

MAC Book Presentation

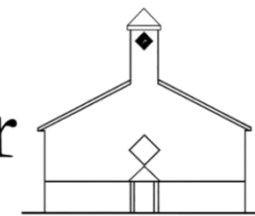
On 31 July 2023, FOMA Chairman, Elaine Gardner, presented a copy of *Campus* to MAC Library and Archives Development Officer, Emma Ovenden. The book by photographer Laura Fisher is a visual archive of the University for the Creative Arts at Fort Pitt Hill, Rochester, which is due to close in September. Read more on pages 3 to 4 in *Chairman's Report*.



Photographs by Nikki Pratt

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

The Clock Tower



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The Friends of Medway Archives
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The MAC 2023 Lecture Series: A Huge Success!



The Medway Archives Centre 2023 Lecture Series began at the end of February and ended on 4 July with most of the lectures completely selling out. On 20 June, *Clock Tower* Editor Amanda Thomas gave a talk entitled, *The Story of Isaac Newell: From Strood to Argentina and the Seeds of Modern Football*. Pictured above are (from left to right), Margarita Bitetti (great great granddaughter of Isaac Newell), Amanda Thomas, and Adrian Pope, who is spearheading the campaign to erect a statue in Strood of Isaac Newell. MAC's Emma Ovenden gives an overview of the Lecture Series on page 11.

ALSO INSIDE!

The 3rd Medway Sea Scouts: Peter Bursey's moving account of the fate of the five members whose photograph was taken in 1929.

Brian Joyce's scandalous tale of an 1850s' sham marriage in Gillingham Parish Church.

The MAC 2023 Lecture Series



Emma Ovenden, Medway Archives Centre Library and Archives Development Officer, introduces the very last lecture in MAC's highly successful 2023 Series on Tuesday, 4 July. Entitled, *The Fake Peace within the Textus Roffensis* by Dr Alexander Thomas. The talk was the perfect end to a series in which a wide and fascinating number of subjects was covered – and every one of them Medway related! See page 11 for Emma's report.

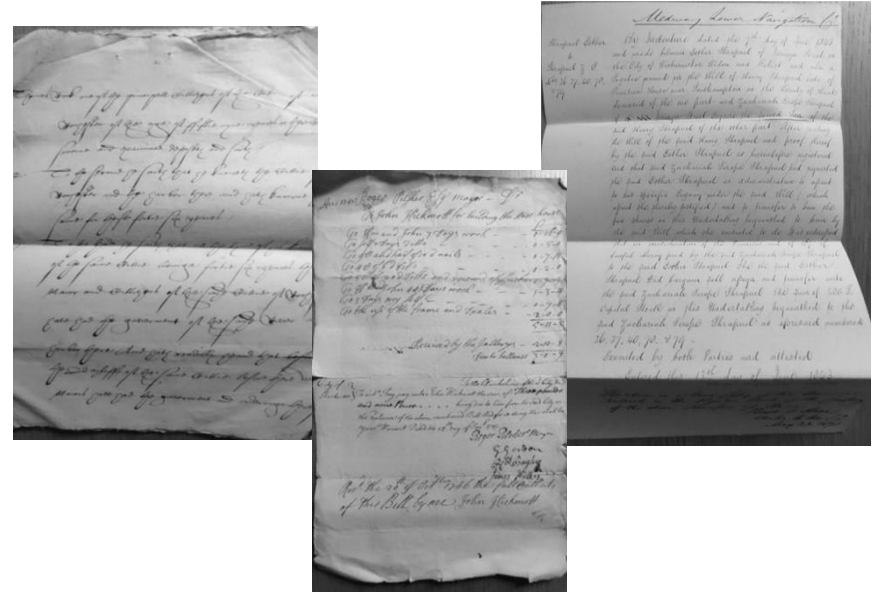
Pauline Weeds (left) and Cindy O'Halloran serve refreshments at the last talk in the MAC Lecture Series on 4 July.



Photographs by David Thomas.

eBay Purchase

On page 8, FOMA Secretary Chris de Coulon Berthoud describes the roller coaster ride he experienced purchasing two exiting lots on eBay to add to MAC's *Archive of Great Expectations*. Here are some more of the items included in the purchase.



Brian Joyce on Dickens

In June, Brian Joyce was back in Medway to give a talk for FOMA entitled, *Dickens in Chatham*. As usual, this was a fascinating talk by Brian and gave an insight into the time Dickens lived in Chatham and how that period affected his writing. Read more on page 5, in *Chairman's Report*.



Photograph by Amanda Thomas.

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Chairman's Letter

Elaine Gardner



Hello everyone!

As I write I am hoping that by the time you read this – in August – the weather is going to be better than it is now. Not sure I want the 40+ degrees of the Med, but 30 would be rather nice.

At our recent committee meeting it was good to hear from the new Library Services Manager, Will Train, that the council are planning to increase the number of staff hours at MAC and appoint an extra member of staff as well as the new archivist. This is good news for the current team who have had to cover since the beginning of this year following the departure of Elspeth Millar, and Cindy O'Halloran's retirement. However, on the plus side, now that Cindy has retired, it was really lovely to welcome her onto the FOMA committee at the AGM.

It is very disappointing that we still have had no one come forward to take on the role of FOMA Treasurer (see page 6 for details). This role is one of the three that we must have as part of our charity status. Online banking makes the role easier than before as much of the banking and transactions such as payments can be done from home. We do hope that one of you will come forward or maybe encourage a friend, not currently a member, to join us and take on the role. It is not an arduous one – and please be aware that not all of our committee members live in the Medway area.

At the last FOMA Committee Meeting on 6 July, we had a long discussion about the sad closure of the University for the Creative Arts at Fort Pitt Hill, Rochester. Most famous, perhaps, as the training ground for fashion designers Zandra Rhodes and Karen Millen, the college has been a part of the Rochester landscape - both visual and academic - for a very long time. We were fortunate that Will Train was at the meeting, and he participated in our discussion about the massive archive at the college and where it will be relocated; sadly it is too large to be housed at MAC. During our discussions, it emerged that the photographer, Laura Fisher has had published a book which is made up entirely of images of the college.

Entitled, *Campus*, we agreed that it would be appropriate for FOMA to purchase this in order that it can be held at the Medway Archives Centre. On 31 July I visited MAC to present the book to Library and Archives Development Officer, Emma Ovenden, and as illustrated on the back cover. The *Introduction* to the book, which is the only text, as the rest is photographs, reads as follows:

‘The UCA campus on Fort Pitt Hill opened in September 1970. The purpose built art school sits in the footprint of the blockhouse of the Napoleonic fort that was previously there. The college was built with the original fort in mind and was designed to suit the local area following the natural lines of the hillside. The imposing structure dominates the Rochester skyline and boasts commanding views over the River Medway.

There has been an art college in Rochester for over 130 years and a wealth of creative talent has been nurtured throughout this time.

Sadly, the campus is closing later this year. I was fortunate enough to study here – Art and Design at pre-degree and then a degree in Photography. More recently I have been back as an Artist in Residence. This luckily gave me the opportunity to document and make a visual archive of the campus before it closes its doors for good.

It has been a bittersweet journey, walking in the shadows, reflecting on my own memories and feeling the presence of those who have studied here before me.

June 2023.’

My thanks to Emma for transcribing this.

We received some exciting news in response to the article I wrote about William Barrett in the last edition of *The Clock Tower*. Amanda Thomas, our Editor, had become as curious as me about William and decided to see if she could find anyone related to him on the family history website, *Ancestry*. To her delight there was and after she made contact, the relative of William and his wife Louise sent Amanda some photos. These included one of Louise and her siblings and another of William with his. You can read more about this – and see the photographs - on page 19.

We were also delighted recently to receive another £120 donation from our friend in the Netherlands, Henk van der Linden. Whilst we have already thanked Henk formally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank him once again. Thank you, Henk, it is extremely kind of you. With the 110th anniversary of the commencement of World War One coming up in 2024, I expect we will be seeing a lot more of each other!

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 72 of *The Clock Tower* is Monday 30 October 2023, with publication on Wednesday 22 November 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



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 and Twitter) or contact David Park, Secretary on 07968-380588 or email: secretary@friendsofbroomhill.org.uk

Medway Geographical and Local History Society

We start our new season in September 2023.

Friday 22 September

The S.S *Richard Montgomery* – three films and a presentation by Colin Harvey.

Friday 27 October

Mountain Mentality – a talk by Brian Laverick-Smith.

Friday 24 November

History of the Local Area – a talk by Maggie Francis

Meetings at 2.00/3.30pm. Doors open 1.30pm.

Holy Trinity Church, Twydall Lane, Gillingham, Kent, ME8 6JU.

Visitors £3.50 per meeting, annual subscription £20.

For further information contact Vanda Woollett,

Telephone 01634 389916, mobile 07948 277 131, email vwoollett@hotmail.co.uk

On 16 June, we were delighted to see Brian Joyce back in Medway again, giving a talk for FOMA entitled, *Dickens in Chatham*. The refurbishment works at St Nicholas' Hall in Strood meant this talk was held at St Luke's Church Hall on Rochester's City Way. Brian's talk was fascinating and focussed on the time Dickens lived in Chatham and how that period affected his writing. It was clear that this had been a formative time in his life and that many of the locations familiar to him in Chatham (and Rochester, of course) had been used in his work. It was also interesting to see how he had incorporated various people's names into his writing. However, Brian also explained the devastating effect the coming of the railway to Chatham had had on Dickens in later life. As a boy, the space in front of the family home at Ordnance Terrace had been a quasi-rural paradise, but the railway cutting and the building of the station destroyed it all, much to Dickens' dismay.

Our next talk will be on September 8, and we will once again be back at St Nicholas' Hall in Strood. Author Cherry Burroughs will be discussing the great North Sea floods which occurred at the end of January 1953 – 70 years ago. Cherry has written a novel called *The Farmer and the Fury* which follows the story of George and Annie Hadley, whose family farmed on an island in the Thames Estuary. When the flood arrives, the island is almost completely submerged by water, and the book is dedicated to all those affected by the dreadful events in 1953. Cherry has liaised with MAC, delving into the archive of the period and some of the extraordinary images of the time. She will also be selling and signing copies of *The Farmer and the Fury*. I remember the floods as we had been living in the Medway Towns for just a couple of months. My father was with BP at the newly built refinery about to go into production at Grain. He wasn't able to get to work for a few days as even Chatham around the Brook pumping station was flooded as well as most of the refinery and the marshes at Stoke. I was five years old at the time so I guess you have to be over 70 to have been around when it happened, but if you do remember it then I'm sure our Editor, Amanda and staff at MAC would love to hear those memories.

Look out too for some interesting event and exhibitions coming up at MAC from September. Details can be found in *News and Events* on page 40, on the FOMA (foma-lsc.org) and MAC websites (www.medway.gov.uk/info/200391/medway_archives_centre/317/medway_archives_centre) and on Facebook (www.facebook.com/fomalsc) – and don't forget to take a look at FOMA's new Instagram page - @FriendsOfMedwayArchives

Obituary

John Harriott

We were deeply saddened recently to hear of the death of one of our newest members, Mr John Harriott. John joined FOMA with enormous enthusiasm at the talk given in November 2022 by Colin Harvey, *The Wreck SS Richard Montgomery*. We have sent our condolences to his family and widow, Dot, and look forward to welcoming her to future FOMA events.

June Blackburn

We were saddened to hear of the death of FOMA member, June Blackburn, and send our condolences to her family.

THE FOMA COMMITTEE NEEDS 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

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 three working days' notice of your intention to visit. For all other material (such as books, maps, photographs) we just require one 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.



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.

Medway Archives Centre

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

Events and Exhibitions

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.

Summer Activity: *Medway Heroes in Time*

24 July – 1 September

Shining a light on some of Medway's historic and more recent heroes!

Activity packs suitable for all ages, including children based on about 30 Medway Heroes. Please contact or visit Medway Archives to get a pack for your selected hero (a list is available) Packs can be sent out electronically.

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

New Members

A warm welcome to new FOMA member Ms Sally-Ann Ironmonger.

We are delighted to announce that Mr Michael Jennings and Mr Richard Bourne have become Life Members.

Member Update!



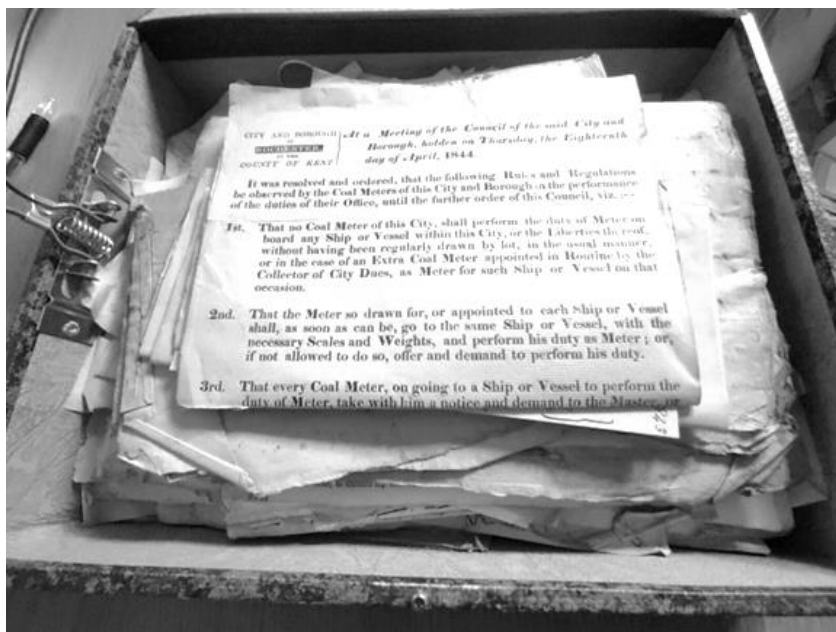
Since our formation in 2006, many of us at FOMA have been involved in a variety of high-profile projects, and FOMA's Webmaster, Dr Alexander Thomas, is no exception! A researcher of Viking Age governance in England, Alex was the last speaker at the MAC lecture series with his talk, *The Fake Peace within the Textus Roffensis* (see page 14). Earlier this year he was asked to contribute accessible contextual articles to a new translation and transcription of the *Textus Roffensis* which is on permanent display in the crypt of Rochester Cathedral. The *Textus* project is also based there, led by historian and manuscript specialist, Dr Christopher Monk, and aided by the Cathedral's Heritage Officer, Jacob Scott. The *Textus* pages on the Rochester Cathedral website (<https://www.rochestercathedral.org/textus>) are slowly being populated, with new material added regularly. New AI (artificial intelligence) generated images are also being included, as well as an interactive facsimile of the manuscript itself to help illustrate the existing articles.

Secretary's Report

Chris de Coulon Berthoud



An eBay Discovery!



There was some considerable excitement amongst FOMA Committee Members at the end of July when a significant collection of documents pertaining to *Rochester's Mayor's Office* (sic) was discovered on eBay. We always keep an eye out for things that FOMA can purchase for the Medway Archives Centre, but this was something quite extraordinary. The description was simply, 'Box Of 18th and 19th Century Documents - Mayor's Office Rochester Council Kent', and the collection was divided up in to two lots.

One of the most searched *Clock Tower* back issues on the FOMA website (<http://foma-lsc.org>) is the one we published ten years ago in February 2013 (pictured) which featured a series of articles on the East Coast floods of 1953. Brian Joyce wrote:

'This year, the night of 31st January/1st February marked the sixtieth anniversary of one of the worst disasters to hit modern Britain in peacetime. A deep area of low pressure passed from the Atlantic into the North Sea, where it met a high spring tide. High winds caused a storm surge to race down the east coast, killing 19 people in Scotland and then ravaging low-lying English coastal counties from Lincolnshire to Kent.

Thirty thousand people had to be evacuated from their homes and 24,000 properties were severely damaged. In Canvey Island in Essex, which lies entirely below sea level, 58 people were drowned, many in their sleep. A further 37 died in Jaywick, a similar coastal community of cheaply-constructed bungalows. Although far less seriously affected than the Netherlands, where the floods killed nearly 2,000 people, the United Kingdom lost 300 to the storm that Saturday and Sunday.

Fortunately there were no fatalities directly caused by the floods in the Medway Towns, although there was widespread damage and disruption to the north Kent coast.'

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.



News and Events

Calendar of Forthcoming Events and Exhibitions

FOMA Talks and Events

Further information is available on the FOMA website (www.foma-lsc.org), our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/fomalsc) and sent to members via email, where appropriate.

The Great North Sea flood of 1953

A talk and book signing by author Cherry Burroughs

Cherry talks about this historic event and her new book *The Farmer and the Fury*

Friday 8 September
Doors open 7.00pm for 7.30 pm start

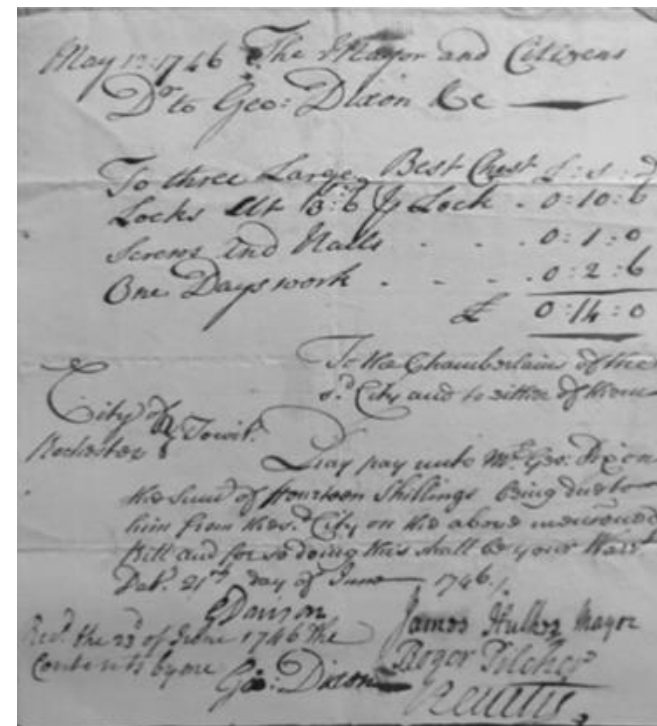
St Luke's Church Hall, City Way, Rochester, ME1 2BQ.

PLEASE NOTE, this talk was previously advertised (including in the printed *Clock Tower*) as taking place at St Nicholas Church Hall, Strood. Due to circumstances beyond our control, the talk can no longer take place there. We sincerely apologise for any inconvenience his may cause.



Fortunately, I am somewhat experienced with the purchase (and selling) of items on eBay and so I set to work putting in a bid for both. It was the most enjoyable experience, but I had not anticipated the nerve-shredding twists and turns. I was thrilled to be notified that we had managed to secure the second lot, however, we all struggled to hide our disappointment that the first lot had slipped through our hands. Then, in an amazing twist of fate, and perhaps due to what might be best described as an administrative error, I was able to bid on the first lot again. Imagine our delight when we heard we had won that as well and the whole collection will be coming to MAC!

It is hoped that these documents will eventually join the contents of MAC's Rochester City Archives, the so-called *Archives of Great Expectations*. It is hard to believe that it was 15 years ago, in September 2008, that FOMA heard we had won the bid for the Heritage Lottery Fund grant of up to £154,500 to catalogue and make available for research for the first time the contents of some 500 boxes of the Rochester City Archives (1227 to 1974). The collection later became known as the *Archives of Great Expectations* and they form the largest archival collection in the Medway area.



One of the documents from the eBay purchase; others can be seen on the inside back cover.

The *Archives of Great Expectations* includes maps, photographs, building plans, heraldic and manorial records, records of land use, title deeds, rate books, records of trade and industry, public health, and transport. The project went on for years and it was this which established FOMA in the heritage sector and was the first of many successful projects.

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.

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>

Loving *The Clock Tower*

Of course, the FOMA Committee is always going to be biased when it comes to reading *The Clock Tower*, but Jean Skilling - one of our best proofreaders – was particularly taken with Issue 70, May 2023.

5 May 2023

Hi Amanda,

I have really enjoyed the preview – I don't remember the Anglo American bookshop but I seldom went to Chatham as a child, Mum preferred Gillingham, and I most certainly would not have been allowed to look in the window!

Janet's articles always bring back so many memories – Mum had a yellow plastic daffodil in a vase on the kitchen window sill for many years I couldn't have told you which soap powder it came from though. My brother and I collected PG Tips cards and Golly tokens if we could persuade Mum to buy jam (she usually made it) and our drinking glasses always came from the garage.

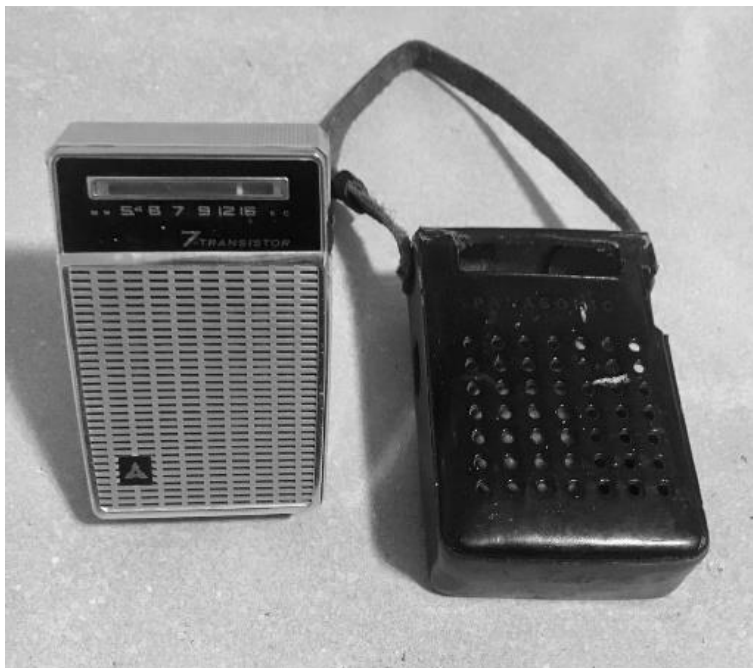
Whenever I read Peter Bursey's stories I wonder if either my brother or I were at Twydall School at the same time as him, I really must e-mail, find out when he was there and where he lived.

I look forward to the final version. Enjoy the coronation tomorrow!

Best wishes,

Jean.

It was some time before I managed to save up for another transistor radio, as I had my sights set on a more expensive and (to my eye) a more trendy looking one. It was called a Perdio, so I didn't need to give that one a name, and what's more, its case was a much more *with it* - it was black. Hooray!



Clock Tower Editor, Amanda Thomas found a radio for sale on eBay which has some similarities to Janet's – most notably the case. The description reads: 1960s PANASONIC 7 Transistor T-7 RADIO W/ LEATHER CASE (WORKS)

MAC Lecture Series 2023

Emma Ovenden, Medway Archives Centre Library and Archives Development Officer

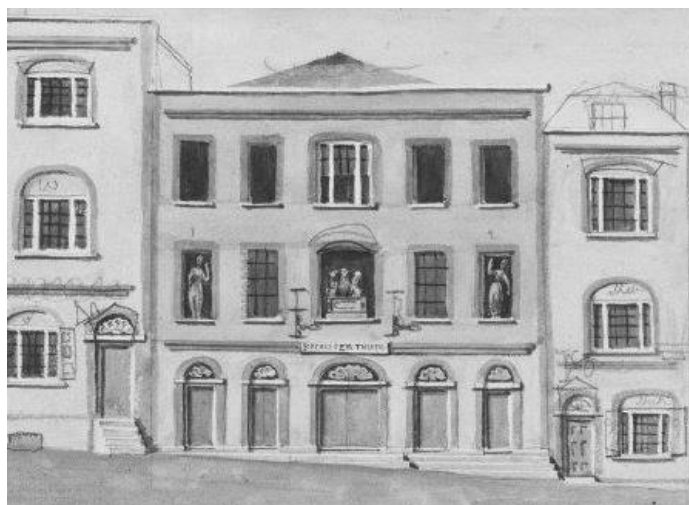
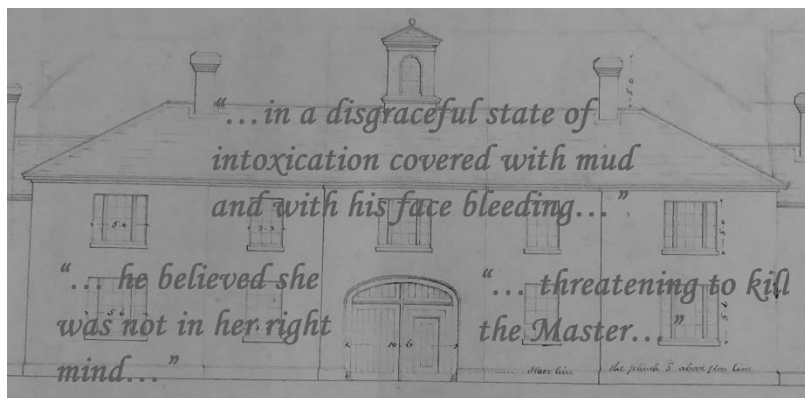


From February to July 2023, Medway Archives Centre held its first lecture series, with a lecture taking place each month – and we were delighted at its success!

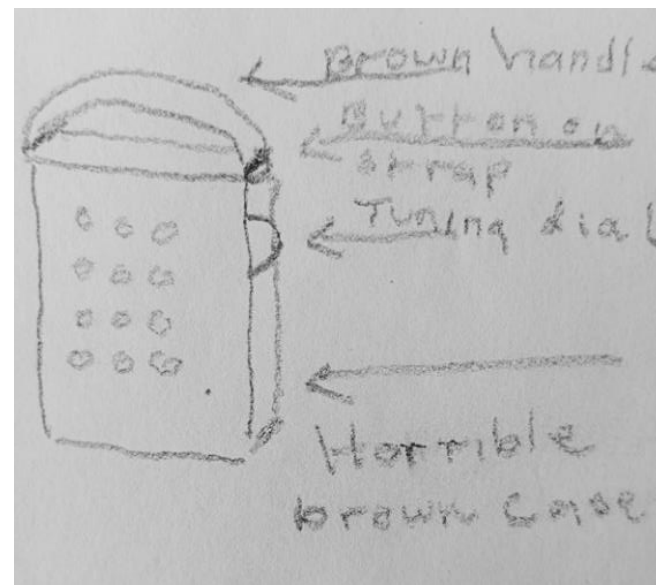


Six lectures were delivered as part of the series, with the first lecture in February, *Islands of the Medway Estuary*, (pictured) being delivered in collaboration with FOMA. It saw Adam Taylor present a talk about the once inhabited islands of the Medway Estuary, and included the shipwreck of a WW1 German submarine, abandoned Victorian forts and Adam even shared where samphire grows in the Estuary!

Deborah Collins presented the second lecture entitled *Drunkenness, Madness and Bigamy – the staff of Strood Workhouse*. The conditions for the inmates of workhouses were dependent upon the quality of the workhouse staff, and the Strood workhouse had a number of problems with the staff employed. Deborah's interesting talk explored some of their stories.



The third lecture was entitled *An Eighteenth-Century entrepreneur: Sarah Baker and her Kentish Theatres, 1737-1816*, and saw Dr Jean Baker (not a relation!) present a talk about Sarah Baker, an illiterate fairground performer who became one of the most successful self-made women of the eighteenth century. Sarah Baker opened a theatre (pictured) in Rochester in 1791.



Janet's drawing of her precious transistor radio.

I probably listened to Radio 1 but other channels were available. Radio Luxembourg, and later Radio Caroline, were best listened to on the big radio in our front room at home. That had valves and didn't sound as tinny as my little transistor-driven one. Of course, I could dance to the music indoors, which I could hardly do walking up the high street. I loved the more thumpy sound which gave more of a beat to dance to. I remember trying to do the Twist, but it was very difficult on the carpet in the front room.

My beloved radio finally met its demise on the rock-hard floor of the ladies' loo on which I managed to drop it one day. I had taken it out of its horrible (brown) case in an attempt to make it more trendy looking, but this left it vulnerable to attack. Apparently, I had cracked the circuit board. However, all was not lost as my boyfriend said he would make me another radio. Surely radios came from shops! Anyway, after ages spent soldering and winding wire, the big moment arrived for the big switch on. There was a large bang, and the only signals we got out of it were smoke signals.

Me and My Transistor Radio

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.

My first transistor radio came from Boots. I had heard, seen or read somewhere that they did a reasonably priced one, so that's where I went. Apart from that, Boots was on my way to and from work each day. It cost £2, so bearing in mind my £4 a week income, it wasn't easy come by. I think it was the cheapest model available, but I had bought myself a tranny! As it was known in those days. It was not exactly the latest model, but it was a tranny, even if its case was brown, very brown, clumpy and old fashioned looking. It had an ear piece that looked like a national health hearing aid. Needless to say, I didn't use the ear piece, preferring to deafen everyone, so they probably all needed the afforsaid National Health hearing aid in any case. It also had a carrying handle. I mean, how archaic could you get? It was so *square* that it might as well have been *last century*, apart from its innards of course, which were bang up to date. (1966?) I called my radio Albert. Why? I don't know. Perhaps because it was the most old-fashioned name I could think of. It certainly could not have been described as *fab* or *gear*, but it did the job.

The music that came out of it kept me company day and night. I even had it blaring out walking up the high street on the way to work. This was pre Getto Blasters, and the ear piece was definitely not like a modern ear bud. If I was discreet at work, I could have it on quietly at the back of the shop. As the manager liked listening to the sport on it, a blind ear was employed when I listened to music, probably by the Beatles, The Pretty Things, The Move, The Who, Manfred Mann, or Freddy and the Dreamers as well as my favourite, Frank Ifield. He was old fashioned, but I liked his music. I had a picture of him on my bedroom wall and strangely enough married someone called Frank years later!

Jacob Scott, the Heritage Officer at Rochester Cathedral, spoke about aspects of the cathedral's history. Jacob's research is increasingly focused on aspects and people in the past that have previously been underrepresented in the written and archaeological records. His considered this issue in his talk and spoke about possible areas for further research.



Photograph by David Thomas.

The fifth lecture in the series was entitled *The Story of Isaac Newell: From Strood to Argentina and the Seeds of Modern Football*. Amanda Thomas (pictured above) presented a fascinating talk about Isaac Newell, who was born in 1853 in Taylors Lane, the third child of Joseph Newell of Essex and Mary Ann Goodger, who was from Higham. Her lecture looked at the family history of Isaac Newell and explained 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. We were also thrilled to welcome Isaac Newell's great, great granddaughter, Margarita Bitetti to Amanda's lecture (see the front cover). Margarita has been working closely with Amanda to unravel many previously unknown facts about the Newell family and their story.

Dr Alexander Thomas presented *The Fake Peace within the Textus Roffensis* on Tuesday, 4 July. 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. Dr Alexander's lecture (pictured below) explored the *Textus* itself as well as the impact of the fake text on contemporary research.



Photograph by David Thomas.

All the lectures were very popular, and we are very grateful to all the speakers who took part in the lecture series, and for their support of Medway Archives Centre. We very much hope to host a lecture series next year – watch this space for details!

The story of Charles Bursey's father, Charles Bursey (1881-1970), and who married Daisy Sharp, can be read in the February 2022 issue of The Clock Tower, Number 65. The story, part of a series by Peter Bursey entitled, Notes from the Bursey Family Archive begins:

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'.

Cyril grew up in Blackheath where his father, Arnold, was the physics professor at Greenwich Naval College. Cyril went to Keble College, Oxford. He had a younger brother, Harold who served in the Royal Navy and who reached the rank of vice-admiral before retiring. Cyril himself served as a chaplain in the royal navy and was on HMS *Argonaut* in 1914, however he resigned from the navy in February the following year. The living of the newly built stone church of St Augustine's was held by the bishop of Rochester, and Cyril Reinold held it from 1917 until his death on 17 April 1931. He left his effects of £2,617 17s 11d to his brother Harold.

A news report in the *London Daily News*. of 23 November 1931 tells us that 'a window was unveiled at St Augustine's church, Gillingham, yesterday as a memorial to five sea scouts who died in the firing of a mock burning house at a Gillingham fete two years ago. No doubt Cyril had been involved, if not the instigator, of this memorial to the boys. He must have grieved.

The photograph of the boys was taken outside this house (pictured below) – the old vicarage - in St John's Road, Gillingham, pictured here in 2008. Unfortunately, I do not know the identity of the scout standing next to my uncle in the original photograph on page 30.



All illustrations are from the author's personal collection.

Medway Archives Centre Report

Helen Worthy, Senior 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 will have been advertised by the time you read this, and we hope to have some someone in post by the next issue of *The Clock Tower*.

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 me, Helen Worthy (Senior Archives Assistant).

Events and exhibitions

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

Lectures

Our MAC Spring Lecture series has now come to an end, and we'd like to thank all our wonderful lecturers who helped to make this an extremely interesting and varied programme. We also couldn't have run this without help from our volunteers who greeted customers and made refreshments. Please see page 11 for an overview of the Series by Emma Ovenden.

Drop-in Sessions

We continued our series of Saturday drop-in sessions, including a look at the new Chris Broderick collection. As Chris de Coulon Berthoud explained in his *Secretary's Report* in the last issue of *The Clock Tower* (Number 70, May 2023), Broderick was a local musician, playwright, film-maker, poet, and author who died at the beginning of the 2022.

We also ran a drop-in sessions focussing on industry on the Medway, and another on family history, and two drop-in sessions to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III. We displayed a selection of our charters, which are rarely seen, many with their seals still attached. We also had a visit from KMTV who took some footage of the centre and the event, and interviewed the new Library Services Manager, Will Train and MAC's Emma Ovenden, and we were fortunate enough to have FOMA's Len Feist here as a customer, who gave a fantastic impromptu interview as well!

Exhibitions

Our popular exhibition by Martin Verrier, *The Dockyard and Ship Repairs at Sheerness*, has come to an end, and we had some great feedback from customers. People were really keen to share their stories of working at the dockyard, and Martin has kindly donated some fantastic photos - do contact us if you'd like to see them!

We were also pleased to host a short display of artwork by children at nearby St Nicholas Infant School. This colourful and fun artwork was part of their Big Arts Day.

On display until 30 September is our latest exhibition *If the Stones could Speak ...*. This display features a selection of our rare images of Rochester Cathedral and its community.

Art Events

Emma has been busy calling on people to call in and get creative! We have run colouring-in sessions to tie in with our ship repair exhibition and our Rochester Cathedral exhibition.

Outreach

Emma visited St Nicholas Infant School in Strood to talk to the children at their assembly about the Coronation of King Charles III.



The Deputy Naval Stores Officers at Chatham staff photo

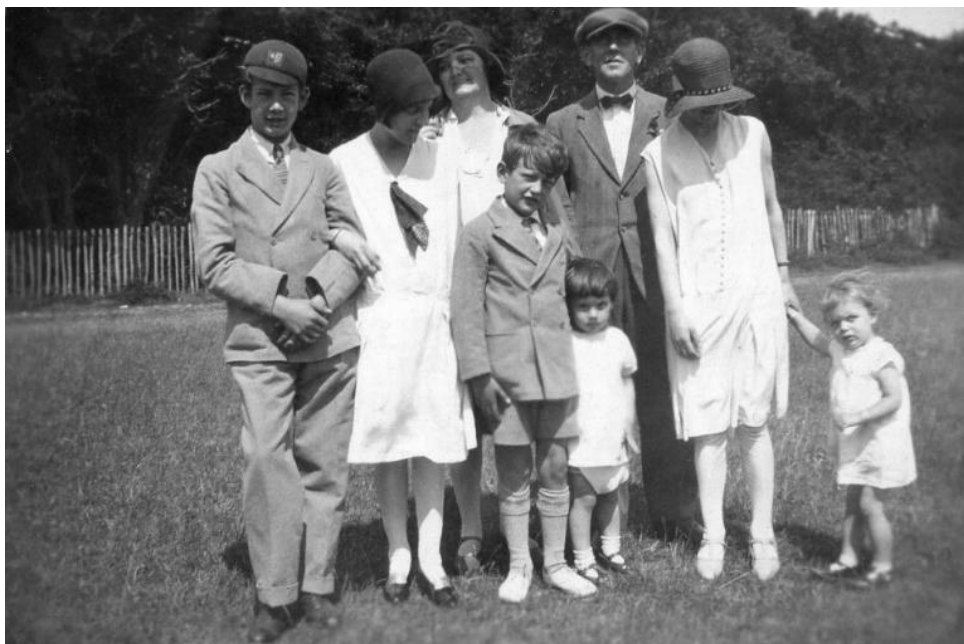
Cyril Reinold (1875-1931), vicar of St Augustine's church

The Leader of the Sea Scouts in the photo was the local vicar, Cyril Reinold (pictured). My father has written on the back of the photo: *St John's Road, Vicar of St Augustine's known as "Stack" to the four members of the 3rd Medway Sea Scouts.*



Cyril Reinold

This family photo (below) shows Charles, aged 13, on the left, my father Jack, aged eight, their two sisters, Eva and Rene, and young David Young (son of Eva) and Joan Clark (daughter of Rene). Charles and Daisy are standing at the back.



Uncle Charles went into dockyard administration and had a successful career in the Naval Stores Branch. He had two overseas postings in Hong Kong and was stationed at Malta during the terrible bombing and blockading of the island by the Germans in 1940-41.

Between 1952 and 1957, Charles was one of the five Deputy Naval Stores Officers at Chatham and can be seen in a section of their staff photo of circa 1954 (see opposite) sitting in the middle of the front row wearing the light suit.

Other projects

Emma has also put out a call on social media, to tie in with Windrush Day and Refugee Week. Were you or your ancestors on the *Windrush*? Or were your family refugees, and came to Medway at a different time and from a different place to make their home here? Then we would love to hear from you. Medway Archives Centre exists to help everyone discover the stories of Medway's people and places – and we would like to add your written memories to our collection. We are inviting everyone to write their memories and share the story of how they first came to Medway. Please email archives@medway.gov.uk for a memory page or for more information.

Medway's Heroes in Time is a Medway-wide collaborative project involving schools, local history groups, ethnicity forums and the general public. The project shines a light on some of Medway's historic and more recent heroes. Medway Archives Centre has free activity sheets for children to call in and collect. Please just drop in! Monday 24 July to Friday 1 September, weekdays 9am to 5pm, Saturdays 9am to 12.30pm (closed Wednesdays and Sundays).

Images and original resources from our Shorts Collection are currently on display at Rochester Art Gallery, part of the exhibition *Seaplane Works*. Do pop along and take a look at technical drawings, artwork, models, film, memorabilia and more. The centrepiece will be a large-scale painting by Billy Childish of the *Canopus* flying boat and the display runs until 14 October.

Future events and exhibitions

We continue our Saturday drop-in sessions with *Focus on... Pentagon Shopping Centre and Local Area* (Saturday 2 September, 10am to midday), and *Focus on ... Medway Forts* (Saturday 7 October, 10am to midday). Come along to see some of the resources we have at MAC, chat to staff and volunteers, and plan a return visit to learn more!

Our next exhibition opens on 12 October. Entitled, *Once Upon a Time in Medway*, it is a photographic exhibition by Dan Gardner. He has lived in Medway all his life, and this new exhibition seeks to capture the untold stories, forgotten spaces, and old landscapes that make Medway what it is today. An endearing photographic record reflecting the diverse character, community and comforting familiarity found on the streets around us. Copies of Dan's latest photo zine, featuring images from the exhibition, will also be available to buy. Thursday 12 October to Friday 15 December 2023, weekdays 9am to 5pm, Saturdays 9am to 12.30pm (closed Wednesdays and Sundays).

We will be running a series of reminiscence sessions in the autumn. More details to follow!

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 includes

- Acc1575: LP 'The Earth's Rotation' by POD, band featuring Chris Broderick, and lyrics to the song cycle 'And One Red Mitten' by Chris Broderick.
- Acc1577: notes on Doust Shipyard.
- Acc1580: Documents, correspondence and photographs relating to Bayden Simmonds outfitters shop and family.
- Acc1581: collection of prints relating to Medway, donated in memory of Gary Robert Marcham.
- Acc1585: Photograph album and ephemera relating to Robert Wilfred Dale, Mayor of Rochester in 1924.

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.

On Sunday 20 October 1940 he flew to Pilzen in Czechoslovakia to bomb the Skoda works there. Len Adlam was the second pilot that night. They arrived at the target and dropped their bombs on the factory but were hit by enemy gunfire during the attack. Pilot officer Ernest Brown was badly injured, so Len had to fly the plane back home. They arrived in England in the early hours of the 21 October but crashed, possibly due to an enemy aircraft or possibly due to fuel shortage. Of a crew of five only one survived, Serjeant Langfield, who was very badly injured although he still managed to pull the others out, three were dead, including Len, and one died later. Serjeant Len Adlam died doing his duty. I found this information about Len at the following web site where there is more on his career and another photo of him:

Christopher Yeoman: Len Adlam (intotheswarm.blogspot.com)

Charles Bursey (1916-1984)



The Sea Scout on the left in the photo above is my uncle Charles Bursey. He wanted to attend Gillingham Park Fete but his mother, Daisy, wouldn't let him. Apparently, he had to stay in and do his homework. The family lived in Pretoria Road, only five minutes from the Park, and could probably hear the hubbub coming from all the events going on there. This photo and the one below were taken on the Darland Banks in June 1929. It was a popular place to go for picnics or Sunday afternoon walks. Charles' father (also Charles), my grandfather, was a keen walker.



Leonard Winn (1915-1929)

At Gillingham Park Fete on 11 July 1929, Winn was trapped in a burning building erected as a part of a demonstration by the local fire brigade to show how they could rescue people. Many of the boys, including Leonard, who took part in the demonstration also died from horrific burns. Leonard is the boy on the far right in the photograph above and his tragic story has been told on the following web site: Leonard Gordon Winn - The Gillingham Park Fete Tragedy (weebly.com).

Len Adlam (1915-1940)

The boy next to Len Winn is, I believe, Len Adlam. I do not know if he was at Gillingham Park on that fateful day, but his life took a normal course throughout the 1930s until, in 1939, he joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve. That year he trained firstly on Tiger Moths before being moved to Spitfires. In 1940 he transferred to Bomber Command where he flew Wellington bombers and then Whitley bombers.

What Happened Next in our Quest to Discover more about 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.

In the last issue of *The Clock Tower* (Number 70, May 2023), I explained how for the best part of this year I have been a volunteer at the Medway Archives Centre (MAC), listing the contents of various collections online. One collection I worked on was that of William Brice (ref. DE1247/872/05) who purchased the Mockbeggar farmlands in Cliffe and Higham in about 1930. In a box of loose papers, I found a sheet of A5 lined paper, the first page of a letter, headed, 'Sir'. It was dated December 12, 1916, and was from a man called William Barrett whilst he was serving in the army in France. Before, the war, William had worked as a gardener and then from 1916, records show he was working as a private chauffeur. 1921 Census revealed that at that time he was working for William Brice and his family in Birchington. As the letter was found in the Brice papers, it seems likely that it was sent to William Brice, and I concluded the article with the following paragraph:

'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.'

Our Editor, Amanda Thomas was extremely curious about the story and had a look on *Ancestry* for anyone with William Barrett in their family tree. She found a 'Julian' and made contact! Julian, William Barrett's great nephew, responded and kindly sent us some information along with two lovely photographs showing William with his family in one and Louise with her brothers, sisters and mother in the other. He wrote:

'Good afternoon Amanda, I fear my encounters with my great aunt Loui and great uncle Bill are only as a very young boy. We as a family spent one holiday there, I remembered being shown "the Bosses" posh car, a Bristol as I recall. I think where they lived at Mock Beggar Farm. Auntie Loui was my dad's mum's sister and my dad spent several holidays there but sadly the only thing I can recall him relating to me about his visits is that he was collected from the bus stop by their German Shepherd! Sorry my knowledge is so limited,
Best regards Julian.'

The picture information he provided said:

'William in front., on the right is my auntie Barbara, my dad's sister in-law. The rest of the names on the reverse I know but can't place without checking the family tree. The other picture front row from left to right Louisa, Emma (my Great Grandmother), Amy (my Grandmother), Ida.'

Looking at census records, Louisa, Amy, Ida, along with the names George, Jack (John) and Arthur written on the back of that photo are all brothers and sisters, and Emma was their mother. Amy was one of the witnesses at Louisa's wedding to William. William was next to youngest of eight children of parents John and Jane. In order the children were: Emily, Lillian, John, Emma, George, Rosie, Elsie, William and Violet. Julian has identified his Aunt Barbara, and Lil is one of William's sisters, however, I am not sure how Mildred, Kitty and the younger lady on the end fit into the Barrett family (and whose name is sadly impossible to decipher on the back of the photograph). And is that William's dog who is mentioned above?

As a footnote, we have also sent Julian a copy of the original article and letter sent by William Barrett whilst serving in World War One.

Julian's photographs can be seen opposite.

Be Prepared – 3rd Medway Sea Scouts, 1929

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

The photo overleaf was taken on the corner of Rock Avenue and St John's Road in Gillingham outside the vicarage - possibly in 1928 but probably in 1929 - was found in the photo collection of my aunt, Eva Young née Bursey (1903-1980). Judging from the angle of the sun, it looks like early morning and they are about to set off on a cycle ride: perhaps down through Kent to one of the seaside towns. It would have been very much a *Boy's Own* adventure taking their sleeping bags and camping gear.

The boy on the left is my uncle Charles Bursey (1916-1984). I discussed this photo with my father Jack in the 1990s and he told me that one of the boys was Len Adlam, and another was a boy who had died in the Gillingham Fete Tragedy in July 1929. The common link between at least three of these boys is that they all attended the County School in Third Avenue, Gillingham, which was later to become the Grammar School. They were friends and my father sometimes went cycling with them. This is their story.

of all she possessed in the world, the fruits of long saving and self-denial, and when she was burdened with an infant, he had cast her upon the world friendless and unprotected.”

The Judge sentenced Butler to be transported to Australia for seven years, but criminal records suggest that this was commuted. The former soldier spent some time in Pentonville prison before being transferred to Portland convict prison in Dorset. He was released on a so-called *ticket of leave*, the equivalent of today’s parole, at the end of 1855.

What possessed Butler and his associates to go through with such an elaborate charade must remain a matter for speculation. At a time when the property of a single woman such as Ann Farrell became her husband’s on marriage, greed could have played a part in his thinking. He may well have used the bogus marriage as simply an opportunity of moving out of his barracks. Either way, William Butler, Ann Farrell and their baby soon disappeared from history.

Gillingham.

**HEARTLESS DECEPTION.—ALLEGED CASE OF
MOCK MARRIAGE.**

The county magistrates were on Monday last engaged for several hours in the investigation of one of the most extraordinary, and, if proved to be true, one of the most heartless cases ever brought before them, in which a young Irish girl appeared as the victim, having, she supposed been lawfully married to a soldier at Gillingham church—and after living with him for several months, and giving birth to a child, was at length deserted by him and driven to the parish for support, he disavowing her as his wife, the marriage ceremony, to carry out the vile design, being alleged to be a mere mockery.

The prisoner, William Butler, a private soldier belonging to the 83d regiment stationed at Chatham barracks, and whose uniform bore a good conduct stripe, was brought up in custody of B. Howes, charged with having feloniously uttered a certain writing, as and for a copy of an entry in the registry of marriages of the parish of Gillingham, of a pretended marriage between himself and one Ann Farrell, well knowing such entry and writing to be forged.

Kentish Gazette 30 March 1852; image from the author’s collection.



Picture caption from the back of the photograph for William’s picture: from left to right, (back row), Barbara, Mildred, Lil, Kitty and ?; (front row), William Barrett and dog.



Picture caption from the back of the photograph for Louise’s picture: from left to right, (back row), Morris, George, Jack, Arthur, (front row), Louise Barrett, her mother Emma, Amy and Ida.

‘Cruel And Unmanly’

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.

In late 1851, a young Irish woman named Ann Farrell arrived at the Medway Union Workhouse, which was then at the east end of Chatham High Street. She begged the workhouse officials for help: her infant son had been left there by his father the day before and the woman was desperate and penniless. The workhouse officials questioned her with a view to return her to her home parish in Kilkenny and referred her to the Magistrates’ Court. However, after listening to the destitute young woman’s story, the magistrates issued a warrant for the arrest for the baby’s father, Private William Butler of the 83rd Regiment of Foot.

Butler was tried at the Kent Assizes in July 1852, the prosecuting barrister observing that the soldier’s offence had been committed ‘under circumstances of a novel character, at all event for the nineteenth century.’ Butler was accused of forging a certificate of marriage and of using it to convince his *wife* that their *marriage* was real. The following is an account of the affair based upon contemporary newspaper reports of the couple’s court appearances in Rochester and Maidstone.

Ann Farrell, who the *Maidstone Journal* described as ‘an interesting Irish woman’, was born in Kilkenny around 1830. She was unsure of the precise date she arrived in England, but thought it was 1847 or 1848. She had been hired as a servant to a

Ann, with what the *Maidstone Journal* called ‘a fine boy in her arms’, told her side of the story. She was supported by the Rev. Robert Orgill Lemon, the Curate of Gillingham, who confirmed that what she had believed to be her marriage lines, which supposedly bore his signature, was actually a forgery. Furthermore, Rev. Lemon produced the Register of Marriages: there was no entry of Ann’s *marriage* to Butler.

Next, Sergeant Reynolds of the 83rd Regiment said he had heard that the blank marriage certificate had been bought at Arthur Fordham’s print shop in Chatham High Street, where *Gillingham* had been written at the top. The sergeant suspected that all the writing, including the signatures of supposed *witnesses* was the work of a discharged soldier named Rogers. When pressed, Sergeant Reynolds admitted that it had been Butler himself who had told him the *marriage certificate* was not genuine.

In court, Butler admitted visiting Fordham’s and asserted that Ann had accompanied him. He denied giving her the certificate and said he believed Ann was collecting it for a friend. However, both Ann and the printer himself denied that she was the woman who had accompanied Butler. The word *Gillingham* had been written on the blank certificate by one of the printer’s employees at the anonymous woman’s request.

According to the *Kentish Gazette*: ‘... the prisoner entered into a lengthened defence, corroborating in many points the evidence as given by the prosecution, but at the same time declaring his innocence and alleging the statement of Farrell to be a fabrication.’ However, the Rochester magistrates would have none of this, and committed William Butler to the next County Assizes.

In Maidstone in July 1852, Butler’s defence claimed that Ann must have known that her *marriage* was a sham. Ann denied this, arguing that she had only become aware that something was wrong when she attended a wedding in an Anglican church some time later and realised the ceremony bore no resemblance to her own. Much of the testimony from the magistrates’ hearing was repeated, and once again, Ann’s story was supported by several witnesses.

The jury found William Butler guilty of knowingly presenting a forged official document as genuine. Before passing sentence on the charge of forgery, the Judge commented upon the moral dimension of Butler’s actions: “The prisoner has been clearly proved to have conducted himself in a most cruel and unmanly manner. He had not only deprived the unfortunate girl of her virtue, but he had also robbed her

the following day he was arrested by three sergeants, who escorted him back to Chatham in custody. Thanks to Butler's behaviour, Ann and baby William were left alone in Liverpool.

The couple exchanged letters (with soldiers or their wives reading Butler's efforts aloud to his illiterate partner). Ann perceptively began to notice that Butler was starting to distance himself from her emotionally, addressing her as 'Dear Ann' rather than his customary 'Dear Wife'. Furthermore, he urged her to remain in Liverpool rather than join him in Chatham. She should "put the child out" and go into service because "... he said it was better to be earning £20 a year than to be with him." He stated more than once that he could not support Ann and the baby on a soldier's pay.

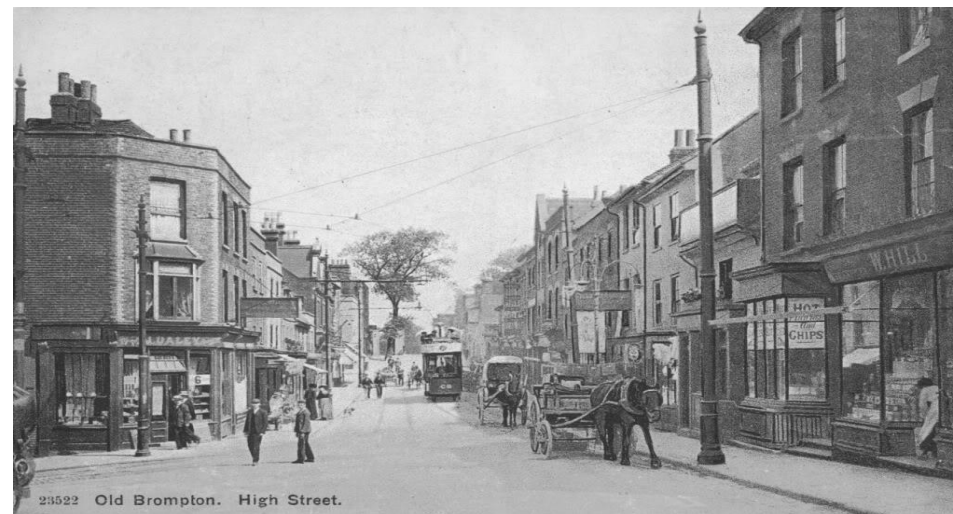
Despite this, Ann made up her mind to leave Liverpool and return to Chatham for a showdown with Butler, but by now she had none of her savings left. She planned to walk the 250 miles, but a group of sympathetic soldiers clubbed together and raised 45 shillings to subsidise her journey.

When she finally reached Chatham, she visited Butler at the barracks. According to the *Kentish Independent* newspaper, he 'treated her with derision.' Ann reminded him of his marital and parental responsibilities, producing the paper he had given her after their *wedding*. Butler then revealed to a shaken Ann that the ceremony at Gillingham Church had been a sham, that the couple were not actually married, and that he "didn't care a damn where she and the child went." As she later asserted in court, Butler "repeated that I was no wife of his and I might go where I liked." However, she could leave their baby son with him if she wished, as he accepted that the child was his.

The next day, she called her *husband's* bluff and returned to the barracks with little William. She told Butler, "I have neither money, milk nor victuals to provide it with nourishment," and handed over their son. He responded: "Very well. I'll devilish soon find a place for it." The *place* turned out to be Medway Union Workhouse, where Ann found her son the next day. It was then that the Guardians took her to the Magistrates Court with a view to returning her to Ireland, and the magistrates issued an arrest warrant for Butler.

In March 1852, the soldier appeared in Rochester Magistrates' Court charged with 'having feloniously uttered a certain writing as, and for, a copy of an entry in the Registry of Marriages of the Parish of Gillingham, of a pretended marriage between himself and one Ann Farrell, while knowing such entry and writing to be forged.'

Sergeant Major Forsyth and his wife and accompanied them to Chatham. Ann subsequently moved to the Alton Ale House in Brompton High Street, where she was employed by John Roy, the landlord.



Brompton High St with Alton Ale House behind the street lamp; image from author's collection.

There appears to have been some kind of dispute at the Alton, so Ann moved once more, this time to lodge with another Irish woman in what Ann described as *Irish Alley* in Brompton. The young woman earned a living by sewing and knitting. Before she had left Ireland, Ann had been in a relationship with a soldier, but he had been transferred to India. Wishing to rekindle their romance, she travelled to Gravesend, and with another woman, stowed away on a ship bound for the sub-continent. However, the pair were discovered, and they were put ashore in Portsmouth. Thwarted in her Indian scheme, Ann returned to the Medway Towns. At this stage, Ann had savings, part of which had come from the sale of her deceased mother's possessions, and partly from money earned at the Alton Ale House.

In the autumn of 1850, Ann's life was transformed when she met Private William Butler of the 83rd Regiment of Foot. He had been a soldier for nine years and had been widowed three years earlier. After a brief courtship, Butler proposed marriage, and Ann accepted. Both Butler and John Roy's daughter told Ann that banns had been read at St Mary's Church in Chatham. Accounts differed as to what happened next, but the planned ceremony was delayed.

Ann herself claimed it was because Butler's brothers, at her expense, travelled from Ireland and Staffordshire to attend the wedding. However, Butler and his siblings got drunk, the brothers returned home, and the couple's plans had to be temporarily halted. Another suggested explanation was that Butler's sergeant was warning him against the marriage to Ann Farrell.

Either way, Butler now told Ann that he wanted their wedding to be a more private affair: he would get the banns transferred to Gillingham Parish Church. A new date and time were arranged; she was to meet him in Gillingham churchyard at 11 am, which she did, complete with her newly purchased dress and bonnet. Butler had told Ann to bring half a guinea for the relevant fees: Ann arrived with the money.



Gillingham Parish Church where the sham marriage took place; image from author's collection.

It is perhaps relevant to what happened next to mention that at the time, a party of soldiers were using the church tower to undertake surveying work on behalf of the coastguard. They were able to access the building with a key provided by the Vicar of Gillingham. Consequently, the church was unlocked. Ann met the uniformed Butler as arranged, and they entered the church, making their way into a small room which Ann assumed was the vestry; as a Catholic, she had never been in an Anglican church before.

Three men and a woman, all strangers to Ann, were already in the room. One man, dressed in a cloak, but not clerical vestments, now took charge. Ann assumed he was some kind of clergyman. He asked the names of the couple's fathers, and then appeared to conduct a formal service, using phrases such as 'for better or worse', 'till death do you part' and so on. Butler was then asked to place a wedding ring (which Ann had purchased), on her finger. The man in the cloak then pronounced William Butler and Ann Farrell man and wife. The four strangers then left the room; Ann never saw them again.

The newly-weds were the last to leave the church, and as they left, they were greeted by a woman, who saluted the pair and offered to sell Ann a flower. Ann refused, but gave her a penny anyway. The woman was to remember the couple in court a few years later.

Ann and William Butler then walked across the fields to Chatham. In a pub later on, Butler gave Ann a document which he claimed was a copy of their entry in the Gillingham Parish Register of Marriages. Ann, who was illiterate, took his word for this. They then held what would now be called a reception or party, but which was later referred to in court as a *jollification*, paid for (as seemed to be the pattern) by Ann.

After a day or two, Butler informed Captain Austen, his superior that he was now a married man, and requested permission to live outside the barracks. Butler also told Ann to "break the ice", show Austen the certificate and make the same request. Permission was eventually granted, and the couple lived as man and wife in civilian lodgings for the next three months.

A turning point was reached when Butler was given orders to travel to Liverpool to participate in a recruitment drive. By now, all of Ann's savings had gone, and she had to pawn some of her clothes so that she could afford to make the journey north. The couple lived in lodgings in the city and Butler received a bonus for each man recruited, but the cash soon disappeared. In August 1851, while the pair were still in Liverpool, Ann gave birth to a son, who was named after his father.

Queen Victoria visited Liverpool a few months later, the first reigning monarch to do so since 1690. This was an important and prestigious event for the city, and the military played prominent ceremonial and security roles in the events of Thursday 9 October. Unfortunately, when Private William Butler reported for duty, he was found to be extremely drunk. He was escorted back to his lodgings to recover, where