

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

NEWSLETTER No. 81 – Winter 2019

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT by Alan F Taylor.

At the September meeting we welcomed guest speaker Frank Andrews who presented his talk entitled 'East Kent Light Railway'

Frank said the East Kent Railway was constructed between 1911 and 1917 to serve the growth of the Kent Coalfield that was being developed in East Kent. The consortium of Kent colliery and land owners envisaged a line that would link the collieries with the main line and a new port at Richborough.

Although Richborough became an important port during WWI, the line did not cross the River Stour until after the war, by which time the port was in decline. Branch lines to Canterbury, Deal and Birchington were planned, but never completed.

The line was built to light railway standards by engineer, Colonel H .F. Stephens. The first passengers were carried in 1916, with just a few facilities being provided for them. Passenger services between Eastry and Sandwich Road Halts were withdrawn on 31st October 1928. When the railways were nationalised, the line became part of the British Railways Southern Region and all passenger services were completely withdrawn on 1st November 1948.

However, the line from Shepherdswell to Tilmanstone Colliery remained operational until the 1984/85 Miners Strike. Tilmanstone Colliery reopened for a short while, but eventually ceased production in October 1986. Inevitably closure of the line followed in 1987.

In November 1985, the East Kent Railway Society had been formed with the intention of saving and reopening the remaining two and a quarter miles of line, but it was not until 1989 that the volunteers were able to start the massive task of clearing the tangle of shrubs, trees and other vegetation that had claimed the railway since closure. The East Kent Railway has transformed the station area and its environs at Shepherdswell, with a replica of the original station building and platform being built, along with new access roads, car parks laid, and the addition of toilet blocks, a café and picnic areas being provided.

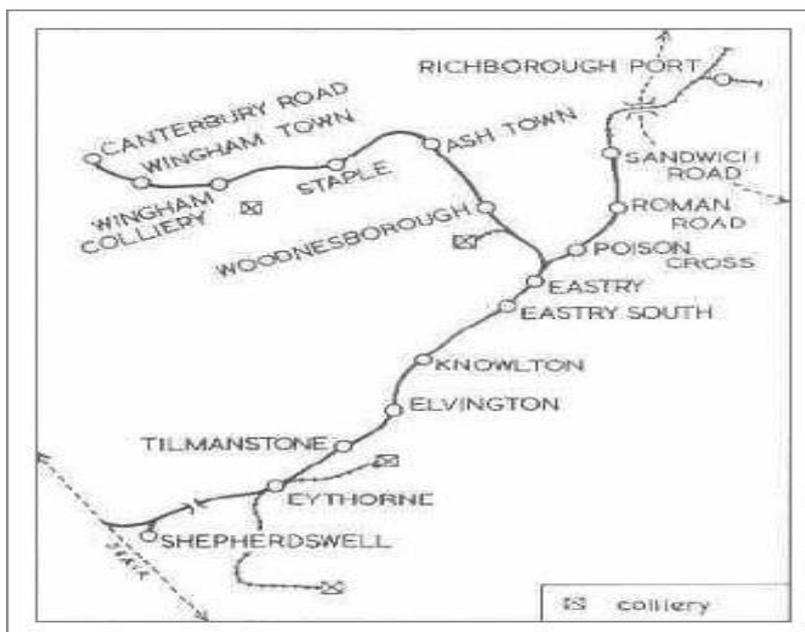
In 1993, the Light Railway Order was obtained, allowing regular passenger trains to run on the East Kent Railway, after an absence of over forty years. Since then a new station has been built at Eythorne. In 2003, the East Kent Railway became a Charitable Trust.

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

October was the Annual General Meeting, standing for election was: Chairman: Alan F Taylor, Hon. Sec: Peter Bamford. There being no other nominations these officers were duly elected. Standing for Treasurer was Terry Begent proposed by Peter Bamford and seconded by me; there being no other nominations Terry was duly elected. The committee members standing again were: Hilary Tolputt, Vince Williams, Brian Adams and Mark Hourahane. Allyson Edwards standing for committee was nominated by myself and seconded by Peter Bamford. As there were no more nominations, they were

duly elected. After a short break a short film was screened, entitled "Folkestone Yacht Club Cross Channel sailing race", which took place in August 1958.

Thirty-seven members attended the meeting plus one visitor.



At the November meeting we welcomed back guest speaker Ian Gordon who presented his talk on the 'History of the Harvey Grammar School'

Ian started by saying he passed the exam and the interview for the Harvey Grammar school in 1957.

The school was established to serve "20 poor boys of Folkestone". Originally situated in Rendezvous Street, the school started out as a single classroom 35ft long and 20ft wide. There were 20 boys on the school roll, with just one master employed to teach them reading and writing.

In 1882, the school moved to its third building (the second having been rebuilt on the site of the original building in 1846). This time the school found itself in Foord Road. By this time there were 55 boys, the master held a degree and the first assistant master was appointed. By 1890, the school had a staff of four in addition to the headmaster.

The main school building at the school's current home on Cheriton Road was built in 1913. By this time, the school roll had grown to 149. Thereafter, the School grew rapidly and, by 1937, the number of boys attending had risen to over 500.

Between 1940 and 1944 the School was evacuated to Merthyr Tydfil and, on return from Wales after the war, the School prospered in its newly-designated role as a County Secondary Grammar School.

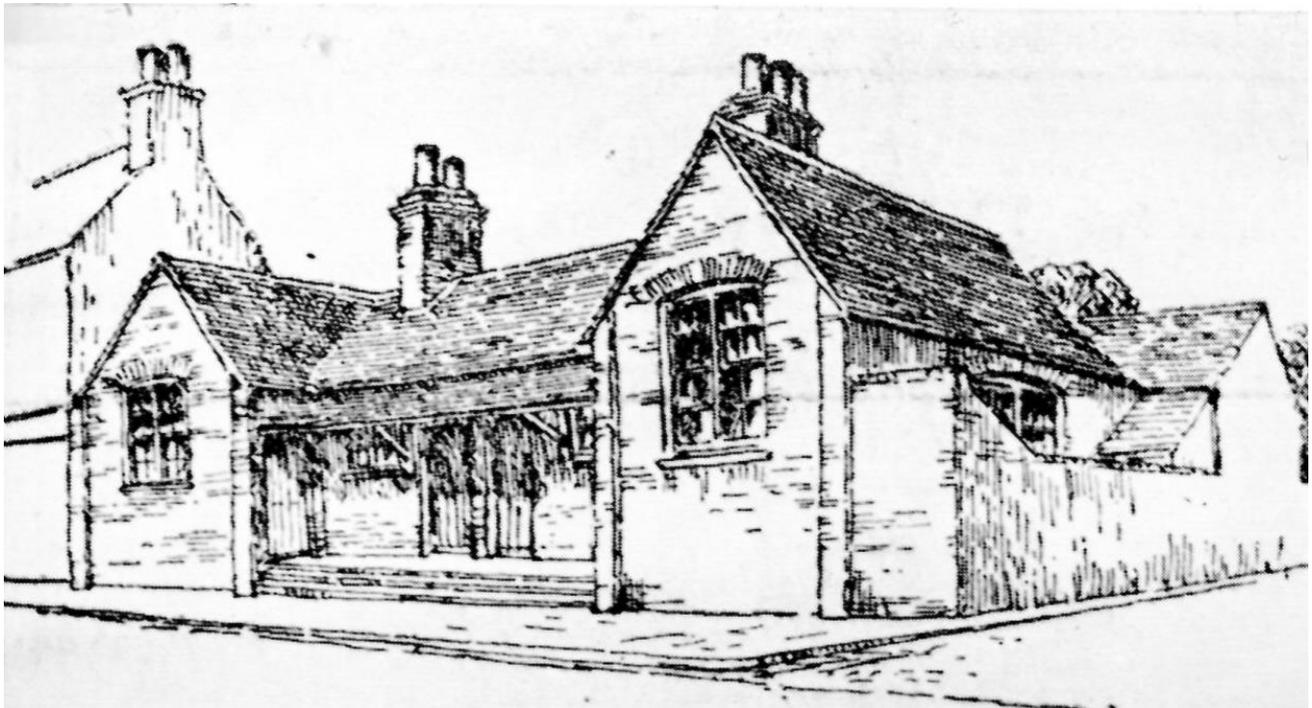
Holding true to these founding principles, the school continues to serve the brightest young men in Shepway from all backgrounds. The entrance test is designed to give every pupil a fair chance of gaining entry, regardless of background or circumstances.

Over the years, more and more buildings have been added to the Cheriton Road site as the curriculum offered to the ever-increasing number of pupils has been developed and extended.

Today's school community of over 900 pupils enjoy the full range of modern educational facilities, including the most recent addition of the Wright Building – a 12 classroom teaching block, opened in 2015.

Ian finished by talking about his time at the Harvey Grammar, he then opened the talk up to the floor for any other Harveian's at the meeting to have their say.

Fifty six people attended the meeting thirteen of whom were visitors.



The old Harvey Grammar School, Rendezvous Street.

Extract from 'The Harveian': The Magazine of the Harvey Grammar School, Folkestone.

Vol. V1. – No. 6. December 1914.

THE LOCAL EFFECTS OF THIS WAR.

The district has been influenced by the War in many ways and perhaps more than most places, but probably the most striking change to be noted is the erection of the Camp at Sandling.

Just to the north of Sandling Station there were, three months ago, some flat fields, where rabbits from the neighbouring woods were wont to sport, and where, if the weather were favourable, might be found many a goodly mushroom. Now, however, all is changed. In some fields are to be seen neat little piles

of bricks, all in a row, on which in the future is to rest the floor of some hut. Further on there is a forest of yellow beams, all pointing skyward, on some of which rests the framework of a roof, and these skeleton-like objects at last begin to take the form of huts. From the next field comes a clatter of hammers, produced by carpenters who are boarding the sides, nailing on felt, and fitting windows. Some way off is quite a civilized part, for though a thick layer of mud still covers the paths, or rather tracks, yet on the door of each hut is chalked the use to which that hut is to be put, whilst at the door of one building is a curious little wooden chest, on which is written "Letter Box." In the yonder space are some men playing football, and in the corner soldiers are being drilled. Here is a hut built of corrugated iron – a kitchen. Inside is a double row of large stoves about which some cooks are bustling, whilst here and there are large copper a-shaped vessels, presumably for tea-brewing.

A few weeks ago some of the carpenters employed to build these huts struck for higher wages, consequently the more satisfied men had to be guarded whilst at work by soldiers with fixed bayonets.

Although the soldiers from that camp have generally been well-behaved, yet one unhappy military policeman has lately been badly mauled, and as a punishment for this the soldiers have to be in camp at an earlier hour every evening. Other objects of interest have been the Canal at Seabrook and Dymchurch Wall.

At the former place some soldiers have been busy bridge building. Under their care have appeared bridges of all sorts, from one composed of a platform lashed to, and floated upon barrels, which means of transit would easily support a heavy vehicle; to a fragile structure made of boughs of young trees, bound in the shape of x's, placed upright in a row in the water, and having a path of beams resting in the hollow of the x's, with a railing of boughs lashed to the top of the beams which form the x's.

At many places on the Dymchurch Wall, much to the dismay of the inhabitants of that region, who think that the sea will now surely break the wall, have been dug trenches. Near Dymchurch a bank slopes up from the road to the top of the wall. The trenches are made at the summit of the wall constructed pent-houses, which are connected to the end of each trench, so as to afford good shelter for troops if the trenches are ever used.

Nowadays soldiers are to be seen everywhere. Buildings which were before notorious for their emptiness and gloom are now full of life and bright with work, they having been commandeered to accommodate soldiers. Brilliant lights which may be seen from the sea are strictly prohibited, with the threat that the supply will be cut off if the order is not obeyed. Special constables have been appointed to enforce the law. Emergency Committees have been formed that things useful to the Germans may be destroyed, if the enemy land here.

These and a thousand other changes comprise the effects of the war on this district.

Although we shall be relieved when the war is over, yet I think we are all glad to have the privilege to live in these most interesting and exiting times, and to see these alterations around us.

Price – (Form V11.)

We would like to welcome new members Jan David Lewandowski and Sharon Norman

An a rather sad note I would like to announce the deaths of members Marcelle Hignett, and Nick Paine who died on 4th September aged 69 years,

May I join the officers and committee in wishing members a Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year.

For anybody who has not yet paid their subscriptions – a reminder these are now due.

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