



**FOLKESTONE & DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**
www.folkestonehistory.org
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NEWSLETTER No. 80 – Autumn 2019

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT by Alan F Taylor.

At the June meeting we welcomed member speaker Hilary Tolputt who was going to take us on a **Guided tour of Holy Trinity Church**, but due to inclement weather the light was very poor so Hilary used her power-point presentation instead.

Hilary started with the early history of the church she said it was aptly known as 'the church in the fields'. William, 3rd Earl of Radnor had ambitious plans for the development of the west end of the town, and had identified a site for the church on his land by 1865.

The church was built in stages as the houses around were contracted. The 1868 building consisted of just the nave and chancel without transepts. The first vicar was the Revd Charles J. Taylor, and the curate, the Revd H. M. Roxby, officiated at the first services held by licence on 13th June 1868. The Archbishop of Canterbury consecrated the church on 29th July 1868. In addition a vicarage was constructed in 1870 at a cost of £2,056 next to the church; this site is now occupied by Cordova Court.

The second phase was finished in 1882 with the building of the south aisle and transept, and the third stage in 1888 with the completion of the north aisle, north transept, the tower with spire and north porch, all to the plans of the architect Ewan Christian, and builders of the three stages were Robert Baker, Henry Clemmans, and Cornish & Gayner. The third and fourth Earls of Radnor paid the entire cost of the building, which was just over £13,350.

Hilary then went on to talk about some of the vicars. The second one being Canon Robert Baynes, who was vicar from 1880 to 1885; Canon Frederick Woodhouse, 1886 to 1905; Revd. Canon F. Evelyn Gardiner, 1905 to 1918; the Revd. Wallace H. Elliott, 1918 to 1929; and the Revd. Claude Spencer Thomas Watkins.

Due to most of the population being evacuated, Holy Trinity Church was closed in 1940 and the vicar moved to another parish. The Revd. Edwin Cook, vicar of the nearby Christ Church, looked after the Holy Trinity congregation who were left. In September and October 1940, bombs fell, blowing out all the windows on the north side of Holy Trinity Church. Then Christ Church was destroyed by enemy action in May 1942 and the congregation spent the next week cleaning up Holy Trinity Church, and covering the broken windows. It reopened the following Sunday and in September 1941 the Revd. Edwin A. Cook became vicar of Holy Trinity Church.

After a short break Hilary spoke about the stained glass windows. She said that the windows destroyed in WW2 were replaced in 1979 and in 2014. The apse ceiling, painted in 1897, was a gift from the Revd. and Mrs F.C. Woodhouse. The ornately gilded reredos, which was painted by Clayton Bell in 1889, was a memorial to Susannah, first wife of the Reverend F. C. Woodhouse. The first organ was built by Bishop and Starr in 1869 and a second organ was built by the same firm in 1888, and further restoration was carried out over the years. To finish Hilary spoke about the Edwardian font, which was designed by George Fellowes Prynne, and stands on a raised platform with a Sicilian marble step and glass mosaic flooring at the west end of the church.

A reference from Sumner's 3d Illustrated Guide c.1892: Our most aristocratic church is Holy Trinity, at the extreme West-End. It is the gift of the late Lord Radnor, and was only completed in March, 1889, when the Archbishop came down and preached a sermon. The Rev. F. C. Woodhouse is generally considered to be a most suitable vicar, as there is a distingué air about him which is quite in keeping with his surroundings. He is the author of several widely-read religious works, and all his discourses, which he reads, bear marks of a scholarly preparation. The ritual is moderate, and the services are as bright as the building is light. He is helped by the Rev. W. T. G. Hunt, an elderly clergyman, whose reading of the lessons it is always a pleasure to listen to.

Forty-two people attended the meeting, which included visitors.

Our July meeting saw member and author, Vince Williams, gave his fascinating talk called **Fictional Folkestone** which he last gave to the Society in 2012, detailing the many famous authors and poets who either lived in the town or wrote about the local area. The talk was illustrated with many photographs of places these writers either lived in or wrote about.

Those who saw the talk last time will no doubt be aware of Folkestone's connection with such famous authors such as Charles Dickens, H.G.Wells, Richard Barham, Henry Williamson, Samuel Beckett, Arthur Conan Doyle and Wilfred Owen. But Vince also covered the authors, who although famous in their time, have sadly fallen out of favour with the public today, such as: Jocelyn Brooke, Alfred Copard, J.S. Fletcher, Elizabeth Bowen, Frances Marsh and Catherine Crowe.

In this newly updated talk, Vince explained the now found literary connections the town has to J.R.R. Tolkien and Beatrix Potter, and only recently discovered in the last year, to the poet Christina Rossetti.

Sixty-four people attended the meeting seventeen of whom were visitors.

At the August meeting we welcomed Melanie Gibson-Barton who presented here talk entitled '**The Suffragettes and the Suffragists – Votes for Women.**'

A suffragette was a member of militant women's organisations in the early 20th century who, under the banner "Votes for Women", fought for the right to vote in public elections, known as women's suffrage. The term refers in particular to members of the British Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), a women-only movement founded in 1903 by Emmeline Pankhurst, which engaged in direct action and civil disobedience. In 1906, a reporter writing in the *Daily Mail* coined the term 'suffragette' for the WSPU, from suffragist, to belittle the women advocating women's suffrage. The militants embraced the new name, even adopting it for use as the title of the newspaper published by the WSPU.

Women had won the right to vote in several countries by the end of the 19th century; in 1893, New Zealand became the first self-governing country to grant the vote to all women over the age of 21. When by 1903 women in Britain had not been enfranchised, Pankhurst decided that women had to "do the work ourselves"; the WSPU motto became "deeds, not words." The suffragettes heckled politicians, tried to storm parliament, were attacked and sexually assaulted during battles with the police, chained themselves to railings, smashed windows, set fire to postboxes and empty buildings, set bombs in order to damage churches and property, and faced anger and ridicule in the media. When imprisoned they went on hunger strike, to which the government responded by force-feeding them. The death of one suffragette, Emily Davison, when she ran in front of the king's horse at the 1913 Epsom Derby, made headlines around the world. The WSPU campaign had varying levels of support from within the suffragette movement; breakaway groups formed, and within the WSPU itself not all members supported the direct action.

The suffragette campaign was suspended when World War I broke out in 1914. After the war, the Representation of the People Act 1918 gave the vote to women over the age of 30 who met certain criteria and then the Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act 1928 gave all women the vote at age 21.



Fifty-nine people attended the meeting which included 16 visitors.

Folkestone Great War Baseball

“Canada came to Shorncliffe in force in February 1915, and very soon Folkestone was a suburb of Toronto.” 40,000 Canadians of the 2nd Contingent were stationed in Folkestone for training and they brought baseball with them.

Folkestone claims “the first baseball league in England” – at least Canadian Military League. The C.E.F. came to Shorncliffe following the 1st Contingents’ miserable winter on Salisbury Plain, who suffered appalling weather and disease. Folkestone was ideal, on the railway network it was the main port of embarkation to France. Shorncliffe Camp had been recently vacated, rifle ranges and a musketry school were nearby, as was the town with its comforts and amenities.

Baseball provided a spectacle for a sports-starved public but was also a morale boosting activity for the soldiers. The inaugural 1915 “Dibgate Baseball League” was won by the 6th Field Co. Divisional Engineers, composed of students and staff from Queens University, Kingston. Matches were watched by thousands, gate money went to charity and the local press ran weekly reports.

From these reports we know the Fort Garry Horse pitcher, Jack Hinds, was semi-professional prior to enlisting and pitched for numerous Winnipeg teams into the 1930’s. Ralph Baker Catcher/1st Baseman for the 27th Battalion was an Allan Cup winning Ice Hockey player for the Winnipeg Victorias. Stanley Maxted, left fielder for the Eaton's Motor Machine Gun Battery had been born in Folkestone but was sent to Toronto as one of the British Home Children aged 10; after the war he had a career in broadcasting and as a film actor.

Baseball fever gripped the country and other leagues emerged. In London, US civilians formed the London Americans who played Canadian teams and later helped establish the Anglo-American Baseball League.

A Shorncliffe team played the London Americans at Lords Cricket Ground that September, and were unofficially crowned British Champions.

Baseball continued in Folkestone throughout the war. In 1916 the 104th Battalion included coloured player Private Rankin Wheary; Folkestone’s baseball was integrated long before the major leagues.

By 1918 leagues across the country were controlled by the Canadian Military Athletics Association, and were effectively professional. Play-offs decided the champions of the British Isles.

In June 1918 Shorncliffe hosted over 250 games of baseball. The local independently run Ameri-and-Cans League caused national controversy scheduling play on Sunday, the outcry boosted attendances.

One player Richard Odgers pitched the first game in April 1915 for the 12th Battalion at Folkestone and in 1919 was on Team Canada's roster at the Inter-Allied games in Paris, participating at the birth and conclusion of the Great War Baseball Story.

This year, on Sunday, June 16th, a commemorative Great War Baseball game was held at the Three Hills Sports Park, featuring a local team the Kent Buccaneers and a team made up of serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces in the UK, the Canuk Warriors. This marked the return of Canadian baseball to the town 100 years after it was last here, and was played on the same ground many of the wartime matches were played. A free event, over 200 people came to watch the Buccaneers run out 13-1 winners. Simultaneously a photographic exhibition of Great War Baseball was held at the Folkestone Museum.

By Andrew Taylor



Three Hills, Folkestone Cricket ground June 16th 2019

On behalf of the officers committee we have some very sad news the society's treasurer Paul Tatt passed away on Saturday 27th July aged 57 years. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Karen and family.

Also on a rather sad note I would like to announce the death of John Philpott on 25th January.

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