



## FOLKESTONE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

### *NEWSLETTER NUMBER 2 - APRIL 2000*

#### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The first newsletter seems to have been well received, I have had some letters from members expressing how much they enjoyed it and that they are looking forward to No.2.!!

The response for articles for future newsletters is encouraging, never the less I am continuing to appeal for more information.

Martin Easdown and Linda Sage have taken on the job of being co-editors for the newsletters, so if you have anything to contribute they can be contacted at; 27 Hampton Vale, Hythe, Tel: 01303 230202.

As well as giving all our members newsletters we are sending copies to the Hythe Civic Society, Dover Historical Society, Lyminge Historical Society, the family History Society and Janet Adamson, Heritage Officer at the central library, Folkestone.

We have received a letter of thanks from Mr Umbers of the Hythe Civic Society who said, he enjoyed the newsletter very much and he looked forward to receiving further edition. He asked if it would it be possible to use historical information from them? and he said," that we could use any information we wanted from their newsletters".

I am very pleased to be able to announce that we were successful with our bid for a Millennium Lottery Grant, we received the full amount we put in for, £3,137.

The money has been spent on purchasing a video projector, a 35mm slide projector with a zoom lens and a hard case for carrying it and a 180 x180 cm portable screen.

These items will help our Society to fulfill its aims which are as follows:-

To promote the advancement of education by developing public interest in all aspects of the history of the town of Folkestone and the surrounding district.

To promote and organise co-operation in the advancement of the above purpose and to that end to bring together representations of the statutory authorities and voluntary organizations engaged in the furtherance of the above purpose within the area of benefit.

To arrange outings, lectures and other activities to foster interest in the history of Folkestone.

#### **KENT HISTORY FEDERATION.**

Some of you are possible not aware that we are one of about 92 Kent History Societies that are affiliated to the *Kent History Federation*. It costs us £10 per annum to be affiliated, we get our insurance cover through them at 10p per member, which is very good.

The aims of the Kent History Federation are to promote the History of Kent. The Federation holds four meetings a year at the Council Chamber, County Hall, Maidstone to which Daphne Heaver attends as our representative. The Federation produces two Journals a year which we contribute to, they are published in March and September at £1 each. If you would like copies please see our Secretary Peter Bamford who will order them. The Federation also holds an annual Conference, usually in May, it is hosted by a different affiliated society each year. We hosted the conference on 26 June 1993, this year it will be at Faversham.

I have been attending these conferences regularly for the past ten years, I consider that they are a very good day out.

Our photographic exhibition entitled, *FOLKESTONE PAST & PRESENT*, which is our millennium project, has been in Sandgate library since 4th November last year, it will be staying there until 20th April 2000. It will be in St. Martins Church Community Centre for Easter Monday 24th April and the Parish Church, Folkestone, for three months from June onwards.

#### **Folkestone Branch of the H.S.B.C. Bank's Centenary 18th. May 2000**

I was asked by the manager of the H.S.B.C. Bank Mr. Ben Sharp if I could help them research the history of the Folkestone branch. The following is a compilation of my research and information from the Bank archives in London.

Number 1, West Cliff Gardens, Lodging House, run by Miss McDermott, (corner of Sandgate Road) was demolished to build 29 Sandgate Road, ( which became 41 Sandgate road after the re-numbering).

29 Sandgate road was first occupied in 1895 by Temple, F. Wilson & Co., auctioneers, surveyors and house agents.

The Bank's board of directors (the Bank was then known as the London City and Midland Bank) decided to open a branch in Folkestone in 1899. The decision was made at a board meeting held on 29th September 1899, after it was announced that suitable premises, (29 Sandgate Road) had been found at a rental of £350 per annum.

On 18th May 1900 the board of directors appointed Mr. Charles Frederick Bruce, formerly assistant manager at Cannon Street, Birmingham, manager of the new branch. By the end of July the branch was offering a full range of banking services from premises at No. 29 Sandgate Road. Mr Bruce managed the branch with just two members of staff; Mr Frederick Walker Sutton was the clerk, who earned an annual salary of £60, he was assisted by an apprentice, Mr Vivian Hurley, who earned the princely sum of £20 a year.

In 1922/23 the Bank acquired No.39 Sandgate road (formerly occupied by Emilie, Milliner) and No.2 West Cliff Gardens (formerly occupied by Mr George Thomas Sharp) to extend the Bank. The architect commissioned to design the new Bank was Mr T.B. Whinney, it was more or less as we see it today with a Portland stone facade and flat roof. Mr Whinney was responsible for the design of many of the Bank's branches.

By 1924 the new building was open under the name of Midland Bank Limited, the Midland amalgamated with the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation in 1999, the official date when the sign was changed to H.S.B.C. was 27 July 1999.

Here is the list of managers from 1900 to Present day

Mr Charles Frederick Bruce 1900-1913; Mr Frank Fletcher 1914-1932; Mr Frank Marston Rudland 1933-1934; Mr Bernard H. Smith 1935-1940/47; Mr E.S. Cockell 1940/47-1955; Mr L.C. Bridgeman 1956-1960; Mr M.K. Plascott 1960-1967; Mr A.R. Sharp 1967-1972; Mr G. Shobrook 1972-1981; Mr R. Westwood 1981-1983; Mr C. Bryson 1983-1988; Mr A. Martin 1988-1993; Mr T. Bourne 1993-1994; Mr B. Sharp 1994-present .

The Bank will be celebrating their centenary, so if you are a long standing customer, who knows? you might get an invite. There is also going to be a photographic display, so watch this space H.S.B.C. Bank for details.

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## ***Tales of Old Folkestone Smuggling***

by  
the late John Milton

*John Milton was for many years a partner in Milton & Smith's fishing tackle shop at 12 Tontine Street, Folkestone.*

### **SMUGGLERS CAVE IN THE WARREN**

When we were boys, we use to go down to the Warren on the east side of Folkestone and climb up the chalk cliffs at the spot known as *Eagles Nest*, where after a climb of about 150 feet we would come to a cave, known as the *Smugglers Cave*. This was the entrance to an underground passage, which according to local legend led up to the *Valiant Sailor*, an inn that still stands at the top of Dover Hill overlooking Folkestone. We use to walk along the passage for about 30-40 feet then came to a halt as the passage was blocked by fallen chalk, so we never did get to the *Valiant Sailor*, but there is no doubt this was a smugglers run.

### **GAP ON THE EAST CLIFF (BAKERS GAP)**

On the East Cliff there is a gap in the cliff with a small stream flowing down it. There was always a path leading up to the top of the cliff beside the stream for this was a regular run for smugglers.

One dark night at high tide, it was decided to make a run for everything was ready; the lookout men, the runners and boat-company were all eager to get the job done. The contraband was landed, the runners were out and the load was distributed for carrying up the path when suddenly the excise men struck and a running fight took place on the cliff face in the gap. When one of the excise men was killed, everyone dropped their load and bolted. Although rewards were offered, nobody was ever caught and eventually the affair died down. The man who was killed was named Baker and from that day on the gap has been known as 'Bakers Gap'.

The stream still runs today, but the path is now covered by a reconstructed flight of steps that lead to the East Sands Promenade.

### **SHEEP GRAZED ON THE CLIFF TOP**

There were several farmers in the neighbourhood and sheep once grazed on the fields at the cliff top. These sheep were turned to good use on dark nights when a run was on. It was the duty of some of the lookouts to have a number of cured sheepskins on hand in case there was a chase by the excise men. The smugglers would then get amongst the sheep covered with sheepskins so on a dark night they would not be recognised and no arrests were made.

### **MONEY NEVER CHANGED HANDS**

Smuggling was always conducted on a barter system, and all transactions took place beyond the three-mile international limit from the English and French coasts; wool from this side of the Channel often being exchanged for silks and rum. Many influential people, including the squire, the rector and even the mayor, would sometimes benefit from the landings, so there was a certain amount of protection offered when a smuggler was caught.

**Recommended further reading:** *English's Reminiscences of Old Folkestone Smugglers and Smuggling Days*. (This book from the late nineteenth century is long out of print, but may be found in local second-hand bookshops).

Dedicated by Permission  
To  
**THE MAYOR OF FOLKESTONE**  
(ALD. E.J.BISHOP. J.P.)  
1922 TO 1926

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WORDS BY

**KATHARINE STROOD**

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MUSIC BY

**HUBERT G. OKE**

A.R.A.M.,L.R.A.M.

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Arthur H. Stockwell,  
29 Ludgate Hill,  
London E.C.4.

### ROAD OF REMEMBRANCE

There's a road in an English town planted with Rosemary;  
Either side, now green-now brown-Fragrant with memory!  
Sons of maple land and pear, With sons of oak surrendered  
A sacrifice to Empire there By rosemary remembered  
Road of Remembrance! Sacred fane! With vault of Heaven  
above;  
Road of Remembrance ! Rosemary Lane!'Tis paved with  
death-less love!  
From Life to Death, and yet again, From Death to Life they  
passed, for their dear country to retain Its freedom to the last.  
'Lest we forget' the martyred young, 'Tis sown for graves in  
France, Healing hearts with anguish wrung In Road of  
Remembrance!  
Road of Remembrance glorious! Whose slopes to Victory trend;  
If laurels grace its crown for fame, 'Tis Rosemary to the end!  
If laurels grace its crown for fame, 'Tis Rosemary, Rosemary,  
Rosemary to the end!

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