



**FOLKESTONE & DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**
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Chairman's Report by Alan Taylor

The December meeting was a Christmas quiz organised by Vince Williams. It was in two parts, part one was 25 questions "So You Think You Know Folkestone". Vince showed images and told us three possible answers A – B – C and we had to tick the one we thought was the right one.

Refreshments were then served warm sausage rolls & mice pies, tea or coffee.

The second part was twenty photographs taken by Tony Hill & Brian Adams, which Vince projected on the screen and we had to write down where or what we thought it was.

The total number of answers was 45 – Mark Hourahane and I tied with Anne & Peter Bamford with 27 correct answers.

Thirty- five people attended to meeting three of whom were visitors.

At the January meeting we welcomed guest speaker Tom Mullard who presented his talk entitled '**Folkestone Fascists in the Spanish Civil War**'. Tom started by telling us he was a history teacher at the Dover Girls' Grammar School, but now he is at Simon Langton Girls' Grammar School. His interest in the Spanish Civil War started when he was on his honeymoon in Barcelona. He said he went on a two hour guided walk about the Spanish Civil War, which inspired him to take a keen interest.

He went on to say that in the 1930s, Britain was facing the largest economic depression of the 20th century - unemployment rates were high, and the British people were losing trust in the government. Although fascism is often seen as the rich man's politics, Oswald Mosely managed to capitalise off the anger felt for the Great Depression, creating the British Union of Fascists which was very strong in Kent.

Tom then spoke about Harry Addley born in Folkestone 1896 who lived in Radnor Street & Dover Street (now Harbour Way). He later moved to Dover and had a restaurant in Northampton Street which was bombed. He fought in WW1 and later in the Spanish Civil War, being killed in the woods of Boadilla in December 1936. Arthur Ovenden & Harry Addley also had a fish restaurant in Folkestone. It is listed in Kelly's directory for 1933 at No.1 Dover Street. He mentioned other men who went to fight in the Spanish Civil War including John Black, Horace Dowsey and Frederick Strachan, all from Dover & George Gorman who lived at 128 Dover Road, Folkestone.



Harry's, No.1 Dover Street

Tom told us that in 1940 813 known British fascists were arrested under regulation 18B. Two of these were members of the Folkestone BUF branch: Reginald Beer, the Folkestone District Leader and Evelyn Flynn, the Folkestone Women's District Leader. As known fascists they were arrested for being traitors to the country. Folkestone was seen as one of the hotspots for fascism.

I worked with Reginald Beer in George Stone's joiner's shop where Reg was the joiner's shop foreman and we knew he was a Blackshirt!

Tom said that over the course of the war, a c500000 lives were lost and the war ended on the 28th March 1939, with a nationalist victory. General Franco declared himself dictator and his regime held power until 1975 with his death which ushered in democracy.

Forty-eight people attended the meeting twenty of whom were visitors.

At the February meeting we welcomed guest speaker Betty Black who presented her talk entitled **'Skyways: Post War Passenger Aviation at Lympne Airport.**

Betty started by saying following the end of WW2 Lympne airfield had reverted back to farm land. Many new charter start-ups, including Skyways Limited, had jumped on government contracts but when the airlifting of food and fuel to Berlin ended on May 12th 1949, Skyways Limited needed to find new sources of revenue. In the early 1950s, there was no jetting off to Europe for summer sunshine British holiday makers were left to spend their summer vacations at popular seaside resorts like Blackpool, Margate, Scarborough, or even Folkestone!

But some of those holidaymakers would arrive at Blackpool Airport and then board a 40-minute flight for a holiday on the Isle of Man. The concept proved so popular that Skyways was flying between Blackpool and the Isle of Man 16 times a day during the summer.

The success of the Isle of Man venture gave owner Eric Rylands the confidence to extend the idea to flights across the English Channel. So, on 30th September 1955, Skyways began the world's first combined international bus-air service between London and Paris. The journey started at Victoria Coach Station in London, where passengers would board a bus for Lymington Airport in Kent. From there, they would be flown across the Channel where they would board a bus for Paris.

Following its London to Paris, Skyways Coach-Air Ltd was formed as a dedicated low-fare subsidiary of Skyways Ltd. Betty also told us that other routes were added including flights to Jersey. Betty showed us photographs of the crash at Lymington on 11th July 1965, when an aircraft flipped over on landing, however all 48 passengers managed to escape unhurt.

By the 1970s, road, and rail infrastructure had improved to such an extent that it was now more accessible for people to get to an airport without a charter bus. With Spanish resorts welcoming millions of British tourists on cheap charter holidays, Skyways Coach-Air went into receivership in 1971. It briefly relaunched as Skyways International in 1971 and then in 1972 the company was acquired by Dan-Air. Ashford Airport, as Lymington had been renamed, closed in 1974 and Dan-Air relocated its business to Lydd airport.

Betty was one of the ground staff who booked the passengers in on arrival, walked them across the airfield to the aircraft and saw they got onboard safely. She also said that when the airport first opened after the war there wasn't a public address system so if there was a flight delay or any other announcements to make, they would walk round the passenger lounge, and tell all the passengers - some of whom, she said, were rather rude to the staff.

Thirty-eight people attended the meeting eight of whom were visitors

An extract from: Views and Reviews - Folkestone - Special Edition, 1895.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM PLEYDELL, BOUVERIE, fifth Earl of Radnor, was born in 1841, and succeeded to the title in 1889. He married in 1866 the only surviving daughter of the Rev. H. Chaplin, sister of the Rt. Hon. Henry Chaplin, of Blankney, president of the Local Government Board. Both Lord and Lady Radnor, the latter of whom is a very accomplished amateur musician, have done much to develop Folkestone, and are supporters of most of the local institutions. The Earl is patron of Christ Church and Trinity, which his father and grandfather helped endow.

Lord and Lady Radnor are about to take up their residence at "The Manor House," just completed for them by Mr. Daniel Baker, and their presence in the town will naturally help very largely in giving that fashionable tone to society, for which Folkestone is noted among English watering places. It is not alone in connection with the development of his estate that Lord Radnor shows his interest in the town, but in many a quiet and unostentatious act by which the charitable institutions of the town benefit. It need hardly be added that the Earl and Lady Radnor are extremely popular in the district.

That much misunderstood, and even more maligned personage, the ground landlord, has in his day and generation had quite sufficient to contend with in the way of misrepresentation and abuse, but at Folkestone, if anywhere, a triumphant vindication of the fact that good can result from the fact of the land being in the hands of a few, rather than that of many, can be brought forward.

It is impossible for anyone not utterly prejudiced and biased, to deny the Earl of Radnor's Estate has been developed with a far-sighted liberality that has had for its object the good of the locality, quite as much as the interest of its noble owner, the comparative cheapness of leasehold property, and the unusually liberal way in which sites are apportioned, being manifest to all.

Instead of the ground being cut up into little plots, each the size of a handkerchief, as we so often see where an estate is sold in freehold lots, almost all the better class houses in Folkestone, are spaciouly designed and have access to gardens, either private or used in common with other houses, that are not a mere parody on the word.

Building leases to the longest extent possible, viz., ninety-nine years, are granted, and the ground rental is strikingly moderate when compared with that in force at other fashionable centres.

Quite properly, suitable restrictions are placed on building operations, so that the whole estate may be improved and not marred by each successive addition.

Folkestone owes much to the admirable way in which the Radnor Estate has been developed, as the inhabitants of the town are readiest to acknowledge.

During the last fifty years, very large sums of money have been spent by the Earl and his predecessors in protecting and draining the West Cliff, so that the property that has sprung up upon it is absolutely safe, and is now by far the most attractive part of Folkestone. Few even of the residents know that it is Lord Radnor who has provided and maintained that unique promenade, the Leas, for which perhaps more than anything else, Folkestone is famous. Lord Radnor also maintains the Lower Road Gardens, a charming resort for visitors, where there is leafy shade almost on the brink of the sea. The late Earl also gave Radnor Park to the town at a nominal rent. The extensive site of the Theatre and Pleasure Gardens, are also held from the Earl at a nominal rent, and in fact, as the largest landowner in the district and Lord of the Manor, the town is largely indebted to him for the liberal and far-sighted way in which the estate has been laid out, and certainly no one will grudge him that it has turned out a profitable investment.

It is often the case, that those who sow are permitted to see the fruits of their industry ripen fully, but it is meet that they should be remembered, and surely this is the due of the late Mr. William Norman, a surveyor of eminence, who as agent from 1859 until 1892, the year of his decease, laboured assiduously in the interest of the building estate, and largely contributed to make Folkestone what it is to-day. His Lordship's agents are Messrs Brown, Norman & Co., of 34 Great George Street, Westminster. Mr W. H. Norman of that firm is frequently at Folkestone, and information can always be had of the local agent, Mr W. B. Radford, at the Manor Office, Folkestone, or at Westminster.



Notices by Alan Taylor

We would like to welcome new members: Ronnie Chan & Robert Goodfellow, Richard Brook & Ms Shay Collyer.

On a rather sad note former member Gordon Hawker died on 27th January aged 89 years.