to the Creaking front door,
after Clattering about in the kitchen.
Father Clips the grass with the ancient shears, the sound of which next door's push-along mower can only surpass
as the noise of Clipping ceases.



The stone. The inscription reads: 'This stone was erected by the Burial Board on the spot where the Roman leaden coffin enclosing human and other remains was found on 17th May 1878. Thomas Austin, Chairman.'
Photograph by Andrew Callan, Cemeteries Manager, Medway Council.

Colegio Comercial Anglicano Argentino in the town of Rosario. The Newells introduced sport to the curriculum, and started a football club, which became a great success.

In 1903 Claudio Newell, son of Isaac and Anna, founded the club Newell's Old Boys in honour of his father who had recently died. The Club went on to be one of the most successful in Argentine football history, being league and cup winners many times.

Isaac Newell is revered by football fans in Argentina as the man who took football to the country and as the founder of sport in schools. Taylor's Lane is known as the spiritual home of Newell's Old Boys. Perhaps the fields of Higham fostered a love of the beautiful game in young Isaac Newell. We shall never know, but a small part of Kent is well known in a far off continent because of him.

Notes

1. Les Rosbifs – the Medway Man who created a top Argentine club.
<http://lesrosbifs.net>
2. Wikipedia – Isaac Newell.

When Edwin met John

Brian Joyce



Brian Joyce is the author of several books on the history of the Medway Towns, including *The Chatham Scandal and Dumb Show and Noise*. He is a past President of the Chatham Historical Society and was on the FOMA Committee. Brian was born in Chatham and continues to take a great interest in the history of the Towns, however, he now lives in Tyldesley in Greater Manchester. Since moving to the North West in 2014, he has contributed articles to many journals specialising in the history of his new local area.



John Bunny (pictured here and on the front cover) was a well-established American stage actor when, in 1910, he began making the first of his 150 silent comedy shorts for the Vitagraph Company¹. These films were extremely popular, and in pre-Chaplin days, Bunny was arguably the favourite comedian among filmgoers. He was certainly one of the first film performers to be billed by name.

Perhaps it was his Anglo-Irish origins² or a hankering to try something new that prompted Bunny to star in a film version of Charles Dickens' *Pickwick Papers* in 1912, the centenary of the author's birth. The rotund actor was determined to make *Pickwick Papers* as realistic as possible, and persuaded Vitagraph to gamble on making it in Britain rather than at the company's studios in Brooklyn, New York. One of the British locations used

for the film was, naturally enough, Rochester.

Thus, on a hot afternoon in June 1912, two 'perspiring individuals with a decided American accent' entered the shop of Edwin Harris at 89 Rochester High Street. Harris (pictured opposite), the well-known printer, antiques dealer and amateur antiquarian, related these adventures with the filmmakers in a newspaper article a few weeks after Bunny's death in 1915. One of the visitors to the shop that summer afternoon was Larry Trimble (pictured opposite), who, while only in his mid-twenties, was a leading director for Vitagraph. His companion was Arthur Ross, his camera operator, and the pair were looking for a set of duelling pistols to use as props for their film.

Alex Thomas (pictured) also discovered further details on the Heritage Gateway website:

Chatham Cemetery

Hob Uid:415973

Location : Medway
Non Civil Parish

Grid Ref : TQ7554066390



Summary : A 4th century Roman lead coffin burial encased in a wooden coffin was found in 1878 in a modern cemetery at Chatham. Two glass vessels were found inside the coffin and two vessels outside. A number of urns are said to have been found in the cemetery previously as well as a Bronze brooch and a coin of Trajan. The whereabouts of the finds are now unknown.

More information : TQ 7552 6640: Roman coffin and pottery found in 1878. A Roman lead coffin dated by Roach Smith to the 4th century and containing a skeleton of a middle aged man was found in 1878 at a depth of 7 feet during grave digging in the south west corner of the new cemetery at Chatham. Two glass vessels were inside and two yellow ware vessels outside. The coffin was previously enclosed in a wooden one, several hollow nails being found. Now in the Technical Institute, Chatham. Many urns are said to have been found in the cemetery previously and nearby, a Bronze fibula and a worn copper coin of Trajan.

TQ 7554 6639: A stone, indicates the find spot of this coffin. A number of graves have been dug in close proximity to this find in recent years (1948-9) but according to the cemetery superintendent no further Roman British burial finds have come to light.

The present whereabouts of the lead coffin, last reported in Chatham Technical Institute, is not known, all finds in this Institute having been dispersed some years ago.

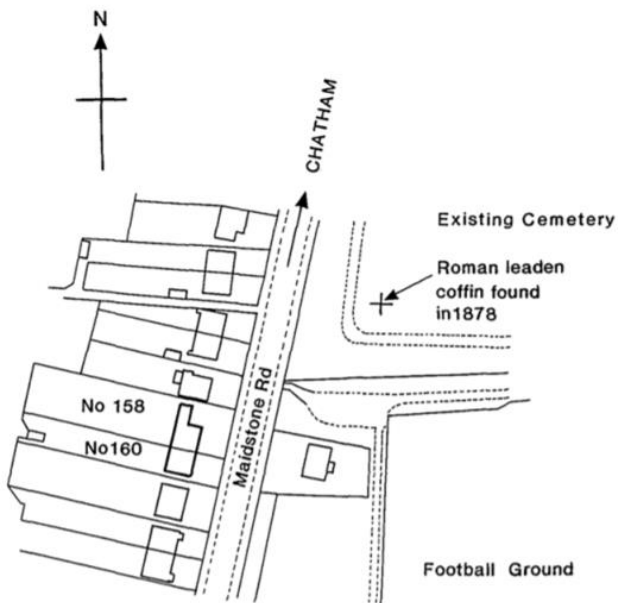
https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=415973&resourceID=19191

Just a few days after Jean Skilling's original email, Andrew Callan, Cemeteries Manager identified the location of the grave from the map. Aided also by a pencil note he had discovered in the *Register of Graves*, he drove to Chatham Cemetery and located and uncovered the memorial stone, as pictured overleaf.

The glass was unfortunately all broken into fragments. The coffin, which was six feet in length, was made in the usual way, from a sheet of lead cut at the corners and folded up to form the sides and ends. The lid was ornamented with a kind of billet moulding, composed of small raised blocks placed diagonally about a quarter of an inch apart, running along the lid, about two inches from the edges. One end of it was formed by means of this moulding into a compartment, in which was a triangle formed with the same billet design, there being in the centre an escallop shell. Two pairs of these shells appeared on one end of the coffin, the other end was destroyed. Doubtless the lid was decorated throughout its entire length, but the decayed state of the lead rendered it impossible to trace any further pattern. Of the lime which had been placed upon the body at the burial, one piece had become solid, and it bore the impression of the shoulder of the deceased. Information was obtained that many portions of urns have been found from time to time in this cemetery, probably the remains of other burials. The site of the present discovery is the S.W. corner of the graveyard, within a few yards of the road leading from Chatham to Maidstone. The coffin-lid and earthen vessels are now deposited in the offices of the Local Board of Health at Chatham.'

<https://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/Research/Pub/ArchCant/Vol.013%20-%201880/013-12.pdf>

Brian Joyce also discovered a map which identifies the position of the Roman coffin (scale 1:1250) in *Archaeologia Cantiana* Vol 108 (1990) pp 183-4. The map accompanied an article by D Bacchus entitled, 'Discovery of Roman Remains at Maidstone Road, Chatham'. The article discusses the discovery of Roman pottery and animal bones in the basements of numbers 158 and 160 Maidstone Road.



<https://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/arch-cant/vol/108/discovery-roman-remains-maidstone-road-chatham>



Laurence Trimble (1885 – 1954), the American silent film actor, writer, and director, pictured in 1914. Robert Grau (1914), *The Theatre of Science*, Broadway Publishing Company; Wikimedia Commons.



EDWIN HARRIS,
Ye Olde Curiositie Shoppe. Eastgate, Rochester.
Drewn by Frank Cusley for
"The Kentish Pictorial," June, 1914.

After informing Trimble and Ross that he did not stock such items (despite the image to the right), Harris got talking to the two Americans. Once the visitors discovered that Harris was the official guide to Rochester for the Dickens Fellowship, they asked him to escort them round the city, pointing out Pickwickian locations for them. They also hired props for the production from Harris' shop. In his later *Chatham News* article, Harris recalled,

'I also received an invitation to see the making of this film. In the afternoon, by arrangement, a covered carriage arrived ... and I got inside with the redoubtable John Bunny. He was in full makeup as "Pickwick", which, the weather being warm, he found somewhat uncomfortable.'

Although some contemporary journalists wrote of vast crowds following Bunny and the Vitagraph crew wherever they went, Harris quotes the actor as being dissatisfied with an apparent lack of attention.

'He struck me as a very shrewd businessman. He could not understand how it was that the newspapers and the inhabitants were so apathetic in not seizing hold of the fact that the Vitagraph Company were here enacting the *Pickwick Papers*. He said they should have boomed it for all it was worth.'

Harris went on to quote the frustrated Bunny directly:

'Here is the Vitagraph Company sending a company of highly trained American actors across the Atlantic, lodging them in the famous Bull Hotel and spending thousands of pounds on the production, which in a few short

weeks will be shown in picture palaces in all parts of the world, thus giving an impetus to Dickens lovers to visit the quaint old city of Rochester.’

An early scene, in which an aggressive cab driver wants to fight Pickwick, was filmed at Boley Hill. Harris watched this, and later wrote:

‘It was duly rehearsed and afterwards filmed. It was a quaint scene, residents in the neighbourhood looking over the walls and out of the windows and doors, the usual crowd of onlookers kept strictly behind the camera, the waiting carriage in the background with John Bunny therein, fanning himself with his hat and waiting for his turn.’



Rochester's Bull Hotel, a key exterior filming location.

Other locations included Star Hill, which deputised for the book's Goswell Street, and the Deanery Gate, where Messrs *Jingle* and *Trotter* were filmed. A scene featuring Messrs *Winkle* and *Snodgrass* was shot in the Castle Gardens. Thanks to permission from the Earl of Darnley, the area around Cobham was used for additional scenes. Unfortunately for us, interior scenes that supposedly took place at the Bull Hotel were shot at the Vitagraph Studios in Brooklyn. However, for the segment showing the arrival of Pickwick's stagecoach at the Bull, Larry Trimble used the real thing. Shots of its journey from London to Rochester were filmed at Cobham.

Having completed their work, John Bunny, Larry Trimble and their crew swept out of Rochester. The city settled back into its customary peace and quiet until 1923, when more Dickensian scenes were filmed at the Bull for the British film *This England*. On this occasion, the characters from the *Pickwick Papers* were joined by Bill Sykes, Mr Micawber, Uriah Heap and other well-known dramatis personae. Like Dickens' novel, Larry Trimble's film was released in serial form - in two, perhaps three parts.³ Audiences seem not to have warmed to John Bunny in this unfamiliar context, and he returned to making his more profitable short comedies. Anyway, one wonders how the true flavour of *Pickwick Papers* could have emerged in a silent film lacking the wordplay of Alfred Jingle and the Wellers.

The Roman Burial in Chatham

Amanda Thomas



On 11 August 2021, I received an email from FOMA Treasurer, Jean Skilling (pictured) with some exciting information:



‘For a long time I have volunteered at Medway Crematorium indexing burial registers and often get asked by the staff for help. I had one such call yesterday asking whether I knew anyone who could help with the location of the Roman remains discovered in Chatham Cemetery at the end of the nineteenth century!!!

Apparently there was once a stone marking the spot in the Cemetery but it has disappeared and they can find nothing in their records. I had never heard of

this ... I wondered whether you might have heard of it, if not do you think Brian Joyce might be able to help?’

I forwarded the message to Brian Joyce (pictured) and also to Alex Thomas, who FOMA members may recall has recently received his doctorate in Archaeology and Anthropology from Bristol University. If these two didn't know, then no one would!

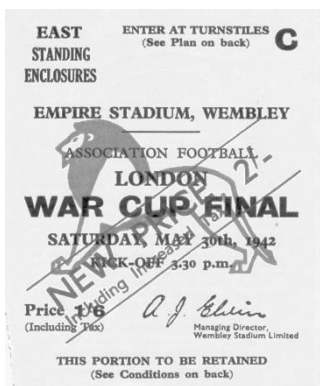


True to form, both came back with a plethora of information.

Brian Joyce identified a couple of articles, one of which had been written shortly after the discovery. Published by the Kent Archaeological Society, *Archaeologia Cantiana* is published online and in Volume 13, published in 1880, the discovery of the Roman burial had been described by George Payne (Junior) in an article entitled, ‘Roman Remains found at Chatham and at Barming’:

‘ROMAN LEADEN COFFIN FOUND AT CHATHAM.

On the 16th. May, 1878, the grave-digger employed at the New Cemetery, Chatham, came upon the remains of a leaden coffin, at a depth of seven feet, containing a human skeleton and a pale green glass vessel. Two other glass vases were found, outside the coffin, at the head; and two earthen vessels at the feet. The latter are both, of hard brownish coloured pottery, and measure in height five inches and five and three-quarter inches respectively.



Left: a ticket to the 1942 FA Cup Final.
 Right: Charles Bursey's Imperial Service Medal, presented to him by King George VI.

Daisy died in 1941, and Charles married Mary Carter née Hills in 1944. Charles died in 1970 after a long and fruitful life. He was a genial man, and a Labour-voting man who put his family first. My full biography of Charles Bursey has been deposited at the Medway Archives Centre.



Left: Charles Bursey pictured in 1961 on his 80th birthday.
 Right: Charles and Mary in 1969 in Shakespeare Road outside his daughter Rene's house.

All illustrations are from the archive of Peter Bursey.



A couple of images of John Bunny filming in Rochester as Pickwick in Pickwick Papers.



John Bunny died in 1915 of kidney disease three years after completing the *Pickwick Papers*, his career sadly already eclipsed by the Chaplin phenomenon. Larry Trimble returned to the Medway Towns in 1913 with the former *Vitagraph Girl*, Florence Turner. They set up their own company and made several films in the Medway area in partnership with Coley Goodman, the proprietor of cinemas in Gillingham and Strood. Edwin Harris sold his printing business to W and J Mackay in 1927 and lived as the uncrowned King of Rochester for another thirty years!

Unless otherwise specified, illustrations are from the author's collection.

Notes

1. The American Vitagraph Company was founded in Brooklyn, New York in 1897 by J Stuart Blackton and Albert E Smith; it was bought by Warner Brothers in 1925. James Stuart Blacktin (1875–1941) was born in Sheffield and emigrated with his family to the United States in 1885 where they changed their name to *Blackton*. Albert Edward Smith (1874/5-1958) was born in Faversham and also emigrated to the United States with his family when he was a child.
2. John Henry Bunny (1863-1915) was born in New York City, the son of George and Ellen Bunny. In the 1875 US State Census, Bunny Senior is listed as a Wholesale Paper Dealer in New York and both he and Ellen state they are Irish. This was not the case, as Bunny's *IMDb* biography reveals: 'Bunny was the ninth in a line of English sea captains and would be the first not to follow in that profession. He attended St. James High School in Brooklyn and worked

as a grocery clerk before running away in the late 1800s to discover the world of entertainment and appear in a small touring minstrel show. He became involved in theater and appeared in musical comedies such as *Old Dutch* with Hattie Williams and Lew Fields. He also worked as a stage manager for various stock companies. Bunny's rebellious nature took over again and he quit the theater to become involved in the flickers. This was a very bold step. Not only was it a major step down for a legitimate stage actor to go into the movies at that time, but Bunny took a pay cut from \$150 to \$40 a week to work for Vitagraph in 1910. He made more than 250 shorts for Vitagraph over five years and become the best-known face in the world.'

https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0120544/bio?ref_=nm_ov_bio_sm

Family tree information on *Ancestry* would suggest that John Bunny's grandfather, also John, was born in Cornwall.

3. The British Film Institute

(<https://www2.bfi.org.uk/films-tv-people/4ce2b6b30a518>) provides the following information for the 1913 production of *Pickwick Papers*:

Synopsis

Two of the stories from Dickens' *Pickwick Papers*:

Part 1: The Adventure of the Honourable Event - the story of Mr Winkle's duel.

Part 2: The Adventure at the Westgate Seminary.

Combined from the three part 1913 American Vitagraph serial *The Pickwick Papers*.

Cast and Credits

Samuel Pickwick - John Bunny

Mr Jingle - Arthur Ricketts

Snodgrass - Sidney Hunt

Mrs Budger - Minnie Raynor

Tupman - James Pryor

Winkle - Fred Hornby

Dr Slammer - Arthur White

Sam Weller - H. P. Owen

Fat Boy - George Temple

Captain Boldwig - Arthur Jackson

Director - Larry Trimble

Production Company - Vitagraph Company of America

Script - Eugene Mullin (pictured)*

Author of the Original Work - Charles Dickens



Above: Eugene Mullin (1894-1967), photographed in 1921, unknown author; Wikimedia Commons.

*Born in Brooklyn, New York, Eugene Mullin was a director and screenwriter during the silent era of films. He wrote scripts for some 66 productions between 1909 and 1925 and directed seven films between 1910 and 1921.



Left: Charles and Daisy, Rene and Eve in the back yard of 27 Pretoria Road Gillingham c1910.

Below: Charles' carver from Pretoria Road, photographed in 2011.



During World War One, Charles worked long shifts getting up at 5.00am to be down at the yard by 6.00am, six days a week. He went through one spell where he worked for three months without a day off due to the pressures of work. Because of these long hours he earned good money during these years. Ironically, if he had remained a writer, he would by then have been earning £3 to £4 a week, as they had become *established* civil servants, whereas he was still classed as a skilled labourer earning just 24 shillings a week as a crane driver. One night, the air-raid sirens went and, because Charles had been working long hours, Daisy didn't want to wake him up so took herself and the children down to the air-raid shelter in the garden. The next day, grandfather's work mates talked about the air raid and, of course, Charles knew nothing about it. He told Daisy off when he got back home! Their son Charles (1916-1984), born during the war years, increased the workload on Daisy, and they also had two soldiers billeted on them for periods of time. Another son, Jack (1921-2004) was born just after the war; he had a long and varied career in the Dockyard.

As a founding member of the Brasenose Working Men's Club in Nelson Road, each year Charles was given a ticket to the FA Cup Final which he attended from about 1924 onwards. Pictured overleaf is Charles' Imperial Service Medal which the king was 'graciously pleased to award' him on 4 June 1942 for loyal and continuous service in the Dockyard.



*Left: Charles and Daisy Sharp on their wedding day in June 1901.
Right: Daisy standing, her mother Susie Sharp née Salmon (1845-1913) with Rene (1901-1990) sitting on her lap.*



Daisy Bursey's button or boot lace hook which dates to circa 1900. Charles gave it to his grand-daughter, Joan Clark, after Daisy died of cancer in 1941.

Richard Dadd

Peter Cook



Peter Cook began his journalistic career with the Gravesend Reporter during the early 1960s. While working for the paper, he met his wife Lizzie, and the couple became Ten-Pound Poms emigrating to Australia. There he joined the Australian Broadcasting Commission at its outpost radio station in Townsville, Queensland. In 1970, following his return to the UK, Peter joined the staff of a brand-new BBC local radio station in Chatham, BBC Radio Medway. Peter later joined the BBC radio newsroom at Broadcasting House in London, helping provide national coverage for local radio stations. After more than a decade he and a BBC colleague formed Orchid Communications, generating audio communications services for large companies, but this was not to survive with the arrival of new technologies. Peter returned to his local reporting roots and joined the Kent Messenger Group, first at Gravesend and then at Medway. For about 15 years he recorded local history in the Medway Messenger's weekly 'Memories' feature. He describes the latter as 'the best job of my career.' Now retired he and Lizzie live in Ospringe, Faversham.



Born in Chatham, Richard Dadd (1817-1886) was a painter best known for fantasy scenes and the supernatural, including fairies. Prior to his mental breakdown and incarceration in the Bedlam and Broadmoor asylums, his work had been more conventional. However, following an 1842-3 tour of Europe and the Middle East, his behaviour became more erratic and unstable, culminating in the most terrible event.

It is thought Dadd began drawing at the age of 13; he attended the Royal Academy Schools from 1837 when he also began exhibiting.

Richard Dadd working on one of his fairy paintings; Bethlem Hospital in 1856

Well known for having a good temperament, he was seen as a rising star in the art world. Later, and as Peter Cook will explain in this series, Dadd spent some 42 years in Bethlem and Broadmoor where he continued to paint. Dadd's paintings and drawings have a dreamlike quality and are characterised by fine detail; his work also famously includes a series of sketches which illustrate the passions – joy, pain, love and hate.

Part One: Patricide

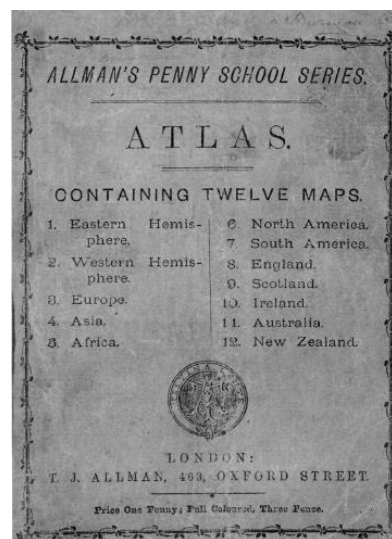
Beneath the clipped green sward, once graveyard of St Mary Magdalen Church, Gillingham (pictured), lie the bones of Robert Dadd, apothecary, gilder of metal ornaments, lecturer in science, and victim of patricide. Father to nine children, he was stabbed to death and slashed across the throat by his third son Richard, then 24, an up-and-coming painter. It happened in Cobham Park, on August 28 1843.

Right: St Mary Magdalen Church, Gillingham; Peter Cook.

In July 1842, Dadd accompanied his patron, Sir Thomas Phillips on a tour of Europe and the Middle East, including Italy, Greece, Syria, Palestine and Egypt. By May 1843, Richard began to exhibit signs of mental instability and he left Phillips in Paris and returned to England. His manner was erratic, he suffered paranoid delusions, and – in the hope of a cure – decided to restrict his diet to hard-boiled eggs. Deeply concerned, his father consulted a London physician, Dr Sutherland, who recommended 'quiet and care'. He also suggested placing Richard under the 'restraint' of an asylum. The father refused to have his son confined, but it was a decision that would cost him his life.



Above: Robert Dadd (left) and his son Richard, pictured in The Kentish Independent, September 9, 1843.



Left: the school atlas, circa 1890. Right: the National School at the top of James Street, Gillingham, pictured in the early 1980s.

In 1905 Chatham Dockyard was at the peak of its national importance and a major contributor to Britain's defences. That year saw the launch of the last battleship built at Chatham – HMS *Africa*. As a 15 year old, Charles worked as a boy writer in the Yard at Gun Wharf because he had good handwriting skills but, in 1901, with a wife and family to support, his father-in-law helped Charles get a job on the steam pinnacles on the River Medway. These small navy boats were usually assigned to a capital ship moored in the river and linked the ship to shore amongst other duties. In 1905, aged 24, Charles obtained a job as a crane driver in the dockyard and he remained doing this work for the next 40 years.

Very little is known about the cranes Charles drove. They certainly included the swan-necked cranes that are seen in many old photos of the dockyard. All the cranes were steam driven and Charles had to get to the Yard earlier than the other workers in order to steam up his crane. He walked to work throughout his whole life and, in the 1930s when my father Jack was an apprentice engine fitter, he used to go and have lunch with his father in his cab. This was in one of the swan necked cranes alongside No. 3 Basin. In the 1940s, there were 39 cranes in the yard and they were all different.

Their daughter Rene remembered that, in 1911, Charles and Daisy celebrated their tenth wedding anniversary by hiring a pony and trap for a family day out. They went to Maidstone via Bluebell Hill, not for any specific reason, but just to enjoy the journey. This form of transport would probably have been, if not a luxury, then something considered old-fashioned in 1911.

Notes from the Bursey Family Archive

Peter Bursey



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

Part Two: Charles Bursey (1881-1970): crane driver, HM Dockyard Chatham

Charles Bursey was a Gillingham man born and bred who grew up in late Victorian Britain in the streets of terraced houses that were being newly built at New Brompton. In 1881 his father William was serving on a sloop, HMS *Swift*, on the China Station and Charles never actually met him until he was three years old. His mother, Emma Bursey née Spooner (1849-1899) busied herself with her young family living on the quarterly allowance the navy gave her called the allotment. In 1874 William was earning 1s 9d a day as a stoker and this provided Emma with 30 shillings a month to live on. She also 'took in washing to earn extra money for the home'. She was 'in the Salvation Army'.

In the 1880s, Charles attended The National School at the top of James Street, pictured opposite in the early 1980s. Also pictured is his school atlas which dates to around 1890. The map of Africa has no interior details in it!

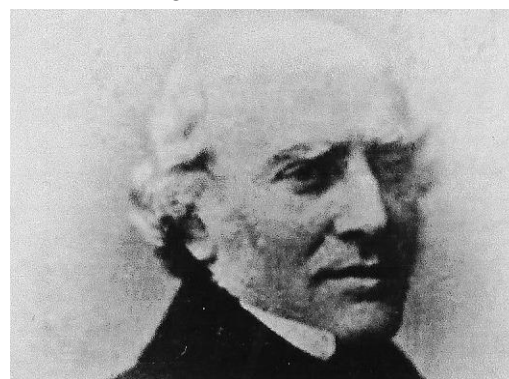
In 1901 Charles married Martha Daisy Sharp (known as Daisy) at the Wesleyan chapel in Canterbury Street. Her family lived in Church Path, now the west end of Saunders Street, where her father Joseph was a barber working from home. He had been in the Royal Marines. Charles and Daisy moved into rooms at Clifton Road but, in 1905, they moved to 27 Pretoria Road where they lived for the remainder of their lives. Charles rented this house all his life and could not afford to buy it in 1946 when he retired and it was offered to him for £400.

Instead, he opted for a quiet stay in familiar surroundings, namely the village of Cobham, with its access to the Darnley Estate, a favourite environment for rest and relaxation. Robert Dadd could not have known it, but he was now destined for a violent death. Richard had become convinced that demons were at work through his father, intent on inflicting evil. His sacred duty, as he saw it, was to destroy both him and them.

The pair travelled to Gravesend – presumably by paddle steamer – from where they took a chaise to The Ship Inn, Cobham. They asked for accommodation, but John Adams, the waiter, who knew Robert Dadd by sight, told them The Ship no longer offered that service. Instead, he would hire bedrooms in the village for him. By the time he returned, the two men had gone out, returning between seven and eight o'clock. Robert ordered tea for himself and beer, cheese and biscuits for his son, who later asked his father, 'Will you go for a walk?' Robert Dadd was reluctant, saying that he was tired and had walked enough, but Richard must have insisted because John Adams discovered that by 9.30 pm both had indeed gone out.

Early the following morning Charles Lester, a butcher of Eastgate, Rochester, and his uncle Abraham Lester, were walking through Cobham, en route to Wrotham market. Later, at the inquest into Robert Dadd's death, Lester said,

'A short distance before we came to the stile next the village of Cobham, I saw a man lying on his face in the grass in Cobham Park, about 30 yards from the road ... I said to my uncle, "There lies a man either dead or asleep." On examining the body, I found the deceased quite dead. I saw the shepherd coming across the Park and beckoned to him. I then turned the deceased over on his back and noticed blood on his face and left hand. There was also blood on the ground.'



A rare photograph of Robert Dadd, sourced from Ancestry with permission from the family tree owner.

Charles Lester called the village constable before continuing to Wrotham and it was only on viewing the body during the return journey, that he recognised him as Mr Dadd, the Chatham chemist. The shepherd, George Griggs, said that when the body was turned over, he saw the cut to the throat, and a great deal of blood where it had lain. A battered hat was found nearby and he also saw a knife with a narrow blade close to the body.

Constable W.V. Dawes, who was summoned to the scene, said the dead man's throat had been cut and he had been stabbed in the left breast. There was a great deal of blood on the man's clothing as well as on the ground:

'I searched about and found a clasp knife near the head. I think it was a new one and had never been used before. I found a razor, which appeared to be a new one, under the body.'

The bloody clothes rent by knife thrusts were brought before the jury, and according to newspaper reports, 'A thrill of horror pervaded the court.' A surgeon who carried out a post-mortem examination of the body, reported a number of stab wounds as well as cuts to the throat. But it was a knife wound in the chest that was the cause of death. The jury returned a verdict of 'wilful murder by a person or persons unknown'.



The scene of the murder in Cobham Park, pictured in The Kentish Independent, September 9, 1843.

Despite having lived and worked in Chatham, Robert Dadd was buried at Gillingham. The graveyard at St Mary Magdalen also held the bodies of his first wife, Mary Ann, and his parents Stephen and Sarah. Stephen Dadd had been timber master at Chatham Dockyard during the period when HMS *Victory* was under construction.

The spotlight now focussed on a search for Richard Dadd, and the family published a hand bill calling for information as to his whereabouts. It seems that after killing his father he headed for Rochester as he had met a policeman on the bridge and asked the best way of getting to Dover. A friend of the family, who knew Richard well, showed anger that the officer had not shown more vigilance, and arrested the young artist. 'Late at night,' wrote Henry Gardiner Adams, 'he is accosted by a young man of abrupt speech and manner, who is hurrying along, with not so much as a bundle to indicate that he had left home prepared for travelling, his dress disordered and blood stained, as a light examination would have shown. And yet this lynx-eyed officer of justice proceeds quietly with him to the Crown Inn, close to the station house, rings

the bell, and allows this poor maniac to go on his way, committing whatever mischief, to himself or others, the demon who had the rule over him might suggest.'

Eliza Coleman, a chamber maid at the Crown, recalled it was the last night of Strood Fair when Dadd arrived at the hotel. 'I remember a gentleman coming in to wash his hands,' she said. 'It was about 10 o'clock. I showed him into a room upstairs. ... He remained upstairs a few minutes only. I went immediately to empty the basin. The water was very dark but I could not tell if it was blood or dirt.' The man must have been Richard Dadd, because when this incident was brought up at his committal hearing he called out: 'I took one of your towels – I took it because it had blood on it.'

On leaving the hotel Dadd climbed into a post chaise pulled by two horses, and driven by Charles Overy,¹ postillion at the Crown. 'He told me to drive very fast as he was travelling to Dover,' Overy said. Dadd must have made good time in getting to Dover, where he hired a boat to take him to Calais. Clearly the trip was premeditated because he had already organised a passport.

August 30 saw him aboard a coach heading for Paris. There he switched to another coach bound for Lyon. Near the Forest of Fontainebleau, he began interfering with another passenger, constantly lowering his cravat and collar. The reason for this soon became clear, as taking another brand-new razor from his pocket, he inflicted four savage wounds on the man's neck. Despite his injuries, the man managed to overpower Dadd, who was arrested and brought before the justices in the town of Montereau.

He quietly confessed that he had recently arrived from England where he had murdered his father, adding that he was an envoy of God sent to exterminate those most possessed by the demon. Judged insane, Dadd was sent to an asylum at Clermont, north of Paris and it was almost a year before he could be repatriated to England.

Note

1. Charles Overy was born in Dartford, Kent in about 1804, the son of Thomas Overy and Mary Wickenden. In the 1841 Census he is listed as 'Post Boy', living in Bull Lane, but by 1851 had progressed to 'Coachman', reflecting his job at The Crown pub. In 1861 Overy is also listed as 'Coachman' and from the 1850s onwards he, his wife Mary (née Wright) and family lived in The Common near Rochester Bridge; he died in 1875.

For more information on Richard Dadd and his work as an artist, please visit the Art UK website:

<https://artuk.org/discover/artists/dadd-richard-18171886>