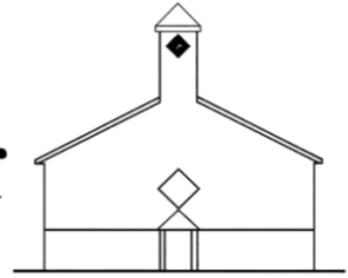


The Clock Tower



Issue Number 70: May 2023
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The Coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla



On 6 May 2023, Their Majesties King Charles and Queen Camilla were crowned at Westminster Abbey. On page 11, to commemorate this historic event, Dr Alexander Thomas' article, *The Importance of Oaths, Pledges and Customs* gives a fascinating insight into the history of the coronation. Photograph by Mark Tantrum, with thanks to Government House, New Zealand. The image is flanked by His Majesty the King's cypher, the Sovereign's monogram, consisting of the initials of the monarch's name and title (Rex), and a representation of the Crown; www.royal.uk

ALSO INSIDE!

The new Maritime Kent Special Interest Group – see page 5.

PLUS

Janet King reveals all about post-war free gifts! See page 19.

Islands of the Medway Estuary

On the afternoon of Tuesday 28 February, the 2023 Lecture Series kicked off at the Medway Archives Centre in Strood. The first speaker was Adam Taylor who spoke about the islands in the Medway Estuary. This first lecture was in collaboration with the Friends of Medway Archives (FOMA) and was clearly a popular topic with seats completely sold out. Details of the next lectures in the series can be found in *News and Events* on page 29. Photograph by Elaine Gardner.



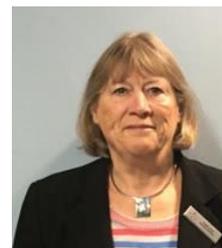
Spotted in North Wales!

During a visit to Wales at the end of March, *Clock Tower* Editor, Amanda Thomas noticed an intriguing sign. Whilst the name 'Winget' of the factory in Strood was spelt with only one 't', readers might know if there is a connection between the Llangollen estate agents and the Medway engineering firm!



Chairman's Letter

Elaine Gardner



Hello everyone!

It's the end of April and we are looking forward to a Coronation and three Bank Holiday Mondays in May - but by the time you read this it will nearly all be over with just what used to be called the Whit Monday Bank Holiday – now the Spring Bank Holiday – left. As I write, the jet stream seems to be lying to the south of us leaving us with chilly wet weather, while Spain basks in warmth. Let's hope the warm weather moves north for May!

We were able to hold our Annual General Meeting in April in our usual location attended by our core of regular members (see page 8). It would have been good to have seen more of you, though I appreciate why as I'm not very good at attending the AGMs of other societies I belong to! Those who attended unanimously approved our proposed membership fee increases. Our members understood that costs to produce *The Clock Tower* had increased, particularly in recent years, and that we couldn't run at a loss. We have kept the increase to a minimum, raising single membership to £12 (a rise from the £10 we set back in 2006), with family membership up to £14 and life membership to £120. These changes will take effect from January 2024, and we hope this small increase won't deter you from renewing your membership.

Sadly, three of our existing committee stood down at the AGM: Odette Buchanan, Peter Joyce, and Jean Skilling. However, we are delighted that Cindy O'Halloran has agreed to join the committee now that she has retired from MAC and she is a very welcome addition to the team. Odette joined the committee back in 2007 just before I did, both of us having been members since the inaugural meeting in April 2006. She was Secretary for many years, but now says she is feeling her age! Jean Skilling has also been a member since the start and served as our first Treasurer. She stepped back from the role in 2015 before returning to the committee to take up the role again when Josie Iles stood down in 2021. We really need to find a new Treasurer as it is one of the executive roles that charities are required to have. Please don't be alarmed by that, though, as Jean is happy to deal with the end of year accounts and the government gift aid claims. We just need someone to keep account of the day-to-day finance and online banking. Alas, one can't even change the name of the treasurer with the bank without making an online request! So please consider joining the committee to help or if you know a friend who could help who isn't yet a member - please encourage them to come and join us! Moreover, living in the Medway area is not a requirement – many of you may not even be aware that our Editor, Amanda Thomas, lives in Hertfordshire.

Our next talk is on Friday June 16 when FOMA member Brian Joyce will be giving a talk on Dickens in Chatham. We are meeting at St Luke's Hall on City Way, Rochester, where it meets St William's Way, while the flooring is replaced at St Nicholas' Church Hall in Strood (our usual venue). Details are on the FOMA website, Facebook page and the new Instagram site that Vanessa Sanderson has set up (see page 5). Hopefully we will see you at FOMA events as all the profit from these go to supporting the Medway Archive Centre (MAC).

Amanda Thomas has sent out by email details from Helen Worthy of the talks and exhibitions at MAC, though these are also to be found in News and Events on page 29 and the FOMA website. The current Sheerness dockyard exhibition (24 April to 30 June) has some wonderful and interesting photographs as well as historical information. Hopefully this copy of *The Clock Tower* will reach you before the next MAC talk on 23 May by Jacob Scott, the Cathedral heritage officer - and don't forget the ones in June and July (see page 30)!

To conclude, we were delighted to hear before Christmas that our committee member, Natasha Boardman-Steer gave birth to a beautiful baby girl. Natasha has been on maternity leave, but hopefully we will soon be seeing more of her. In the meantime, Natasha has sent us a gorgeous photograph, which you can see on the back cover.

I hope you have a wonderful summer!

New Members

A warm welcome to new FOMA members Mr Raymond Harris and Mr and Mrs Alan and June Garden.

THE FOMA COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU (Yes, you!)

Could you be the next FOMA Treasurer?

We very much need someone to take over from Jean Skilling. Applicants do not need any great experience, only basic skills – including a familiarity with online banking - and the FOMA committee will ensure that help and advice are given as required.

FOMA committee meetings are a lot of fun – and we always have tea and cake. There are six meetings a year and **not all members live in the Medway area**; meetings are sometimes held on Zoom. However, if you are able to help at FOMA events, that would also be appreciated!

Please contact Jean for more information at treasurer@foma-lsc.org

Cindy O'Halloran's Retirement

In the last *Clock Tower*, we reported on Cindy's retirement party held on 21 December 2022 at the Medway Archives Centre. Cindy has asked that the following be published to thank everyone for their kindness:

'I would like to say a big thank you to Amanda and Elaine for the lovely write up of my retirement, I am still blushing! Thank you to everyone who came to my send off, it was lovely to see so many old workmates, friends and colleagues. I received so many wonderful cards, gifts and best wishes from so many people. Thank you all for your generosity and kindness. I am still getting to grips with being a free agent, it was very strange initially but I think that I am getting to grips with it now! It was fantastic to see so many of you at the last talk by Adam Taylor in February. In the next few months I intend to undertake some volunteering at MAC and hopefully will catch up with you all very soon.'



In fact, we were delighted when, at the AGM on 14 April, Cindy agreed to return to the FOMA Committee (see page 34).

Membership Reminder

IF YOU HAVE NOT RENEWED THIS WILL BE YOUR LAST *CLOCK TOWER!*

Membership can be renewed in several ways:

If you have not already done so, please pay this as soon as possible.

You can pay on the FOMA website <http://foma-lsc.org/membership.html>

The standing order and membership forms are also available on the front page of the FOMA website
<http://foma-lsc.org/>

Payment may also be made using the BAC system:

SORT CODE 60-21-02, ACCOUNT No. 48040304 and please use YOUR NAME (in capitals) for REFERENCE; please email Jean Skilling to confirm you have paid in this way at membership@foma-lsc.org

If you wish to renew by post, cheques must be made payable to

Friends of the Medway Archives and sent to:

FOMA Membership Secretary, Jean Skilling, 15 Port Close, Lordswood, Chatham, ME5 8DU, Kent.
Queries can also be sent by email to Jean Skilling at: membership@foma-lsc.org

The new FOMA Instagram Account is Live!

@FriendsOfMedwayArchives
Vanessa Sanderson



The FOMA Committee is pleased to announce that we have set up an Instagram account to increase our reach across social media platforms! Over the coming months, we will be complementing our website and Facebook page by posting events, snippets from the *Clock Tower*, and celebrations of Medway history. We hope it will be another valuable way to promote our work and engage an even wider audience, so please share the news with anyone you know on Instagram!

If you have an Instagram account, just search for Friends of Medway Archives and follow us. If there is something related to FOMA, MAC or Medway history more generally that you are interested in sharing then please contact Vanessa Sanderson at vanessa.sand12@gmail.com

Obituary

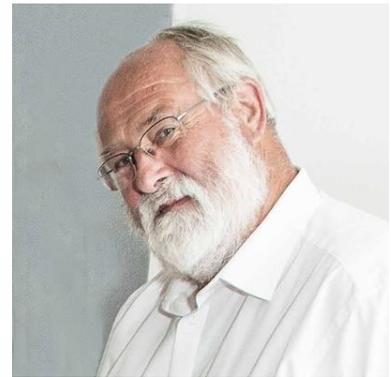
Chris Harlow

We were saddened to hear of the death of Chris Harlow, the wife of one of our long-standing members, Pat Harlow. We send Pat our sincere condolences.

Duncan W Harrington FSG, FSA, LHG, DIP. GENEALOGY

It is with tremendous sadness that we report the death of Duncan Harrington on 26 March. Duncan had been President of the Kent Family History Society (KFHS) since 2004 and helped found the society some 49 years ago; it is a great pity that he will not be able to take part in the 50th anniversary commemorations. Whilst he was not a member of FOMA, he took a great interest in our activities and was a friend and colleague to many of us. FOMA was originally conceived because of the work undertaken by KFHS members at the Medway Archives and many of us worked with Duncan in various capacities. He will be missed and we send our sincere condolences to Duncan's family.

With thanks to the Kent Family History Society



Duncan W Harrington

Secretary's Report

Chris de Coulon Berthoud



The Chris Broderick Collection

We have been processing an exciting new archive collection (pictured) at the Medway Archives Centre (MAC) which consists of the papers of the sorely missed Chris Broderick, best known as the frontman of The Singing Loins. His papers show that as well as a hugely talented and well-loved musician, he was also a hugely talented playwright, film-maker, poet, and author. Chris died at the beginning of the 2022 (see my report in *The Clock Tower*, Issue 66, May 2022). To coincide with the Rochester Sweeps Festival this year (from 29 April to 1 May), MAC hosted a really special event to celebrate Chris' life. The Singing Loins was a Sweeps staple over the years and Chris' family and friends selected items from his archive to display. There were screenings of Chris' short films with starring roles from a diverse range of talents from Rhys Ifans and Elizabeth Berrington, to Billy Childish, and Tony Pilcher, the hairdresser under the bridge on Railway Street, Chatham. There was also vintage footage of The Singing Loins playing live in The Prince of Wales pub in Strood, as well as examples of Chris' annotated scripts, photographs, books, and props from the video for *Please Take My Scissors Away*. We welcomed old friends and new fans of Chris' work for what was at times an emotional look at the breadth of work we now have in the Chris Broderick collection.



The archive collection at MAC containing the papers of the late Chris Broderick, and the contents of one of the boxes.

The Medway Music Project – can you help?

I am currently working on an exciting new project at the Medway Archives Centre tracking down and compiling a database of names and dates of the various artists who have performed in the Medway area in the post-war period. If you performed in bands, were a regular gig-goer, have diaries and ephemera relating to bands in Medway, or would just like to help scour through local newspapers looking for adverts for gigs, then I need your help! Please contact me at berthoud@blueyonder.co.uk if you would like to get involved.

The 2023 AGM Highlights a Successful Year for FOMA and MAC

Dr Alexander Thomas



The Friends of Medway Archives Annual General Meeting took place on the evening of 14 April 2023 at St Nicholas Church Lower Hall in Strood. The Meeting reflected the fact that both the Medway Archives Centre (MAC) and FOMA have had successful years, due to several exhibitions, well attended events and donations, and that FOMA is financially recovering following the Covid-19 pandemic. During the course of proceedings, it was noted that FOMA especially wished to thank Henk van der Linden for his generous donation in the past year. In addition, MAC thanked the family of the late folk singer and music legend Chris Broderick whose archive has been kindly donated to the Archives (see Chris de Coulon Berthoud's article on the previous page).

The Meeting acknowledged the departures of, and the substantial contributions made by, Elspeth Millar and Cindy O'Halloran, from the Medway Archives Centre. Although the vacancies left by Elspeth and Cindy will both be replaced, the Archives is short staffed at present. The Meeting congratulated the Archives for how they have managed this difficult period and for the level of service offered.

The Meeting unanimously agreed to raise FOMA membership fees. FOMA has had the same membership fees since its founding in 2006. It was explained how over the last few years this income has proven to be inadequate to cover the printing and postage costs of the quarterly journal, *The Clock Tower*. Although a two-tiered 'printed-or-electronic' fee structure had been considered, it was recognised by the Meeting that this would not necessarily reduce printing costs due to the size of the FOMA membership. It was also noted that a great number of members enjoy receiving a hard copy of the journal quarterly. The new fees will bring FOMA into alignment with the Kent Family History Society.

FOMA wished to thank Odette Buchanan, Peter Joyce, and Jean Skilling for their services to the Committee following their decision to step down. FOMA congratulated Cindy O'Halloran as she re-joined the FOMA Committee, as well as the other officers and committee members who were also re-elected unanimously. These include Christopher de Coulon Berthoud, Natasha Boardman-Steer, Len Feist, Rob Flood, Elaine Gardner, Vanessa Sanderson, Alexander Thomas, and Amanda Thomas.

A full copy of the minutes can be obtained from the FOMA Secretary, Christopher de Coulon Berthoud at berthoud@blueyonder.co.uk

Medway Archives Centre Report

Helen Worthy, Archives and Local Studies Assistant.



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

Staffing

The archivist post remains vacant, but will be advertised again shortly. We are endeavouring to run the service as normal although we are limiting archive appointments to Tuesdays and Fridays (visits to the Local Studies searchroom will continue as usual). Please direct any enquiries to Emma Ovenden (MAC Librarian) or Helen Worthy (Senior Archives Assistant).

Events and Exhibitions

Despite being short-staffed, we have nevertheless continued our busy schedule of great exhibitions and events:

- Our MAC Spring Lecture series is under way and is proving extremely popular. We were delighted to host FOMA's lecture *Islands of the Medway Estuary* by Adam Taylor, as well as our MAC lectures *Drunkness, Madness and Bigamy – the staff of Strood Workhouse* by Deborah Collins, and *An Eighteenth-Century Entrepreneur: Sarah Baker and her Kentish Theatres, 1737-1816* by Dr Jean Baker. Please see *News and Events* on page 30 for details of our remaining lectures.
- Our exhibition *Coming out of Covid* by Shea Coffey of Medway Pride Radio was accompanied by a wonderful and very lively live broadcast at MAC by Shea, with friends and a banjo-playing Scooby Doo! We hope some of you caught the broadcast on Wednesday 1 February!
- We continued our series of Saturday drop-in sessions, including *Focus on ... Short Brothers, The Town Hall, Chatham ... the Making of a Model* (with local model-maker Peter Allen – see the inside back cover), and *Focus on ... Pubs and Breweries*.
- Our Twydall exhibition was returned (by popular demand) to Twydall Library.
- Emma Ovenden has continued her programme of community arts events, with a Rainbows colouring craft drop-in during the schools' spring break, and our current *Jewel in the Crown* craft drop-in which forms part of Medway Council's celebrations of the Coronation of King Charles III.
- We also gave two 'behind the scenes' tours of MAC to the City of Rochester Society tour guides.

Other Projects

Emma continues to interview participants in MAC's *Oral History of Local Government in Medway* project, as far as we are aware the first Oral History project concerned with local government that has taken place in the UK. Cllrs Rodney and Diane Chambers were interviewed on the 17 April 2023, and more interviews are planned during the forthcoming months.

Future Events and Exhibitions

Our popular Spring Lecture Series 2023 continues. Tickets are £4 per lecture, and admission is by ticket only; tickets sell out quickly, so be sure to book to avoid disappointment. Details of these and all our other exhibitions and drop-in sessions are to be found in *News and Events* on page 29.

Volunteers

Our wonderful team of volunteers continues to support us. Current projects include listing archive and local studies collections, creating chronologies of the Hoo Peninsula and of Strood from 1900, and helping at our events. We have paused taking on any additional volunteers until we have an archivist in place.

Recent Material Donated to Medway Archives Centre

- Acc1570: deeds for 20 James Street, Gillingham
- Acc1571: documents relating to 'Claremont', 61 Balmoral Road, Gillingham
- Acc1572: photographs and game book relating to gamekeeper Ernest Preston of Cobham Hall
- Acc1574: document dated 1596 relating to money paid to soldiers at Upnor Castle

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

The Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III: The Importance of Oaths, Pledges and Customs

Dr Alexander Thomas



Dr Alexander Thomas is FOMA's Webmaster and is an independent early-career archaeological and historical researcher. Alex holds a PhD in Archaeology and Anthropology, specialising in early-medieval archaeology and history, from the University of Bristol. His research interests focus on the landscapes and texts of Viking Age governance, especially within England. Alex is currently working on his first book which aims to reappraise the archaeological and historical evidence for the Danelaw. It is due to be published in early-2025 by Amsterdam University Press. He also contributes to Rochester Cathedral's Textus Roffensis translation and transcription project led by Dr Christopher Monk.



The coronation of His Majesty King Charles III is significant not simply because it marks the beginning of a new chapter for the monarchy, it is important because of its tangible links back to the West Saxon legal culture of the Viking Age (c. AD793 – AD1066). The *formulae* of the oaths the King will make on May 6, 2023, are just as important today as they were over a thousand years ago, when King Æthelstan (r. AD924 / AD925 – AD927) was crowned first King of England in AD925. This is because the legal system which exists now is, to a certain extent, a continuation of early medieval legal culture. It has, arguably, merely been formalised through the introduction of Common Law and further developed over the intervening centuries. Therefore, oaths still afford, to a degree, a guarantee within our legal system. They provide a sincerity to keeping a promise, whilst alleviating the fear of fraud, highlighting the consequences if these pledges are broken. Oaths are still commonplace within society at large today, from Parliament and the swearing in of members of the Commons and Lords, to the law courts where oaths are sworn to aid the establishment of truth. They also still have a place in the marriage ceremony and within the education system –

especially when a student matriculates onto a degree.

The importance of local custom and the preservation of regional identity are intrinsically connected to the oaths the King will make at his coronation. Anglo-Saxon and even Danish kings were expected to pledge to uphold the local customs of their Kingdoms or regional areas (Baker 2014). Local custom, or customary law, were a collection of local laws that each English region or district upheld. A distinguishing feature of these laws is that they were not decreed or written into a King's law code, as they were assumed to be known and understood (Thomas 2021: 28). Customary law was arguably more important than the laws decreed by the King as they were not seemingly affected by the monarch's death. When a King died in the Early Medieval period the laws and the law codes died with him.¹ We are fortunate that the idea of the moratorium of law does not persist today, but its legacy is still felt. The King will pledge to uphold the customs of his Kingdom at his coronation, because centuries ago they were probably the only thing holding the realm together without a new law code in place.

Gavelkind is an historical example of customary law which was abolished in Kent between 1925 and 1926 due to reforms to property law (Wedd 2020). The last King who pledged to uphold this custom would have been George V (r. AD1910 – AD1936) at his and Queen Mary's coronation in June 1911. *Gavelkind*, also known as the *Kentish Custumal*, was a land-holding system where the sons of the peasantry could benefit from partible land inheritance within Kent (Mumby 2014; Wedd 2020: 1). It almost certainly has an Early Medieval origin with one of its earliest references – an Anglo-Saxon charter – dating to c. AD1059 – 1070. The charter grants land in Dene, possibly in Thanet, in *gavelkind* to Æthelred and Blæcmann, the sons of Brihtmær, from Æthelsige, the Abbot of St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury (Sawyer 1968).² Although Charles III will not pledge to uphold the custom of *gavelkind* at his coronation, he will make an oath to uphold similar extant customs.

What has been lost in the intervening centuries is the ritual and the symbolism associated with making oaths and pledges – an *oð* and a *wedd*. A great deal of importance was associated with the act of making an oath, or handing over a pledge, as part of a contract between two parties. On their own oaths and pledges, admittedly, were only part of an agreement, and were not necessarily legally binding (Ammon 2013). The giving or exchanging of objects were part of the rituals which were usually performed as part of the act of making an *oð* or a *wedd* to aid the validity of the agreement (Ammon 2013: 533). Surviving documentary evidence is generally mute on how these rituals were performed. Nevertheless, it has been argued that the use of object giving and exchange within oath giving rituals is because of Christian influence within the legal system (Ammon 2013: 518). This argument, however, is not universally accepted due to the largely empty symbolic nature of oaths and pledges during this period (Ammon 2013: 518), and this ritual may have had an earlier prehistoric origin. In this context, the coronation is perhaps one of the last oaths giving ritual ceremonies involving object giving, making the ceremony distinctly early medieval in origin. There are many objects which make up the regalia which feature within the King's procession and the investiture:

- The three swords representing mercy, temporal and spiritual justice.
- The Great Sword of State representing the Royal authority of the sovereign.
- The Spurs symbolising chivalry and knighthood.
- The gold bracelets of the Armill symbolising wisdom and sincerity.

In addition, there are two royal maces, St Edward's Staff, and the Sword of Offering, which complete the regalia (Torrance 2023: 49).

The King was given four objects during the investiture part of the ceremony. In addition to being crowned with St Edward's Crown, these objects are all deeply symbolic of kingship, its power and dignity, its role in justice and the monarch's relationship with the Church. These objects are the Coronation ring, which symbolises the king's dignity; the Sovereign's orb, which symbolises both the power of the sovereign and the Christian world; the Sceptre with Cross, which represents justice and the power of kingship, and the Sceptre with Dove which represents the sovereign's spiritual role (Torrance 2023: 49).³ It could be argued that the Sceptre with Cross is given, in a very early medieval way, to the sovereign in return for pledging to govern according to the laws and customs of their territories.

It was perhaps thanks to the willingness of Kings to pledge and to partake in object giving rituals, to preserve various local customs within the many regions and districts, and the ability for the law to be able to accommodate them, that led to the unification of England in the tenth century AD (see Pratt 2011: 334). What is astonishing is the wide range of regional identities merely within England, especially within a land area one-seventieth the size of the United States. This regional variation is arguably a remnant of England's prehistoric and post-Roman heritage. The tribes of prehistory – as recorded in the late Iron Age by contemporary authors such as Julius Caesar⁴ – and the Kingdoms of the Heptarchy – the seven Kingdoms which emerged,⁵ following the withdrawal of Roman troops in AD410, and were consolidated between the fifth and eighth centuries AD (see Arnold 1997) – are still a reason for this regional variation. A genetic study led by the University of Oxford in 2015 found that many communities have remained in-situ within their regions for centuries, and still mirror the various bounds of the seven kingdoms of the Heptarchy (Leslie *et al.* 2015).

There are no detailed records of the rituals performed at early medieval coronations. Instead, the Coronation Committee – led by the Earl Marshal, or the Duke of Norfolk, and under the guidance of the Crown and the authorities of Westminster Abbey – follows the template laid out by the fourteenth century illuminated manuscript, the *Liber Regalis*, or the *Royal Book*.⁶ The exact reasons behind the ordering of the King's procession within the Abbey and the order of service are unclear. What this does reflect, however, is the age of these ceremonies as well as the monarch's relationship between his people, the nobility, and the Church.

During the coronation ceremony, the oaths followed what is known as the Recognition, when the King is presented to his people and recognised as their Sovereign through cries of "God Save the King!" The oaths were read by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and each answered by the King in turn.⁷ It is the *formulae* used in these oaths which are incredibly interesting, as well as historic. Many historians and commentators must have listened intently at this point – as did the author!

The oaths were validated through the giving of each crown jewel in turn, before the King was crowned, and following his anointing via holy oil. When the ceremony was over, it was clear that the coronation service had once again demonstrated the tangible links back to the West Saxon legal culture and the importance of oaths, pledges and custom.

God Save the King!

Notes

1. See *The Clock Tower*, Issue 66, May 2022, ‘Her Majesty the Queens Platinum Jubilee’, p. 32; p 29 (online version).
2. See Sawyer number S1658. Available from: <https://esawyer.lib.cam.ac.uk/charter/1658.html>. Accessed 26 April 2023.
3. See the BBC’s guide to King Charles III’s coronation: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-65342840>. Accessed 27 April 2023. Also see the article, ‘The Coronation Regalia’, available from: <https://www.royal.uk/coronation-regalia>. Accessed 28 April 2023.
4. See Handford’s *Caesar: The Conquest of Gaul* (Penguin, 1951) pp. 97–114.
5. These Kingdoms were: Kent, Sussex, Wessex, East Anglia, Essex, Northumbria, and Mercia.
6. See the Westminster Abbey article, ‘A history of coronations’. Available from <https://www.westminster-abbey.org/about-the-abbey/history/coronations-at-the-abbey/a-history-of-coronations>. Accessed 28 April 2023.
7. See the BBC’s *Your full guide to King Charles III’s coronation* (available from: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-65342840>) and *The Queen’s Coronation Oath, 1953*, (available from: <https://www.royal.uk/coronation-oath-2-june-1953?page=8>). Both accessed 27th April 2023.

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Maritime Kent Special Interest Group

This article was compiled by Vanessa Sanderson with the approval of Stuart Bligh of the National Maritime Museum. Vanessa Sanderson is a Collection Cataloguer and Content Creator for medical history collections at museums and archives including the Old Operating Theatre Museum & Herb Garret and Guy's & St Thomas' Foundation. In addition to being a FOMA Committee Member, she is also an archive volunteer at MAC working on a long-term project to transcribe and digitise the wartime letters of the Harrisons, a family directly connected to Short Brothers at their Windermere location during the Second World War. In her free time Vanessa loves to share her passion for medical history by writing social media and blog posts for the Old Op and her personal accounts. Find Vanessa on Instagram @a_curious_archive

The significance of Kent's maritime heritage could hardly be disputed. The county's 202-mile-long coastline, its prominent position closest to continental Europe, and its vital trade links with London are just a few reasons why it has been strategically, economically, socially and culturally important for centuries. And yet, there has been less focus on its rich maritime history than has been so for other counties such as Devon or Cornwall, for instance. For these reasons, the Kent Archaeological Society has recently established the Maritime Kent Special Interest Group (MKSIG). Led by Stuart Bligh of the National Maritime Museum, the group has been set up as a focal point to support and disseminate research and information relating to Kent's maritime heritage. Archaeological exploration and research will be combined with investigation into all areas of interest relating to maritime history, including trade, industry, migration and defence, and the economic and social history of Kent's coastal towns and communities. This wide-ranging approach aims to bring more of the county's fascinating maritime history to the attention of a wider audience while supporting future studies on the subject.

The establishment of the MKSIG follows exciting recent developments in the study of maritime Kent through conferences and the publication of *Maritime Kent Through the Ages* in 2021. Edited by Stuart Bligh, Elizabeth Edwards and Sheila Sweetinburgh, the book is a rare published maritime history of Kent covering a variety of subjects from prehistory to the contemporary. Featuring contributions from archaeologists, archivists, geologists, literary experts, and historians, it embodies the multidisciplinary approach which is at the heart of the MKSIG.

The first meeting at Chatham Dockyard in January brought together a fantastic group of people and organisations, including Chatham Historic Dockyard, the National Maritime Museum, Canterbury Cathedral Archives, Kent Archives, Timescapes Kent, Historic England, Dover Museums, Christ Church Canterbury (Centre for Kent History and Heritage), University of Greenwich, University of Kent, Docklands History Group, Whitstable Museums, the University of the Creative Arts, and independent researchers and academics. Some key aims were agreed to promote Kent's fascinating and rich maritime heritage through publications and articles, supporting research, organising events, and by disseminating information through webpages, online videos and podcasts, exhibitions, and by promoting maritime history more generally at heritage open days. Students, researchers and anyone with an interest in the subject will also be pleased to learn that the Group is currently working with libraries and archives to list and make available relevant maritime collections. A full-day conference is planned for the spring of 2024 and will take place at Chatham Dockyard. The conference will explore the subject of shipbuilding and invites examination of all aspects from the technical to economic and social impacts on Kent's maritime communities.

The MKSIG has been set up with a small steering group to ensure its progress and manage the dissemination of information. The members are Emma Ovenden, Martin Crowther, Keiron Hoyle, Vanessa Sanderson, and Stuart Bligh. Emma is the Librarian at Medway Archives Centre. She completed her library qualification in 1998 and has worked in Medway's public libraries for many years, starting as an Information Librarian in Reference Libraries, before moving into Library Development work (see also *The Clock Tower*, Issue 69, February 2023). Emma's role at MAC sees her taking responsibility for the Local Studies stock, with a particular focus on outreach and collections management. She is currently overseeing a project to list MAC's rich collection of naval studies. Martin is a freelance heritage learning consultant and educator, and the Engagement Officer for Dover's Maison Dieu, a former medieval pilgrims' hospital and almshouse which is undergoing a multimillion-pound restoration to be completed in 2024. Martin has worked in the heritage sector for over 30 years and is passionate about working with local communities to breathe new life into historic buildings and

collections. He also specialises in developing creative heritage learning opportunities for adults and children with special educational needs and disabilities. Kieron has worked as a history teacher in Kent and currently works as a senior lecturer in education at Canterbury Christ Church University. She has lived in both Kent and on the Somme in France and is currently a PhD candidate researching the Maison Dieu under the Tudors and its relations with the town and port of Dover and the Crown as well as developing links to the history of English Calais. Vanessa is a Collection Cataloguer and Content Creator for medical history collections at Guy's and St Thomas' Foundation and the Old Operating Theatre Museum and Herb Garret. Her recently completed MA dissertation took an interdisciplinary approach to medical and maritime histories in which she examined the medical provision available to early modern shipyard workers at Blackwall under the East India Company. She has a particular interest in furthering studies in the under-researched area of the social history of medicine within maritime communities. Vanessa is also a FOMA Committee Member and has recently set up a new FOMA Instagram account (see page 15). Stuart, the Group Lead, is a curator emeritus at the National Maritime Museum and was formerly county archivist for Kent. He was co-editor of *Maritime Kent Through the Ages*, published by Boydell in 2021, and has spent many years researching and working with records relating to Kent's maritime history.

There are dedicated pages on the KAS website (see below) where you can find more details about the MKSIG, including a blog, information on events, and resources for the study of maritime history. You can also visit these pages to find out how you can become involved with the Group and its projects.

References and further information

Stuart Bligh, Elizabeth Edwards and Sheila Sweetinburgh, eds., *Maritime Kent Through the Ages: Gateway to the Sea* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2021)

For more information on the **Maritime Kent Special Interest Group**, including details on how you can be involved, please visit the following KAS webpage:

<https://kentarchaeology.org.uk/about-us/committees/maritime-kent-special-interest-group/26>

You can also contact the Group Lead, Stuart Bligh, for more information at stuart.bligh@hotmail.co.uk

No 223520 MTASC, 491 Coy, XI Corps HA,
B.E.F. France – William Barrett
Elaine Gardner



Elaine is FOMA Chairman and has been a member since FOMA's launch in 2006; she has been on the committee since the end of 2007. Before retiring, she taught maths in the Medway area for nearly 40 years. However, she has always been interested in local history, volunteering at Restoration House since it opened in 2000 and a Rochester guide for nearly 20 years. She has been involved with many projects at MAC following the Heritage Lottery Fund Archive of Great Expectations project in 2010.

For the best part of the year I have been a volunteer at the Medway Archives Centre (MAC) listing the contents of various collections online. The last collection I worked on before Easter was that of William Brice (ref. DE1247/872/05) who purchased the Mockbeggar farmlands in Cliffe and Higham in about 1930. Previous to that he had owned the Ham River Grit and Aggregate company on the Thames in Surrey.

While sorting a very muddled box full of loose papers, I came across a sheet of lined paper, roughly A5 size, which was the first page of a letter, written in pencil and headed, 'Sir'. It was dated December 12, 1916, and the sender's address was as in the title but without any name. It was clearly from someone in the forces in World War One, but who? And to whom was it sent?

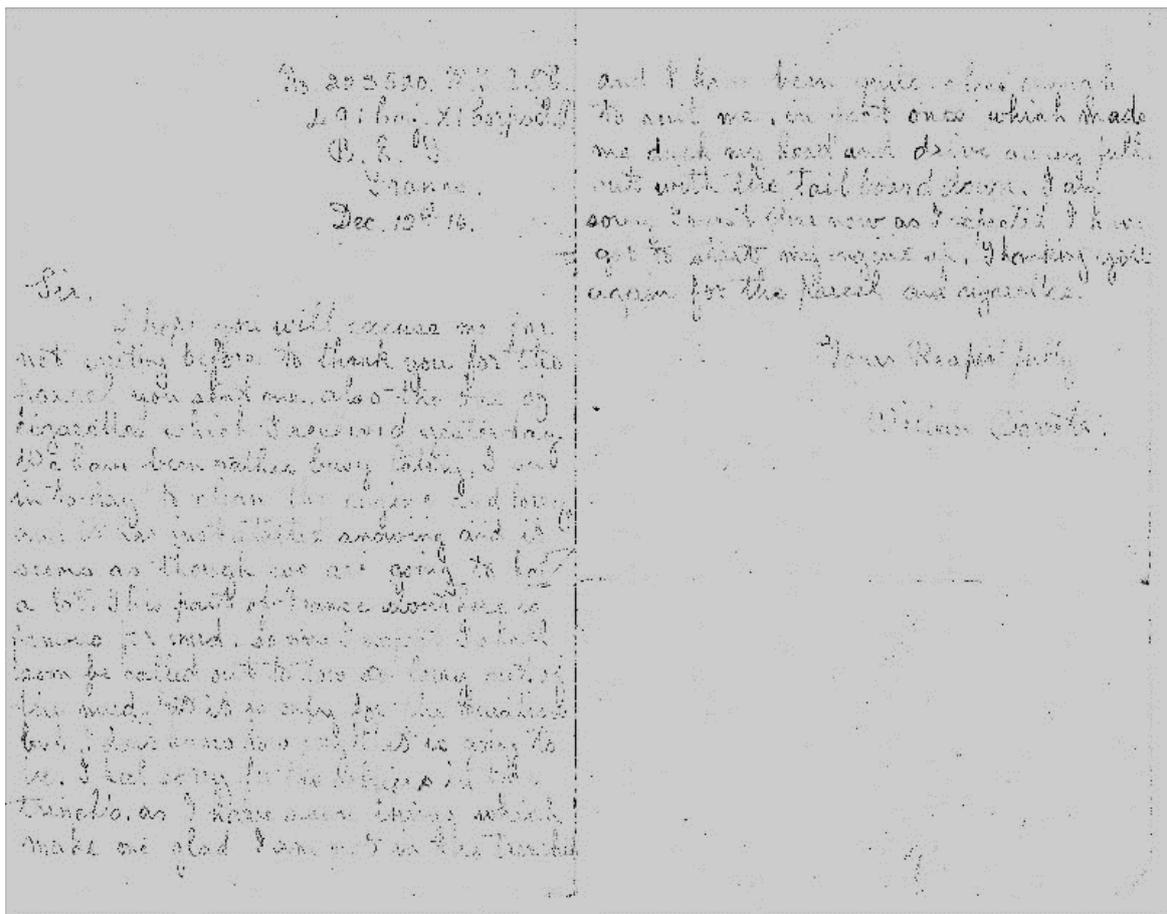
Brenda Paternoster, who is both a FOMA and Kent Family History Society member, regularly helps people with family research. She was at MAC at the same time and kindly put the details into an army search field for me. It came up with the signing-on papers of a man called William Barrett, a private chauffeur living at Ringshill Lodge in Wouldham. We presumed that he had to have written the letter to William Brice as the letter was found in the Brice family archive. Moreover, the second sheet of the letter, which confirmed William Barrett's name, came to light further down the box. The letter reads as follows:

Sir,

I hope you will excuse me not writing before to thank you for the parcel you sent me, also the box of cigarettes which I received yesterday. We have been rather busy lately, I am in today to clean the engine and the lorry and it has just started snowing and it seems as though we are going to have a lot. This part of France about here is famous for mud, so now I expect I shall soon be called out to tow a lorry out of the mud, but it is only for the duration but I don't know how long that is going to be. I feel sorry for the soldiers in the trenches as I have seen things that make me glad I am not in the trenches and I have been quite close enough to suit me, in fact once which made me duck my head and drive away full out with the tailboard down. I am sorry I must close now as I expected I have got to start my engine up. Thanking you again for the parcel and cigarettes.

Yours respectfully William Barrett.

William Henry Barrett was called up when conscription began and signed his Short Service Attestation papers on 9 February 1916 in Maidstone, aged 21 years 44 days. The papers stated that he was required to do one full day with the Colours and the remainder in the Army Reserve until such time as the Army required his service. This occurred in September 1916 when he was assigned to the Army Transport Service as a private, presumably because he could drive, and sent to France. He was awarded the British War medal and the Victory medal, as were most serving personnel.



*The letter from William Barrett.
William Brice Collection DE1247/872/05; Medway Archives Centre.*

So just who was William Barrett, did he survive the war, and how did he know William Brice? Fortunately, since one of Brenda's friends is currently living at Ringshill Lodge, she set out to find what she could for me on William Barrett's life using various census records, the 1939 government survey, and various parish records. William Barrett's early life was quite difficult to pinpoint until a marriage certificate in 1928 revealed his father was a gardener; the document also gave the name of a sister (Elsie Amy Barrett) who was a witness. To follow is what we have pieced together.

William Henry Barrett was born in Bromley on 28 December 1894, and the 1901 Census showed him, age 6, the fifth of six children. By 1911, still living in Bromley, and now age 16, he was a domestic gardener as was his father, John Francis Barrett. We know that by February 1916 William was a private chauffeur living at Ringshill Lodge. The 1911 Census shows the owner of Ringshill Lodge was a Colonel Edward Haynes and his family - but was he still there in 1916?

The 1921 Census proved particularly helpful as it showed William Barrett as a private chauffeur residing at 'Fernleigh', Margate Road, Birchington. This was the home of William Brice and his family. There were ten names listed on the census form: William Brice, Laura his wife, four children named Millie, Joe, Christabel and Robert, all aged between 22 and 11, then William Barrett, chauffeur, and three female servants, one of whom, Louisa Day (aged 22) was a parlourmaid from Burham.

The Brice archive material showed he had purchased Fernleigh around 1919/20. The other addresses I came across were mostly business addresses in Westminster, although I did find one reference to an address in Crow Lane, Rochester which seemed to be a relative. I also noticed that Brice's youngest three children were born in Rochester between 1900 and 1910.

The next document was the marriage certificate (dated 18 February, 1928) between William Barrett, aged 33, and Louisa Day, aged 29, at Burham, St Mary. This, of course, is the same Louisa who was working as a parlourmaid at Fernleigh. The document gave the bride's address as the family home, 4 Margetts Cottages, Chalk Pit, Burham, where she had been living at the time of the 1911 Census. William's address was New Cottages, Cliffe Rd, Near Stonehorse.

By 1939 in the pre-war Register, the pair are listed as living at Dairy Cottage, Cliffe, William Barrett still as a private chauffeur, and Louisa doing 'unpaid domestic duties'; William was also recorded as an Air Raid Warden. I have found no evidence of children, and the deaths of both William and Louisa are registered in the September quarter 1979.

But just what happened to William Barrett between 1911 and 1916? When did he move from gardening to being a chauffeur? When and where did he meet William Brice and become his chauffeur? Was the 'Dear Sir' in the letter addressed to William Brice or perhaps a relative of William Brice, which is how it came to be found in the Brice archive? And why was the letter so important that it had been kept all these years?

I expect the answers are out there somewhere, just not discovered yet.

Free – for all!

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.

Free gifts were all the rage back in the day. The first free gift I can remember Mum having was a plastic daffodil, which came from OMO, a washing powder. The daffodil was made of very cheap yellow plastic, and not very realistic. It was definitely not like the artificial flowers you get today. This came before the two cheerfully checked tablecloths that Mum and Gran had pooled coupons for from one of the other soap powders. My favourite gift was a brush with a mirror on it, which housed a comb. This lived up at Gran's where I could preen to my heart's content; I think this too came with one of the soap powders.

A myriad of tea cloths also came our way, a PG Tips one with a chimp on, one adorned with various cheeses, and one showing cuts of meat. Free calendars were acquired from the small local shops that Mum supported, particularly Miss Petts the newsagent, and Fred the butcher. Another thing we were never short of were free diaries, though we never quite knew what to do with them all.

Green Shield and S.H. Pink Stamps enabled us to have a lot of *free* gifts to set up home with. I remember coming back along the New Road carrying an ironing board from the Green Shield Stamp redemption centre. Free drinking glasses galore came from garages and as my husband, Frank's Dad was a driving instructor, and used up a lot of petrol, he was entitled, with a good dose of blarney, to dozens of glasses for our bottom drawer. We also collected rather a lot of cutlery by the same means.

Embassy cigarettes also had coupons in each packet which you could save up much like the Green Shield Stamps. Sometimes coupons were found just lying in the street, so these really were free gifts! Brooke Bond Dividend tea packets had a small, perforated stamp on each packet and these were stuck onto a card and redeemed when full. DIY magazines often gave away small tools such as drill bits and glass cutters and one particular one, *Hobbies Weekly*, gave away plans to build anything from a coffee table to a small yacht.

When we were young there were toys in Kellogg's cornflakes packets and there was a lot of excitement when a new box turned up in the shopping. We couldn't wait to turn the cornflakes out to find the toy, without having to wade through the flakes first. The toy I remember most was a submarine that actually dived, with the help of some baking powder. Good bath time fun! There was a diver who worked on the same principle: I think they were both green. We (my brother and I) had a Fyffes banana flute each, yellow and banana shaped. To receive this *free* gift Mum had to save up the Fyffes stickers found on each bunch of bananas. With hindsight, I think this may have been a ruse on the part of either Mum or the advertisers to encourage us to eat more bananas. Another thing we saved up for were Golly brooches or pottery models, which were also *free*. You just had to eat an awful lot of Robertson's jam and marmalade and collect a certain number of paper gollies which were stuck on a card with blank golly shapes. If you bought Weetabix you could collect 3D vista screen cards which fitted inside a viewer (for which you also had to collect tokens). I remember we had some of cats and a Sunbeam Alpine, my brother's favourite. Tokens were valid for all Weetabix free gifts and they were originally square then changed to a Weetabix shape.

Comics often came with free gifts as well. Our favourite was the snapper. This was a folded piece of paper and card in a sort of triangular open envelope shape. When you pulled it down smartly it flew open and made a snapping sound. They didn't seem to last very long so we looked out for the next comic with one in.

One good idea, that came from school, was to write off to a company to ask about their products. I remember receiving a large poster from one of the tea companies, showing how tea was produced, from picking the leaves to packeting; I think it even included some samples. Frank sent off to one company and received a booklet showing all the stages of corn milling, with samples of wheat, bran, flour etc., it even included a magnifying glass.

Card collecting was very popular. Wills and Churchman's cigarettes included a free card (as pictured below) with each packet. My brother had complete sets of Wills badges and roses which we think may have been collected by our grandad during the 30s or 40s, particularly the badges. Cards were also free with bubble gum. Bazooka Joe included biggish cards wrapped up with flat pieces of gum, though I recall the bubble gum itself wasn't much good. PG Tips tea had educational cards to collect, and they also produced (for 6d) an album to stick the cards in. You were entitled to a free card from Tonibell, the ice cream people, as well as a free boat when you bought a sundae, and at least one of the comics gave away cards too. We've got one odd one from a comic called *Knockout*.

The coffee we bought came in jars and at one time these were specially designed to be general storage jars, so when you had finished the coffee you could still use the jar. A similar promotion offered very nice tumblers.

Although I still have some of the cards and albums, the free gift I really wish I had kept was the plastic banana flute. People stare at me in disbelief that such an item existed when I tell them about it, let alone *for free*. I suppose a yellow banana shaped flute does take some believing, and we had one each! I've yet to see one on the *Antiques Roadshow*.



Some of Janet's cards showing the front and reverse sides.

The Anglo-American Bookshop

Chris de Coulon Berthoud



Chris de Coulon Berthoud is currently writing a PhD in Social Anthropology at the University of Kent. His work focusses on our shared human relationships with the past; previously writing about traumatic memory in descendants of Belgian Holocaust survivors, and the practice of Second World War re-enactment in the UK. His current work examines the role of the amateur in shaping and producing local history and heritage narratives in the Medway Towns. He is Secretary of FOMA and works part-time at the Medway Archives Centre.

In this issue, Chris continues the story of how in the 1940s, Cecil Reede, the Chatham hairdresser with film-star good looks, became embroiled in an obscenity case with unlikely links to the BBC's *Hancock's Half Hour*, and the execution of Lord Haw Haw.

Part Two: Bench and Books

In June 1942, Cecil Reede and co-defendant, James Hill, were summoned before the Chatham Bench 'to show why the alleged obscene books found on their premises should not be destroyed.' Superintendent H. R. Webb asked for an adjournment until June 29 so that the large number of books seized could be 'read and studied'.

Of the 52 books seized from the premises of Cecil Reede's Chatham Anglo-American Bookshop (situated at 316 Chatham High Street), 26 were eventually forwarded for prosecution, these later being whittled down to 17 titles. Under the headline 'BENCH AND BOOKS – Police Allege Obscenity in Sold Literature' in the *Chatham Standard* of July 3, 1942, the books listed were: *Hell's Belles*, *Kiss The Blood Off My Hands*, *And Worms Have Eaten Them*, *No Mortgage On A Coffin*, *No Orchids For Miss Blandish*, *Miss Callaghan Comes To Grief*, *Vinegar And Brown Paper*, *Silken Sin*, *Georgette*, *For Men Only*, *Balzac's Droll Stories*, *She Done Him Wrong*, *Love Ethics*, *The Second Oldest Profession*, *God's Little Acre*, and *Mr. Drayton Darling*.

Three titles formed a second allegation of selling obscene books: *Hell's Belles* (subtitled *Another story of the street of a thousand women* by Rex Holt and published by Tang Books in 1942), *Miss Callaghan Comes to Grief* by James Hadley Chase, and *Road Floozie* by Darcy Glinto. The latter two were the titles judged obscene at the Old Bailey a month earlier. Unfortunately, some of these titles do not seem to have been served well by history, perhaps because of their small print runs and fly-by-night publishers they remain obscure; I can find little more about Rex Holt and his book.

It is at this point that the prosecution first ran into trouble. The counsel for the defence, Mr. G. O. Slade, would not contest the point that *Road Floozie* and *Miss Callaghan Comes to Grief* had been found to be obscene, but pointed out that they were not among the books that had been seized. These books were thus withdrawn from the list of those that were to be prosecuted. Cecil Reede was obviously not taking any chances when he secured the services of the noted defence barrister Mr Gerald Osborne Slade, KC who appeared in many of the most important civil and criminal cases of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. In a career that eventually led him to become a High Court Judge, Slade is perhaps best known for defending both William Joyce (Lord Haw Haw) and John Amery in their treason trials in 1945. Neither of these defences was successful, and both men were found guilty and hanged for their

treacherous efforts to aid the Nazi war effort. In this case, however, Slade seemed to provide a ruthlessly effective defence against what seems to have been a sloppily presented prosecution.

The prosecution made no bones that this was a moral crusade, making plain their distaste for the material as did Mervyn Griffith-Jones, counsel for the Crown in the *Lady Chatterley* case some two decades later, when he asked if D H Lawrence's was a book 'you would even wish your wife or servants to read?' Mr. K. G. Weale, Kent's county prosecuting solicitor suggested that books 'of a doubtful character' were being sold, with covers that 'were such as to induce poor-minded people to purchase them.' Clearly not a fan of Chatham's East End, Mr. Weale asked the magistrates to 'consider the neighbourhood in which the books were sold and the type of people in Chatham who would purchase them.' He continued; 'You have young soldiers, young sailors, young airmen and women serving in all the Forces, many of whom are liable to be influenced by books of this nature.' He went on to say that Inspector Charles Heathfield 'had seen many young people, boys and girls of 16 to 18 entering these premises and purchasing these books, apart from other people in the Services.'

Cecil Reede countered that he went to great pains to avoid 'having obscene books of any description in my shop. Should any book have been published and it is brought to my notice that it is deemed to be obscene I have given instructions for it to be destroyed.' Inspector Heathfield admitted at this point that Reede had given the police 'every assistance when they were searching the premises.'

Inspector Heathfield gave evidence that 'it was a common sight to see young sailors and soldiers looking in the windows, passing comments on the titles and covers' and that he had spent many hours watching 'young people, male and female, civilians and members of the Forces' buying books in the shop. He also suggested that he had knowledge that they were 'passed from hand to hand in Service establishments' noting that what people looked for in these books was 'filth and fornication'.

Under cross examination from Mr Slade, Inspector Heathfield was forced to admit that there was also 'a good deal in the Bible about fornication' and that there were passages in the Bible that were 'not fit for any people to read'. However, Heathfield countered; 'I think it's put nicer in the Bible than in these other books'. Slade went on to point out that another of the books *The Second Oldest Profession* was in fact written by a Chicago psychologist and published by a reputable firm (Vanguard Press in 1931). It had also garnered positive reviews from *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Spectator* and *The British Medical Journal*. The book, written by Dr. Ben L. Reitman and subtitled *A Study of the Prostitute's 'Business Manager'* looked at the role of pimps in the world of prostitution. Reitman was an American anarchist, lover of the anarchist and feminist, Emma Goldman, and as a doctor to the poor he became known as *the hobo doctor*. But Inspector Heathfield was unmoved, suggesting that the cover was such that it might give people 'emotional ideas'".

Reede and Hill were eventually prosecuted for two titles; Erskine Caldwell's *God's Little Acre* (Viking Press, 1933), a title which seems quaintly unassuming by today's standards, had already been the subject to an obscenity case in the United States in April 1933, when the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice (NYSSV) prosecuted Caldwell and Viking Press for obscenity. The NYSSV lost the case and the book became a worldwide bestseller. In 1958 the book was made into a Hollywood film with a screenplay written by blacklisted screenwriter Ben Maddow and with music by Elmer Bernstein. The second prosecuted title, *Vinegar and Brown Paper*, (Hurst and Blackett, 1939) was a comic novel by John Paddy Carstairs, perhaps better known as the director of a number of Norman Wisdom films. It seems hard to believe that much corruption could have been the result of such a title.

That of course is not merely this author's opinion, because on October 14, 1942, a small article appeared on page 3 of the *Chatham Standard* under the headline; 'BENCH DECISION UPSET – Appeal Succeeds in Chatham Book Case'. The West Kent Appeals Committee reversed the decision of the Chatham Bench. It is notable again that Cecil Reede had secured the finest legal representation, for on this occasion the renowned Mr Slade was accompanied by Mr Colin Duncan, whose eminent career as a barrister and Master of the Bench of the Inner Temple, saw him write the text book on defamation law. Perhaps in a petulant response to the loss of the appeal, a request by the defence for 50 guineas costs was not allowed.

In 1960, the writers Ray Galton and Alan Simpson parodied the breathless prose, and scandalous reputation of these wartime pulp novels in the Hancock's Half Hour episode *The Missing Page*. Clearly aficionados of these books from their youth, Galton and Simpson conflated the names of Darcy Glinto

and another popular pulp author Ben Sarto to produce the fictional author Darcy Sarto and a volume called *Lady Don't Fall Backwards*. In the episode, Tony Hancock is driven mad by the missing final page of a racy thriller he has taken from the library, eventually discovering there was no final page as the author had died before completing it. The title (*Lady Don't Fall Backwards*) was later immortalised in song by the group Echo and the Bunnymen on a 1990 b-side, and in 2005 the musician Pete Doherty wrote a song of the same name for the BBC documentary entitled *The Unknown Hancock*. His reputation finally cleared, Cecil Reede remained in business at 360 High Street for another thirty years. His newsagent's shop is listed in *Kelly's Directory* as late as 1974 when it was demolished as part of the area's redevelopment.

The images below are courtesy of Richard Bourne. Richard took the top image himself in 1974 shortly before the demolition of the shops. Reede's is the shop next to Marcus' Stores. The image of the street corner is a screengrab from the BBC's Hancock's Half Hour.



With thanks to Betty Cole and Richard Bourne for their reminiscences.

Old Friends: The Story of a Gold Locket

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.

In the mid-1940s my maternal grandmother, Marie Anderson née Priddin (1889-1958), then living in Rochester, was given a gold locket that had once belonged to her lifelong friend Ethel Wilson née Long (1885-1943). It was given to Marie by Ethel's husband Albert E Wilson (1883-1948) after his wife's death in 1943. The Wilsons lived in Skinner Street, Gillingham (at no.125 in the 1921 census and in the 1939 Register) and Albert describes himself as a skilled engineering labourer at Chatham Dockyard. The locket contains photos of their daughter Hilda and Ethel's husband Albert. Hilda, born in 1906, was their only child who sadly died in 1917 when she was just 10 years old. The locket was inherited by my mother, Irene Bursey nee Anderson (1922-2013) in 1958 and is now in my possession. Hilda died before Irene was born but she remembered visiting her 'aunt' Ethel from time to time in the 1930s and 40s; mum thought the Wilsons were very fond of her because they no longer had their own daughter.



Left: Ethel Wilson of Gillingham, Kent.

Right: Grandma Marie Anderson, at various times of Gillingham, Chatham, and Rochester. Marie is wearing the uniform of a domestic attendant at Knowle Hospital Hampshire (the County Lunatic Asylum) where she worked during WWI.

Ethel's house was towards the bottom of Skinner Street on the right hand side and no longer exists as it was destroyed in 1941 during a German bombing raid. The original houses on the opposite side of the road are still there but a modern building – Mountevans House, a retirement housing complex – is now on the site of Albert and Ethel's home. My Mum said that when you went into the hall you went down some steps to go into the back room and through to the kitchen and garden. Three houses were hit by the bomb and Ethel was only saved because she was sitting next to a cupboard and their piano. She suffered head injuries and died two years later in November 1943. Albert only lived for another five years but before he died he gave Ethel's gold bracelet and locket (pictured) to Grandma for mum to have.



The gold locket belonging to Ethel Wilson that was given to Peter Bursey's grandmother by Albert Wilson after the death of his wife. Inside are photos of Hilda and Albert Wilson.



The locket must have been an immensely important and treasured item for Ethel and my mother valued it as well. I have never removed the photos so am unable to confirm whether there is a hallmark inside but on the reverse of the locket is stamped 'Ct Back and Front' - and it is almost certainly gold plated. The original chain that held the locket was missing so, in 2011, mum decided to buy a new one. In the autumn of the previous year she had been burgled for the first time in her life and the insurance company gave her vouchers for six hundred pounds as compensation for some pieces of stolen jewellery. Apparently only costume jewellery was taken and none of her valuable items were stolen (or so she said). Anyway, after nearly a year she decided to spend some of these vouchers by getting a new gold chain for Ethel's locket. At the jewellers, she examined several and decided to buy one that would go over her head as her fingers were not able to easily undo a tiny clasp. She bought a 24-inch chain that cost a whopping £250 (the price of gold has gone up even more since then); all their other chains were too short.

Ethel had a widowed sister named Maud and my mother used to call her 'aunt' Maud. This can be confirmed by the 1891 Census where we find Ethel Long, aged 5, living in Skinner Street with her siblings May aged 10; Annie, 9; Maud 7; and Ada 2. Ethel's parents were George Long, a dockyard boiler maker, and Harriet. Ethel certainly didn't move far during her life, even after the bombing, as she died at home on 6 November 1943, aged 58, at 144 Skinner Street. She died of a cerebral haemorrhage (a stroke). Before entering the dockyard as a labourer, 18-year-old Albert Wilson is found in the 1901 Census as a sugar boiler. His father Charles was a confectioner and his 20-year-old sister Sophia a sweet shop assistant as was the next sister, 16-year-old Annie. They all lived in Medway Street, Chatham in 1901. It is noteworthy that both Albert and Ethel's parents were born in London and illustrates the migration into the Medway Towns in the late nineteenth century.

Hilda Wilson died aged 10 on 24 May 1917 in her home at 125 Skinner Street, Gillingham of idiopathic meningitis after 14 days' duration. The source of the infection was unknown but cases of this disease increased during the war with, for example, 2,045 civil cases recorded in the first half of 1915 – about nine times the pre-war figure.¹ The war exacerbated the situation with questions asked in the House of Commons, including one by Captain Douglas Hall MP who asked whether the War Department knew about an outbreak of cerebral meningitis at a factory in Coley, Reading, then occupied by the Royal Flying Corps School of Technical Training.²

Men crowded together in barracks in cold conditions, perhaps sleeping close to a heater, were at greater risk of catching airborne diseases. With various military barracks close by, it is very possible that Hilda caught the virus from a soldier or sailor while going about her daily life. Three months later, there was an outbreak of cerebrospinal meningitis in the naval barracks at Chatham leading to many men having to sleep in the Drill Hall in crowded conditions to avoid further contamination. An unfortunate consequence of this act was the large loss of life there after the German bombing raid on the building on 3 September 1917.³

Notes

1. *Reece Report to the Local Government Board 1916*, Dr. R.J. Reece.
2. *Hansard* (HC), 13 March 1917, vol. 91 cc907-8.
3. Western Front Association; www.westernfrontassociation.com

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 Fountain Elwin Family

In the last issue of *The Clock Tower* (Issue 69, February 2023), we published correspondence from Angela Carles regarding the Fountain Elwin family, descendants of Pocahontas. Angela recently contacted us again with some more information.

3 March 2023

The ... other piece of information that has come to light so far is that Anne Maria Matthews [and husband John] had a son Fountain Mathews b 7/2/1780. ... The mystery here is that she and Fountain Elwin also had a son Fountain c1779. We know she was a widow to Mr Matthews when she and Fountain Elwin married ...

The intrigue deepens ...

Thanks for your good wishes,

Angela.

The Best of Times: Young Charles Dickens in Chatham ...and other Stories

3 March 2023

Having read Brian Joyce's article on Charles Dickens in Issue 69 of *The Clock Tower*, I would like to respectfully point out that Dickens was born IN Portsmouth, not "just outside", as Brian writes. Dickens was born at 393 Commercial Road, now, apparently "Old Commercial Road", which ran from the Rudmore district of the city to the market area. I grew up in the Stamshaw district, which is adjacent to Rudmore.

Terry Stephens

In response to Terry's query, Brian Joyce responded as follows:

"I was referring to the situation in 1812 (i.e., more than 200 years ago) rather than now. As I understand it, at that time Landport was a separate suburb outside the old walled town. That's what I meant in the article. ... The area is part of the city centre today but not then!"

Brian also included some supporting information for Terry Stephens from The Portsmouth Encyclopaedia published by Portsmouth City Council in 2011.

In his email of 3 March 2023, Terry went on to relate the following, which will also interest readers.

My paternal grandfather, Harry Stephens, was born on a farm in Cornwall in 1885, but joined the Indian Army in 1906. When he retired in 1937 he had the rank of major, and set up home in Portsmouth. It is thought a naval officer cousin of his found him a job as a cinema manager. My father celebrated his 19th birthday on 30th August 1939, but war broke out a few days later. As Dad was a machinist in an engineering factory in Portsmouth, he was never called up, as his was a Reserved Occupation and vital to the war effort. Being a major naval city, Portsmouth was badly bombed in the early 1940s, so the whole engineering factory was moved to Frome in Somerset, and I was born near there [...]. Our late Queen's Coronation took place on my 11th birthday! Once Hitler had ceased his bombing raids on the UK, the factory was moved back to Pompey.

In spite of being very young at the time, I have vivid memories of being whipped out of bed into an air-raid shelter at my grandparents' house, and again at the house of one of my mother's sisters. Even in my 81st year, I can still remember those two events, which would have been during the V1 and V2 raids. I can also remember I had a gas mask in the shape of Mickey Mouse!

My mother was born in Sheerness just after Xmas in 1911. She was the second youngest of eight children. father was a boilermaker in Sheerness Dockyard. He was born in Gillingham, his wife in Chatham. Mum moved to live with the above-mentioned sister in Portsmouth. Sister Edie had had to have a hysterectomy not long after she married in 1935, so she was not able to have children, and her husband was often away, as he was a CERA in the Navy. I assume Mum moved in with her to keep her company. My parents met at a dance, and were married in February 1941.

Getting back to Charles Dickens, I was a pupil from 1947 to 1953 at a Junior & Infants School not far from where Dickens was born. The school I attended was called Flying Bull Lane. The Infants & Girls Schools were on the corner of Commercial Rd and Garfield Rd. Boys School was on the other side of Garfield Rd, and on the corner was the Air Balloon Pub. This was in honour of the first air balloon flight, when animals were sent up, as opposed to humans. Hence the name Flying Bull Lane School.

My mother's maternal grandfather was Hamilton John Adams (1855-1921). As a 16-year-old he was living at the Plough & Chequers Pub in Gads Hill, where his widowed mother was a housekeeper. Also living there was a 57-year-old Ag lab called John Wanstall. Until I began my family history research about 20 years ago, I had never come across that surname, but have since discovered there are thousands of them! It appears that this John Wanstall could have been an uncle of the woman, Emma Wanstall (pictured), that Hamilton John Adams eventually married. Sadly, I never knew her, but have a couple of photos of her. She must have been an amazing woman, as she died in 1951 in her 92nd year having given birth to no less the seven girls and seven boys, the eldest being Amy Selina Adams, my maternal grandmother. I have always wondered if Charles Dickens ever frequented the Plough & Chequers Pub. I am ashamed to say that I have never visited Charles Dickens' Birthplace and Museum in Portsmouth! It's funny how you prefer to go away from your home town to visit famous places. I have lived in Edgbaston, Birmingham since 1969, but have never been to such local places as Aston Hall. Must make the effort!

In one of the 19th century censuses Hamilton John's name was recorded as Hambledon, which is a village in Hampshire where cricket is supposed to have originated. I can only assume that, when the Census enumerator asked my great-grandfather what his name was, he understood Hamilton to have said 'Hambledon' because he had a bad cold and a bunged-up nose!

Terry Stephens



Emma Wanstall.

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.

Friday 16 June, 7.00 pm for a 7.30 pm start
Dickens in Chatham
A talk by Brian Joyce

Booking for FOMA events is not necessary and **until further notice will be held at St Luke's Church Hall, City Way, Rochester, ME1 2BQ**. 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

Exhibition: *The Dockyard and Ship Repairs at Sheerness* by Martin Verrier
Monday 24 April to Friday 30 June 2023 (during our normal opening hours).

The industry of ship repairing on the River Medway is documented in photographs from 40 years ago. These images are representative of an industry that once employed many skilled tradespeople over a long period of time. This display includes photographs of tradespeople engaged in repairing vessels, as well as the tug fleets based at Rochester and Gravesend and the ship repair yard at Sheerness.

Ship Colouring Drop-in

Tuesday 30 May to Friday 2 June, 2-4pm (closed Wednesdays).

To tie-in with our ship repair exhibition, call in and get creative with colouring sheets and pencils! It's free, no need to book, just drop in.

Drop-in Session: *Focus on ... Industry on the Medway*

Saturday 3 June 2023 from 10am-midday.

Enjoy browsing some of the resources at MAC, chat to staff and volunteers, and plan a return visit to see more of the collections.

Drop-in Session: *Focus on ... Family History*

Saturday 1 July 2023 10am-midday

Join us to discover more about the resources that can help you research your family history. There will be a selection of maps, directories, parish registers and online records available for you to see. Meet with staff and volunteers, chat about family history, and book a return visit to begin your research.

Display: *St Nicholas CEVC Infant School 'Big Arts Day'*

Medway Archives Centre are delighted to host a display of the artwork created by the children as part of the Big Arts Day on Wednesday 5 July 2023. The display runs from Friday, 7 to Saturday, 15 July 2023 and is free to view.

Exhibition: *If the Stones could Speak...*

Visit us to see our forthcoming exhibition from Monday 24 July to 30 September 2023. Call in and see a selection of our rare images of Rochester Cathedral, and discover more about some of the personalities who have been part of the cathedral's community.

Rochester Cathedral Colouring Drop-in

Tuesdays 25 July, 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 August, 2-4pm

To tie-in with our Rochester Cathedral exhibition, call in and get creative with colouring inspired by our local cathedral. Colouring sheets and pencils are provided. It's free, no need to book, just drop in.

Opening Hours and Visiting

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

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

How to Make an Appointment

Email us at malsc@medway.gov.uk 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.

MEDWAY ARCHIVES CENTRE LECTURE SERIES 2023

Tickets are £4 each, or £20 for the whole series of 6 talks. Tickets can be purchased from Medway Archives Centre only – please ring 01634 332714 to pay over the phone, drop in, or email us at archives@medway.gov.uk for further details.

Tuesday 23 May, 2.00 pm

Rochester Cathedral Heritage

Jacob Scott

The Chapter, staff and volunteers are committed to ensuring the Cathedral and collections serve to their full potential as resources in understanding the past and in facing the evolving challenges and opportunities presented by our world today. Jacob Scott is the Heritage Officer at the Cathedral, working for much of the last ten years in recording, researching and making this huge corpus available freely online. This work is increasingly focused on aspects and persons in the past that have previously been underrepresented in the written and archaeological records, or have perhaps been squeezed out of public interpretation programs by more dominant narratives, towards opening these areas for further research.

Tuesday 20 June, 2.00 pm

The Story of Isaac Newell: From Strood to Argentina and the Seeds of Modern Football

Amanda Thomas

Few people realise that one of Argentina's most legendary historical figures comes from Strood. Isaac Newell was born in 1853 in Taylors Lane, the third child of Joseph Newell of Essex and Mary Ann Goodger, who was from Higham. This talk will look at the family history of Isaac Newell and will explain how, following his emigration to Argentina in 1869, he and his son Claudio started a football club which would shape the future of the international game. It is a story destined to put Strood well and truly on the map, indeed the town has already become a place of pilgrimage for South American football fans.

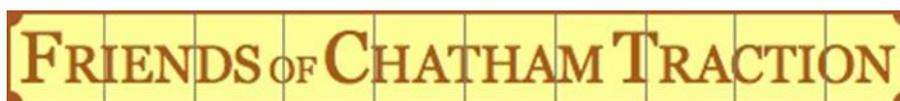
Tuesday 4 July, 2.00 pm

The Fake Peace within the *Textus Roffensis*

Dr Alexander Thomas

A treasure of Rochester Cathedral and formerly of the Medway Archives, the *Textus Roffensis* was created by Bishop Ernulf of Rochester and is an example of a 12th century AD *codex diplomaticus*. Often known as an exclusive encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon and early Kentish law code texts, it is one of just two manuscripts to only contain the Peace of Edward and Guthrum (Egu). For centuries this was thought to be a genuine Viking Age treaty text, but Egu is in fact an infamous forgery created by Archbishop Wulfstan of York. This lecture will explore the *Textus* itself as well as the impact of the fake text on contemporary research.

Dr Alexander Thomas is an independent historical and archaeological early career researcher of the Early Medieval period. Alexander also serves as Webmaster for the Friends of Medway Archives. Educated at Bristol University, his PhD in Archaeology and Anthropology examined the archaeological and manuscript landscapes of the late 9th century AD Danelaw Boundary. Alexander's current research interests focus on the governance of Viking Age England from around the late 8th century AD up to around AD1200. He is currently writing his first book for Amsterdam University Press which will reappraise the historical and archaeological evidence for the Danelaw. The book is due to be published in early-2025



At long last we're moving into areas where we hope the bus (the Medway Heritage Bus (MHB), the GKE 68), will eventually earn its keep. This will need a broadening of our committee's experience base, so look out for further updates in the near future to find out what skills beyond bus restoration are out there. The latest news can be found here:

http://www.chathamtraction.org.uk/updates/230411_Update_61.pdf

For more information see the 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 the car park at the 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 and Twitter) or contact David Park, Secretary on 07968-380588 or email: secretary@friendsofbroomhill.org.uk



Sir Herbert Baker Society

Camilla Baker writes:

Although the Sir Herbert Baker Society is starting small, we have big plans. During a discussion with the wider Baker family last year, it was agreed that we do not want the potentially onerous admin of creating a full charity/trust at this early stage. For now, it will be run under the umbrella of Herbert Baker Furniture Ltd, where it has a separate bank account dedicated to research and heritage. In ongoing discussion with curators, enthusiasts, fundraisers and researchers moving forward and are currently talking to interested research and heritage organisations. we have set some longer-term objectives.

Aims

- To promote the legacy of Sir Herbert Baker's architectural and artistic life's work
- To inspire the next generation of architects and designers
- To champion excellence in craftsmanship

We hope to achieve this through:

- A web-based hub of information.
- An international network of owners, users, visitors to Baker buildings.
- Advocating for and celebrating his architectural and artistic life's work, including furniture and his many collaborations.
- Opportunities to learn about HB's life and work, and visit his buildings

Website

A webpage is under development, www.Herbertbakersociety.org (Google may ask you to sign in to view the holding page). We have begun the massive job of creating a catalogue of all his works, concentrating on the UK to start with. If you would like to support our work, donations would be gratefully received. You can donate by PayPal to info@herbertbaker.com or direct to: Account Number: 20530653; Sort Code: 04-06-05. The account is in the company name 'Herbert Baker Furniture Ltd' for now, but rest assured this is a dedicated account for research and history.

Newsletter

It is our intention to send out a Herbert Baker Society newsletter twice a year to begin with, and will arrange events and visits if there is interest in the future. We hope to send a first newsletter around Herbert's birthday in June.

Owletts

Owletts, the Cobham home of architect, Sir Herbert Baker opened to the public again on Sunday 7th May. From the first Sunday of every month the house will be open from 11am till 5pm. For further information visit the National Trust website at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/kent/owletts

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 71 of *The Clock Tower* is Monday 31 July 2023, with publication on Wednesday 23 August 2023.

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, Jean Skilling, 15 Port Close, Lordswood, Chatham, ME5 8DU, Kent; membership@foma-lsc.org

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The Town Hall, Chatham: The Making of a Model

On Saturday 4 March, model maker Peter Allen (right) staged a free drop-in session at the Medway Archives Centre. The focus of the session was Peter's scale model of the former Town Hall in Chatham, as pictured. Photographs by Rob Flood.



Congratulations, Natasha!



We are delighted to announce that just before Christmas, FOMA Committee Member, Natasha Boardman-Steer gave birth to a healthy baby girl weighing 6lbs 12ozs. Natasha has been on maternity leave but was keen to let us know that she is looking forward to showing her gorgeous new daughter how to use the archives!