



Folkestone & District Local History Society

www.folkestonehistory.org

NEWSLETTER No. 78 – Spring 2019

The Folkestone & District Local History Society's Christmas Quiz by Vincent Williams

Well, as Chairman Alan said on the night, "We haven't had a quiz in over thirty years of meetings." So this Christmas members were confuddled with chairs set around tables, rather than in the usual rows when they entered the hall; although Mary and Brian still did us proud with the tradition of hot mince pies and sausage rolls at the coffee interval of our Christmas meeting.

This year we have recognised as a committee that we need to attract more new members and to do so we may have to experiment with a few new ideas. Also, it is becoming harder to find new speakers, so we would encourage all members to tell the committee what they enjoy most about our meetings and whether there are any specific subjects they would like to hear talks on. Your feedback is vital to our continued existence.

Our newest committee member Mark, designed a flyer and we posted an event for the first time on facebook... so on Wednesday 5th December, in a packed Holy Trinity Church Hall, hopefully everyone had an enjoyable time answering multiple choice questions on the most irrelevant and possibly irreverent facts about Folkestone you really didn't need to know!

When you have, in your society someone like Alan Taylor, whom most Folkestonians know as 'Mr Folkestone,' it's tough to design a quiz that gives everyone an equal chance of victory... so I took my inspiration from the BBC quiz 'QI.' And for those of you who don't know, 'QI,' a.k.a. 'Quite Interesting,' is a BBC2 TV quiz show that turns what are thought to be well known facts about a subject on their head, or just comes up with totally obscure facts that are quite interesting but are hardly life-changing or essential to know. So, in ignoring all the really important information about our town, what does such a quiz about Folkestone tell us...

- The famous murderer Dr Crippen stayed in the town just before he was arrested.
- The creator of the Teletubbies was schooled at the Harvey Grammar School.
- The longest resident at Etchinghill hospital stayed 63 years.
- Former PM, Ted Heath, bought his swimming trunks in person in a Tontine Street shop.
- The actress who starred in Fawlty Towers and whose Shih-tzu dog was poisoned by Manuel was schooled at Downs College.
- One of the Prime Ministers of New Zealand was born in Folkestone.
- Local shops have been opened by the casts of 'Coronation Street', 'It Ain't Half Hot Mum' and 'The Goodies.'
- Terry & June filmed an episode on a Folkestone cross-channel ferry.
- Donny Osmond signed records at Hummingbird Records in the Old High Street.
- Folkestone Library was invaded by a Dalek in 1977.
- Barbara Windsor has pulled pints in the Pullman.
- And you probably do not want to know what former local politician and owner of The Grand, Michael Stainer, intended turning Folkestone Town Hall into!

I could go on, but you would beg me not to. But across the 48 points available, and I do feel ever so slightly bad for making him answer the quiz on his own, our Chairman Alan scored a respectable (but still mid-table) 24 points. And well done to the team of Alison Edwards, Karen Tatt and Paul Tatt for winning with a whopping 32!

To be honest the questions were so obscure I think anyone who got over 33%, which would be expected from sheer guesswork alone, should be congratulated. So I hope everyone had a fun and enlightening time. And if you enjoyed it, let us know so we can organise another quiz.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT by Alan F Taylor

The January meeting was an open evening where members bring along items of local interest. I took two large photographs, one of St Michael's Church Spire being repaired in 1907 and one of Singers Sewing Machine shop on the corner of Guildhall Street & Cheriton Road taken in 1898 just after just after it had been built, both jobs were undertaken by local builder W. Dunk; postcards of streets scenes & shop fronts; stereographs and viewers. Brian Adams took postcard albums which, belonged to his grandfather. Peter & Annie Bamford took postcard albums of Sandgate. Vince Williams took stereographs & viewers; postcard albums of Cheriton; a R.G. Wood tie press and a Sharps milk bottle. Margaret Care brought a number of sale catalogues, which belonged to the Stokes family, plus other items of family interest. And Mark Hourahane brought a selection of theatre programmes for the Pleasure Gardens theatre & Leas Pavilion, including posters & ephemera; two albums of family photographs taken from places they had been on holiday including Folkestone & Sandgate; a Grand Hotel silver milk jug and a Metropole Hotel silver sugar bowl.

Twenty people attended the meeting.

At the February meeting we welcomed back guest speaker Pete Ewart who presented us with his illustrated talk entitled 'A Stroll Along the Nailbourne Valley'. Pete started by saying 'thank you very much for having me back this evening I enjoy coming here where I lived for 12 years and I am particularly looking forward to the interval this evening because I enjoy my cup of tea. We are in the year 2019 which means its 40 years since I gave my first talk in 1979. Between the last 30 years I have given 1200 talks, but in the first 10 years just a few talks. However my first talk was in Folkestone in 1979 and my tea was made by Mary and every time I return to Folkestone to the History Society or Family History Society my tea has been made by Mary.' So Mary got applause from the audience!

Pete announced the title of his talk and said the word *Nailbourne* means no more than an English stream. His talk took us from Lyminge to the River Stour and at each village he talked about the local churches and folk who lived in the villages.

The following is an extract from a book entitled '**The Intermittent (Or Nailbourne) Streams Of East Kent**' by **F. C. Snell**, published in 1938.

The Elham Valley Nailbourne is named from the valley in which it flows, is the largest of three in The East Kent district, much longer than either of the others, being some 14 or 15 miles when flowing from its source down to the point where it joins the main river. Starting from the latter point, there is the first important feature to be noted, which is, that with all these streams there is what is known as a "permanent saturation level." It is the point or position in the geological formation of the valley, where the impervious layer of clay or gault that underlies the immense super-imposed masses of chalk, crops out, or comes near to the surface of the ground. Therefore, as small subterranean streams are continually draining away the water held in suspension by the chalk, along the surface of the gault strata, it is at this point where the gault crops out near ground level, that a stream of water would appear, and constantly flow. At all these points of permanent saturation level in each stream, water is permanently flowing. In the present case – Elham nailbourne – it is situated in a low-lying spot, about midway between the villages of Bekesbourne and Littlebourne, away in the fields on the Hewlett's Park

estate, at a place locally known as Well Chapel. At this spot, the water issues above the ground as springs, flowing off as little streams, that surround small islands on which are trees and undergrowth, and from this point the rivulets unite, and form a permanently flowing little river known as the Lesser Stour, that soon passes through the village of Littlebourne, and so on to Ickham, Wickhambreaux and Stourmouth, and so on through the marshes until it joins the River Stour at a point locally as Plucks Gutter, but more recently named Stour Haven.

From this permanent saturation point, the stream is always flowing in all seasons, even in times of prolonged drought, and from this point on up the valley, the Nailbourne, proper, flows in season for a longer or shorter time and afterwards dies away again until the next outbreak. The valley which the Elham nailbourne flows starts from this point in a south-westerly direction, for some 2 miles when it takes a wide bend, and continues almost south-east. From the valley level the hills gradually rise higher and higher on either side. On the left side – proceeding up the valley – are situated, first the Bekesbourne Downs on which is the extensive Bekesbourne Aerodrome, leading on to the wide and far reaching Barham Downs, and Adisham Downs, extending for many miles in a north and easterly direction.

On the opposite, or right side, to the west, lies an even larger tableland extending to and beyond the large plateau known as the Stelling Minnis, one of the highest land points in Kent.

It's interesting to note that the daughter of the author of the book F. C. Snell was at our February meeting with a copy of her father's book and when speaking to her she told me her late father who died in 1957 published the book himself and that there was only 30 copies printed. I am lucky to have one of those 30 copies in my collection.

We would like to welcome new member: Jo Nyirenda

On a rather sad note I would like to announce that Don Gregory formerly Vice Chairman of the Society died on Monday 4th February aged 83 years.

ANDREW ERNEST (ERNIE) HORTON (1894-1983), His Life and autograph album

It was well over two years ago that the Local History Society Committee examined a box of items which had belonged to Ernie Horton, a private in the Royal Army Medical Corps and related to his service during World War I. The box contained Ernie's medals and badges, documents relating to his enlistment in the 2/2 Home Counties Field Ambulance in January 1915, his much thumbed nursing manual and an autograph album. Ernie had been born in Cheriton in 1894, brought up in Folkestone and worked as a market gardener before the war. However unable to find work when he was discharged from the RAMC in 1919 he had emigrated to Canada. His daughter in Canada had sent the items, which give such an insight into Ernie's work during World War 1, back to his home town of Folkestone where the family hoped they would be accessible to the public.

The most intriguing of the items was Ernie's autograph album. Paintings, drawings and illuminated pages signed by Germans stood out. Why had Ernie invited Germans to sign his album during World War 1? To make sense of this, research was required on Ernie's background. Some light was thrown on this by five sheets of notes in Ernie's handwriting, which gave details of his activities during 1915 and 1916 when after training with the RAMC, he was appointed a nursing orderly in the 2/2 Home Counties Field Ambulance. It was clear that during the autumn of 1916, Ernie was a nursing orderly at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire, at a military hospital where there were German Prisoners of War. It was they who had contributed to Ernie's autograph album. There were even the names of the German prisoners in Ward 18 in the album.

The Committee were concerned that the very fragile album might be put in a drawer or case in a library, and possibly forgotten, so that researchers would not be able to use the wonderful archive within the

album. They decided that after Hilary Tolputt had done initial research, they would all help with checking transcriptions, while Vince Williams would take responsibility for scanning the album and Mark Hourahane would produce an e-Book of the autograph album preceded by the biographical details uncovered by the research. An index of names on the Society's website would hopefully direct family history researchers and particularly Germans to the e-Book and the album.

At the end of last year, the e-Book, skilfully compiled by Mark Hourahane, was put onto the Folkestone and District Local History Society's website by Vince Williams. The committee then decided that it would be good to have a printed version of the e-Book. There were many technical difficulties which were overcome by Mark Hourahane and the finished book contains the fine paintings and illuminated pages of the artistic German prisoners and the humorous entries of the British soldiers. It is available for sale at History Society meetings and is a bargain at £6.

On February 16th, an audience of 34 which included relatives of Ernie Horton attended an illustrated talk at Folkestone Museum given by Hilary Tolputt on the life of Ernie Horton, and the work of the 2/2 Home Counties Field Ambulance in World War 1. Ros McCarthy, Ernie Horton's niece, thanked Hilary for the talk and the Local History Society for producing the beautiful book "A.E. Horton, His Life and Autographs", and formally presented the artefacts, which were on display, to the Folkestone Museum. Thanks are due to the family for allowing the Society to undertake this project and to Jen Buchman and the Friends of the Folkestone Museum who made arrangements for the meeting which included providing tea.

