



**FOLKESTONE & DISTRICT
Local History Society**
www.folkestonehistory.org

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Chairman's Report by Alan F. Taylor

December's meeting was our, now annual, **Local History Christmas quiz**. Terry Begent had set 25 multi-choice questions, and Tony Hill and Brian Adams had taken twenty-three photographs around the town to be identified. After the refreshments with tea, coffee, hot sausage rolls and mice pies, the raffle was called. Then Terry and Tony gave us the answers and we added up our totals. The winning team was Peter & Annie Bamford and Sara Adams who got 39 questions correct out of 50.

Thirty-seven people attended the meeting of whom ten were visitors.

At the January meeting we welcomed member speaker Mark Hourahane who presented his talk entitled **Folkestone's Disappearing Heritage**. Mark started by showing us two early maps of Folkestone before taking us on a tour round Folkestone talking about buildings past and present, the following are some of the buildings he spoke about.

- The business of Plumber Roddis drapers; milliners and costumers started trading in 1889 occupying shops in the High Street & Rendezvous Street. The business closed in 1972 the premises remained empty until they were demolished in 1984. The pillars in the High Street were listed and were supposed to be kept, but the ones there now are not the original ones.
- Thomas Fuller Taylor started his pork butchers shop at 86 The Bayle. The shop closed in 1973 it was then occupied by a Witches Coven then it was converted into living accommodation in 1997. It is now an Airbnb owned by Dean Richardson.
- The Harveian Institute was demolished and the Folkestone Herald moved to new offices on the site in 1912. The Medieval House which stood next to the Herald Offices was demolished in 1916 and the site was used to extend the Herald offices which were demolished in 1987. The site is now occupied by a complex of flats called "Glendale". Numbers 15, 17, 19 and 21 The Bayle were demolished c1934 to build Priory Hall which became Dance Easy which was demolished to build a complex of flats.
- The Cistern House built between the years 1782 and 1786 was demolished in 1858 to build the Town Hall in 1861 which was designed by local architect Joseph Messenger and the porch was added in 1879. The council sold the town hall in 1986 for £180,000 and it was occupied by Superdrug, then Waterstones book shop and then Madhouse clothing store. In 2011 the council bought back the town hall for £750,000.
- The Kings Arms Hotel, Sandgate Road, was built between 1782 and 1786. In 1881 the site was acquired for road widening and the hotel was demolished and the Queens Hotel was built in 1884 at the cost of £30,000 on part of the site. The Queens Hotel was demolished in 1963. Queens House was built on the site - the ground floor being occupied by Burtons men's outfitters, now occupied by Bonmarche clothing store. The offices at the top have been converted into flats by William Brown and are called "Master William's Place".

- Carlo Maestrani had a restaurant in Sandgate Road opening in 1889. It was sold in 1932 and demolished to build the Astoria Cinema, which opened on Saturday 20th April 1935. It became the Odeon in 1940 which was demolished in 1974 to build Boots, Chemists.
- The HSBC bank celebrated its centenary on 18th May 2000. The building was first occupied in 1895 by auctioneers, before the London City & Midland Bank opened. It expanded in the 1920s after taking over the shop next to it in Sandgate Road, with the present façade designed by T.B. Whinney. In 1924 the bank became Midland Bank, which remained until it was merged under the name HSBC (Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation).
- After the Hotel Esplanade was demolished, 57 & 59 Sandgate Road, which was occupied by Seeboard, became unsafe. The building was demolished in 1974 and Seeboard moved into what is now the Savers shop in Sandgate Road. A complex of shops was built on the site of the Esplanade Hotel and the former Seeboard shop, which included WHSmith, now TGJones.
- In 1914 Frederick J Bobby & Co. purchased seven houses No's 48-60 in Sandgate Road called Albion Terrace. Because of the First World War, Bobby's plans for a new store were put on hold so they let the houses to the Belgian authorities and they became the Headquarters for the Vice-Consul and other Belgian Government departments. Bobby's new store opened to the public on 6th May 1931. Their neighbours at 62-66 Sandgate Road were car showrooms for Martin Walter Ltd. They put the property up for sale and Lewis & Hyland purchased the property, and in August 1935 they sold it to Bobby's. Bobby's was renamed in 1972 and it became Debenhams which closed on 20th January 2020. Folkestone & Hythe District Council then purchased the building in March 2020 and it was re-named "Folca".
- The Bouverie Hotel in Bouverie Road East opened 9th February 1867. The name changed to the Victoria Hotel in 1986 and the building was demolished in February 2000. Building of Bouverie Square commenced in 1862 and the bus station was built on the site and opened in 1955. The houses on the North West side of Bouverie Square were demolished in 1973 and a car park and offices called "Bouverie House" were built on the site. The offices stood empty until 1986 when Saga moved in changing the name to "Saga Building".
- The council offices in West Terrace round to the Leas were demolished to build Fortune House, an office block for Welfare Insurance Company. The Welfare Company moved to Devon in June 1978 and the building remained empty until 1987 when it was converted into flats. In front of the flats was Sainsbury's store which opened in 1970 and is now occupied by McDonald's. Mark mentioned the Memorial Arch and its liking to McDonald's logo.
- The disused Hotel de France on the Leas (formerly Langhorne Hotel) caught fire on 11th September 1993. Kantilal Taylor of no fixed address died in the hotel fire. The four-story hotel was in such a dangerous condition that it was demolished. The site is now a car park.
- The Leas Pavilion designed by Reginald Pope opened as a superior tea room on 1 July 1902. In 1928 J. Grant Anderson built a stage and introduced plays and tea matinees. In 1929 Mr Anderson left and Arthur Brough Players moved in. On 1st September 1985 the Pavilion closed and re-opened as the Leas Club in 1986 which closed in 2008. Plans to build flats and restore the Leas Pavilion have been on going since 2021 by various developers.
- Castlehaven Hotel at No's 21 and 22 The Leas (corner of Shakespeare Terrace) was destroyed by a long-distance shell on 25th September 1944. A complex of flats called George Cooper House was erected on the site by Jimmy Hyham.
- Christ Church was erected in 1850 and enlarged in 1869. It was bombed on Sunday 17th May 1942. Two people were killed - 66 year old May Thomson and 47 year old Vera Ansell. Only the tower remains and site is now a memorial garden.
- On the 17th June 1857 the Folkestone Chronicle reported that four large houses known as Langhorne-Gardens were being converted in a hotel to be called "West Cliff Hotel". During WW1 the hotel was used as a Canadian Ear and Eye Hospital. After the war, the hotel's name changed to "Majestic Hotel" which closed in 1962 and was demolished in 1964. The site is now occupied by Majestic Parade.
- The Wampach Hotel in Castle Hill Avenue opened in 1886 and closed in 1973. Sidney de Haan wanted to purchase the hotel to build a larger hotel, but the hotel was wrecked by a fire and part demolished in 1975 and completely demolished in 1982-3. The site is now occupied by flats called "Court Place".

- A 17th century barn, Ingles Manor, was in Castle Hill Avenue, the barn burnt down on Thursday 15 March 2001.
- The Lyndhurst Hotel, Clifton Gardens was demolished to build Home Pine House which opened in 1984.
- There was a fire at the Garden House Hotel, Sandgate Road on Saturday 3rd July 1999 and it was demolished in August 2003 and the site is now occupied by Garden House Court.



The Medieval House on The Bayle, built c1400



The Kings Arms Hotel in Sandgate Road



Ingles Manor 17th Century Barn



The Queens Hotel which replaced the Kings Arms

Sixty-three people attended the meeting of whom 20 were visitors

At February's meeting we welcomed Rob and Carole Moody who presented their talk entitled: **Traders & Travellers: Old and Folkestone Cemetery**. Rob and Carole have researched many of the people in the cemetery and is there selection of those who had travelled or were traders, or both.

They showcased Alfred Chase Parr, who ventured onto the Arctic ice, heading for the Pole. When the party had given up, he was the only fit member left. His heroic lone walk back to their ship, the Alert, led to the rescue of the remaining party. John Lushington Sherren Adams featured, sailing nearly as far in the opposite direction and getting caught by a typhoon, in the South China Sea, while heading to Manilla. Also among the travellers were the Huleatt family, who were in Messina when the earthquake struck in 1908; Fanny Frost, whose father got a job as a lighthouse keeper and took his family to remote places in England; and Eliza and William Whittle, who both had jobs with the railway

at different times and followed the work from the Midlands, through Battersea, to Maidstone, finally settling in Folkestone.

The traders were represented by Henry William Taylor and his family, with their long-running drapers shop in Tontine Street and the sad story of William Hook, a fly driver who couldn't get any work in the bad winter of 1890-91. After selling his furniture, to feed his family, he must have felt that his options were limited. He was found, frozen, on the seashore, early one morning. Frederick Kennett was a dairyman who seemed to spend much of his time in court for various reasons and Kate Blank, who was a greengrocer, aided by her lodger, Carl, who later became her husband. She left an unusual stone with the inscription in shorthand.



The bathing establishment was a Folkestone institution in its time, with many types of baths, dance halls, billiard rooms, refreshment rooms and other entertainments. Annie Taylor and her husband George were one of its first, probably the actual first, managers. They were followed by Walter Fagg, who invented the amazing bathing carriage which ran on rails and was worked by a steam engine. The third manager was Edwin Willis. All of these are in the cemetery.

The final slides showed the many members of the Rees family, whose ancestors had a little shop in Wales and who moved to Smyrna, Turkey. They were certainly travellers and also traders as they built up a fortune, first with cottons and dyestuffs and then a large shipping business, before retiring to Folkestone and erecting an eight foot tall cross.

Fifty-four people attended the meeting of whom 6 were visitors.



We would like to welcome new members: Helen Lee and Carol Middleton.

On a rather sad note former member Tom Leftley has died aged 99 years. He was a founder member, elected onto the committee at the AGM 1986 and was elected Treasurer at the AGM 1987 and he stood down as Treasurer in 2001.