

**FOLKESTONE & DISTRICT  
Local History Society**  
[www.folkestonehistory.org](http://www.folkestonehistory.org)

## **NEWSLETTER No. 103 Autumn 2025**

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT by Alan F. Taylor**

At the June meeting we welcomed Mike de la Mare & Paul Naylor who presented their talk entitled **The Hortons Of Cold Harbour, Hythe: The Photographs Of Benjamin William Horton**. Paul started by saying he was the chairman of Hythe Civic Society we went on to say Alfred Joseph Horton kept a daily diary from 1888 until his death in 1956. It is now held at the Kent History and Library Centre in Maidstone. In 1974, his nephew Bernard, son of Alfred's older brother Ben, produced a set of notes summarising the entries and adding his own commentary together with some photographs. A digital copy of these have been donated to Hythe Civic Society.

Alfred's father was Benjamin Basset Horton, born in 1837, the son of Joseph Horton, miller and ship owner, and his wife Fanny. Benjamin worked as a woolstapler as a young man before marrying seventeen-year-old Emma Sheafe Finn in 1857.

After a brief spell as a 'photographic artist' and the loss of two babies, he took his family to live at Cold Harbour House, off Blackhouse Hill in Hythe on 17 October 1867. Paul then handed over to Mike who showed us an early map of Hythe pointing out the house to us.

Paul then continued by saying that the electoral register for the next year describes him as qualifying as a voter by right of ownership of *'a moiety of houses and lands'* known as, meaning that he was a co-owner. The owner of the other half was probably his brother Joseph, who bought a *'messuage with three parcels of lands known as Cold Harbour, together with three newly-built cottages and all being in the parishes of Saltwood and Newington next to Hythe'* in 1864. Paul then handed over to Mike who showed us where the properties were.

In the 1871 census, Benjamin describes himself as an *'owner of houses.'* As well as Cold Harbour House, he had built a pair of semi-detached dwellings in St Leonard's Road, Hythe. Known as Devonshire Villas. One was rented and later bought by the Rev. Harrison Brown, the local Congregational Minister.

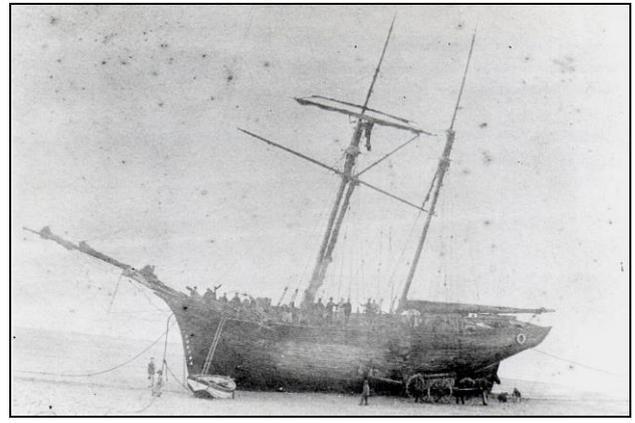
Benjamin's father, Joseph, died in 1873 and left him another 19 cottages and a public house, the Three Mariners in Windmill Street, Hythe.

Benjamin was a pioneering early photographer and many of the photographs which Paul & Mike showed us had been developed from his original glass plate negatives.

Thirty-nine people attended the meeting one of whom was a visitor.



**Cold Harbour House.**



**The Vivid unloading coal on Hythe beach c1880 owner Joseph Tilby Horton.**

At the July meeting we welcomed member and speaker Tony Hill who resented his talk entitled “**Look Up**” – an illustrated talk which started with a view of the Warren followed by Martello Tower No.1 showing the view to Martello Tower No.3. The view that followed included a view looking down the Tram Road; the Sunny Sands showing Cornelia Parker’s *The Folkestone Mermaid*; the outer harbour showing the old houses in East Street and the Stade, which were demolished in 1934-35 and replaced with the artisan council houses as seen now; St. Peter’s Church & School; the inner harbour showing Parade House; the viaduct; the Harbour Station before and after it had been refurbished; Anthony Gormley’s art work; Tontine Street showing Jonathan Wright’s *fleet of golden fishing boats*; Mill Bay; the Old High Street where Tony pointed out the building where the public house Marquis of Granby used to be; The Bayle showing what was Tom Taylor’s pork butchers shop; the Bayle pond; the cottages on the Bayle and the British Lion Pub and opposite where Mr Alfred Parrish had his radio business; the churchyard, down the path to Church Street. Tony pointed out the building where KCC had their offices; the Pullman Wine bar where there was a fire in 1991; the Queens Hotel which

was demolished in 1963. Queen’s House was built on the site and Bonmarche clothing store is on the ground floor and above the shop, where the offices of Kent County Council Social Services were, the building has now been converted into flats by builder William Marcus Brown. Tony then showed us where John Lukey’s first shop was, the Astoria Cinema which opened in 1935 and then



became the Odeon which was demolished in 1974 and is now the site occupied by Boots Chemists; the Bates Hotel which became the Esplanade, Brookes Wine merchants; Christ Church after it had been bombed; the William Harvey Statue; the Band Stand; the Zig-Zag path; the Amphitheatre; and the little railway finishing with The Lower Leas Coastal Park.



Forty-nine people attended the meeting of whom nine were visitors.

At the August meeting we welcome guest speaker Dave Gibson who presented his talk entitled **Susan Spain – Dunk, F.R.A.M. : Folkestone’s Promenade Conductor & Composer.**

Susan was the third of four children (Ethel K. Dunk born 1876; John De Lanoy Dunk born 1878; Susan Spain Dunk born 1880; William Major Dunk born 1882). Their father was a master plumber and house builder who lived at 46 Tontine Street before moving to Halifax House, 92 Cheriton Road. Her second name, Spain, was added as the Dunk family were related to the Spain family. She studied violin and composition at The Royal Academy of Music, London, with Alfred Gibson, Stewart Macpherson and Richard Walthew, and later taught composition and harmony there. For a time she played the viola in a private quartet of Walter Cobbett. She also played (violin or viola) in the Winifred Small Quartet and Cobbett made suggestions for “Anthology” programmes for the quartet. She conducted some of her own works at the British Women’s Symphony Orchestra. She



also conducted her own works at The London Promenade Concerts (1924-1927) and at Bournemouth, Folkestone, Eastbourne and Torquay.

In 1908, she married Henry Gibson (7<sup>th</sup> October 1882 – 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1954). He was a minor composer, violinist, organist and pianist. The marriage lasted about sixteen years and she had one son, The Reverend Alan Gibson (November 1911 - September 1999), and two grandchildren. She died on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1962, aged 81.

Dave, as well as giving us a fascinating talk, showing us many photographs and ephemera from his family’s archives, and sharing family anecdotes; also treated us to audio clips of many of Susan Spain-Dunk’s works.

Fifty-six people attended the meeting, of whom 12 were visitors.

**Looking back...** Did you know that the Folkestone & District Local History Society celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> birthday this year? And that our first speaker was the Rev. Alan Gibson – son of Susan Spain Dunk!

The Inaugural meeting for the society was held on Monday October 14<sup>th</sup> 1985 at Dover College Junior School, 60 Shorncliffe Road. Twenty-two people attended the meeting, all of whom became members. The chairman elected was Charles Whitney, Hon. Sec. Anne Bamford, Hon. Treasurer Eamonn Rooney with Rita Rolfe, Alan Taylor, Peter Bamford, Ann Neville, Maureen Shaw and Eric Frankland elected to the committee.

On Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2010, the society celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a dinner at Folkestone Bowls Club. Seventy-eight members and guests sat down to a three course dinner. Invited guests were, Charles & Ann Whitney, and the then Mayor and Mayoress, Tom and Kate McNeice.

An after dinner speech was given by Charles Whitney (the first chairman) who presented the Chairman Alan Taylor with a solid silver chain of office, which depicts the society’s logo. This was followed by a speech by the Chairman and then Mayor. We also had a slideshow of photographs

depicting the Society's events over the past 25 years – while this was taking place 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary booklets were handed out to all those present.



So thank you to all those members past and present who have supported the Society as we reach our Ruby Anniversary. Your help is greatly appreciated and without it we would not be able to put on the talks, quizzes and exhibitions that we do, and research and publish the books and DVDs that we have done.

And finally, we would like welcome new members, Elizabeth and Rob Williams.