

**FOLKESTONE & DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY
www.folkestonehistory.org
Registered Charity No. 295994**

NEWSLETTER No. 91 – Autumn 2022

Chairman's Report by Alan Taylor.

At the July meeting we welcomed our Treasurer Terry Beget who presented his talk entitled '**St Eanswythe's Water and other Folkestone Springs**'.

Terry started by saying St Eanswythe's Water had long been the subject of legend, a legend that starts in the 7th century with the tale of Folkestone's patron saint striking the ground and drawing its spring in Swecton all the way to her priory on the coast – running uphill in the process. He showed early Kent maps the first one of 1575 showing what the Pent Stream as St Eanswythe's Water is now. He compared that one with a map dated 1698 and another one of 1769, the watercourses in 1801, 1819, 1872, 1936, 1946, 1960 etc. Terry came to the conclusion that all these watercourses ran down hill.

Terry also talked about Martha's Dyke and said it was in the East ward of the town with the road that crosses the railway and leads towards "The Folly", which eventually became the site of the sanatorium. The road is now called Warren Road. He said Martha's Dyke wasn't just a single stream but a network of watercourses that evolved over the years.

In the most in-depth study about Folkestone's legendary watercourse in recent years, Terry uncovered little-known facts about it and a number of other streams that combine together in their race to the sea from the hills above the town.

Terry went on to say whilst little may be known about St Eanswythe's water, even less is known about Martha's Dyke and Roman Villa watercourses from Dover Hill, a stream so important to the growth of the town that it was the only stream in the area to be given a name.

Thirty-four people attended the meeting five of whom were visitors.

At the August meeting we welcomed guest speaker Andrew Taylor who presented his illustrated talk entitled '**The Boys of Summer – Canadian Baseball In Folkestone During The Great War**'.

Andrew opened the talk by revealing that baseball, the quintessentially American game actually originated in England, with the first published reference appearing in John Newburys "A Pretty Little Pocket Book" printed in 1744, nearly 8 decades before the first recorded games in America.

We were then shown how the game returned to England, firstly by US sailors, then with exhibition tours by famous American clubs, all of which culminated in the first professional baseball league in Britain being established in the North Midlands, closely followed by amateur leagues in London in the 1890s and from 1906-11. By the outbreak of the Great War, the game which had always been niche had seemingly lost its popular appeal.

The arrival of the Second contingent of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in Folkestone in the spring of 1915 changed all that as Canadian battalions garrisoned in the town set up their own league, headquartered at the Folkestone Cricket Ground. The wildly popular Dibgate Baseball League featured in local, national and international newspapers and Folkestone became the home of a new baseball craze that swept England, culminating in a history making game in front of King George V on the 4th July 1918 at Stamford Bridge in London.

Andrew illustrated how the decision to make baseball a public game at Folkestone in 1915 revived the fortunes of the game which ultimately led to the return of professional baseball to Britain in 1930s and the little known first ever baseball world cup won by England.

The talk included a lot of details about the individual soldiers/players connected to Folkestone that he had identified and some quite remarkable stories, including Folkestone's very own baseball player, Stanley Maxted, better known in later years as "the voice of Arnhem", one of the BBC's best known war journalists in WW2.

The talk concluded with a short description of the Snowdown Magpies baseball team of the 1950s a team entirely made up of coalminers from the East Kent coalfields, the 2019 Great War commemorative game (pictured below) and recently rediscovered *Pathe* film of the Shorncliffe Canadians playing baseball at Lords Cricket Ground in September 1915.

Thirty people attended the meeting three of whom were visitors.



Baseball being played at the Three Hills, Folkestone 16th June 2019



The Unveiling of Folkestone (civic) War Memorial – Saturday 2nd December 1922.

A large crowd of people congregated at the eastern end of the Leas, Folkestone on Saturday 2nd December 1922 to see the unveiling of the War Memorial; fortunately it was dry day with fine weather. An enclosure was provided at the eastern end of the memorial for all relatives of the 578 dead men who were to be commemorated and honoured that day. Members of the committee, subscribers and principal residents were in an area opposite with members of the British Legion and ex Service men next to them. The Folkestone Naval Cadets, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and St Johns Ambulance lined the approach to the memorial in West Terrace. In front on the memorial itself, a guard of honour with the Regimental Colours from the 1st Oxford and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry were in position. Other services such as the Coastguard were also represented. Also a special enclosure housed two hundred children, who represented all the local elementary schools, under the leadership of Mr P. Greenstreet.

The Mayor, Alderman E. J. Bishop, members of the Corporation and other prominent people from the locality such as Rev. Canon Tindall (the Vicar), Col. W. J. Dugan C.M.G., D.S.O (Commander of Shorncliffe Camp), The French, Belgian and Italian Vice-Consuls marched up to the War Memorial from the Town Hall. Then, Lord Radnor and Sir Stephen Penfold (Chairman of the War Memorial Committee) arrived and the ceremony began.



After a hymn and a reading Sir Stephen Penfold stood forward and gave a speech. He firstly apologised on behalf of Admiral Sir Roger Keyes who was unable to leave the Peace Conference at Lausanne and would therefore be unable to unveil the War Memorial. He also spoke in warm terms of Mr F. V. Blundstone who designed and executed the memorial. He continued describing the memorial, "Standing aloft on the central pedestal a bronze figure, symbolic of Motherhood and Reverence, faces in silent dignity the Battlefields of France and Flanders, and immortalizes the highest bonds of love between the dead and the living. She holds in her hand the symbol of sacrifice, while drooping at half-mast from the shaft of the cross hangs the Union Jack over the memorial, they fell and the memorial was unveiled.

Lord Radnor made a short speech in which he congratulated Sir Stephen Penfold and members of the committee on the memorial. He also stated "Erected as it is in the first place to the memory of those who belong to Folkestone and who fell in the war, one's first thought on an occasion of this kind is the very deep and very sincere sympathy with the relatives of those who fell, and that sympathy is all the deeper and more

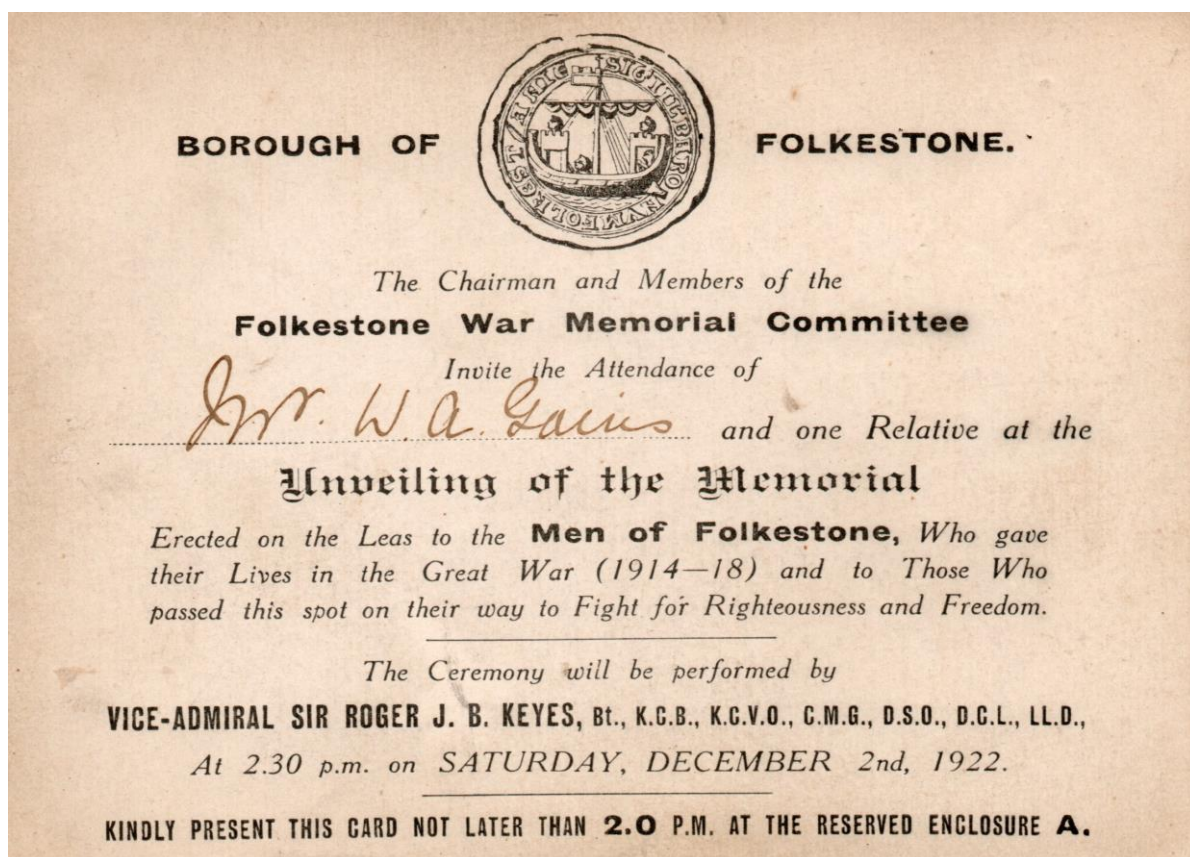


sincere because, I suppose, there is hardly one of us who has not lost a dear relative or any rate, a dear friend during those four and a half years"... "Lastly this memorial reminds us of those hundreds of thousands of men who passed this way on their road to the front".

The Vicar, Rev Canon Tindall, dedicated the memorial and led everyone in the Lord's Prayer. The Guard of Honour presented Arms, the Post played, and the Regimental Colours were dipped.

Sir Stephen Penfold, then asked the Mayor to accept the memorial on behalf of the Town. He did this saying "I accept it on behalf of the Council of the Borough, who will, I am confident, preserve it with reverential care.... "The hymn, Abide with me, was sung, followed by the placing of a number of wreaths on the memorial. The National Anthem was sung and Benediction was pronounced. The "Reveille" rang out and with a march past of the dignitaries the ceremony was completed. Then the relatives of the men who died came forward and placed their own floral tributes around the memorial.

Extract from: Folkestone Express, Sandgate, Shorncliffe and Hythe Advertiser, Saturday 9th December 1922.



Notices by Alan Taylor

A photographic exhibition on Sandgate Hill & High Street was set up in St Paul's Church, Sandgate to celebrate their 200th anniversary.

A photographic exhibition was set-up in St Peter's Church for the Blessing of the Fisheries.

The Society was represented at Civic Day at the Quarterhouse on 18th June with other local societies and displayed the Society's collection of photographs of Folkestone shops and businesses.

For the forthcoming year, we do have some vacancies on the committee, so if you would like to stand or nominate somebody could you please let me know.

We would like to welcome new members: Matthew Jones & Bryan Rylands.