



FOLKESTONE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER No. 22 – Spring 2005

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT by Alan F. Taylor

At the December meeting our guest speaker was Roy Ingleton, who gave us an illustrated talk on the history of Policing in Kent. He said policing started 1000 years ago and by the 18th century we had people called watchmen who attempted to keep law and order. In 1829 the London Metropolitan Police Force was formed. They wore white trousers and swallow tail coats, with high collars where a badge was attached, along with tall hard hats that were strengthened with bamboo cane. However the white uniform was short-lived and was soon changed to blue. In 1835 a Municipal Act was passed in which it was stated that every Chartered Borough had to form a Watch Committee. In Kent the towns affected were Hythe, Folkestone, Dover, Deal, Sandwich, Canterbury, Faversham, Rochester, Gravesend, Maidstone and Tenterden. In 1856 a County police force was formed; the first Superintendent Constable for Kent was Harry Johnston, who was installed in 1857. In 1888 the Local Government Act saw a Kent County Constabulary formed, which was divided into twelve divisions. They were issued with horse and carts, but in the early 1900's bicycles came in. By 1916 the police were using cars, usually Model T Fords, which were followed by the introduction of motor cycles with sidecars. During WWI females were introduced into the police force and in 1943 the Borough police forces amalgamated with the County Constabulary.

At the February meeting the guest speaker was Michael Stainer talking about the history of the Grand Hotel. He said local builder Daniel Baker, who built the Grand also built Manor House, which won the annual house of the year competition c.1899 run by the Building News. Mr Baker had also hoped to build the earlier Metropole Hotel, but the Gordon Hotels Company, who were having the hotel built, would not give him the contract so it is thought that inspired him to build the Grand. The Grand was said to be one of the first buildings built with cavity walls and it boasted a bigger floor area than the Metropole. The Grand's steel frame construction is also thought to be the first of its kind in the world, and it was also the first large scale building to be built with re-enforced concrete floors and suspended ceilings. The steel framework enabled the building to have large windows unlike the Metropole, which has small ones. The outside brick walls are only a curtain structure, once again possibly a first. It is also thought the building was the first to have wall to wall carpets, which were to cover the concrete floors. King Edward VII became a frequent visitor he and his party could be seen in the glass Palm Court on the South Elevation listening to the orchestra and taking tea with his family and friends. This brought the local folk on the Leas in the hope of seeing them. The Palm Court soon became known as the *Monkey House*, a name which, is still used today. The King came not only with the Queen, but also his intimate friend Alice Keppel, an hour-glass blue eyed beauty the epitome of elegance, lively wit and discretion, popularising the expression *monkey business*; his favoured three piece suits are still known as *monkey suits* in America. Michael purchased the property in 1975 and his quest to restore The Grand to its former glory still goes on.

A generous donation: Mrs Clark from Shipham, Somerset has given the Society a mug commemorating Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, which was presented by his worship the Mayor of Folkestone Alderman John Banks J.P.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new members: Mr and Mrs Roberts and Mrs Ashburn.

On a very sad note I would like to announce the death of Freda Willatts, and also my cousin and former member Michael Taylor, after suffering with Locomotor Ataxia for twenty years.

Extracts from the Kentish Gazette
Originally transcribed by C.P. Davies

22 October 1802

A whale of such magnitude as that now on shore at Dover, we believe has seldom been seen on our coast. About a century ago one was discovered which the people of the place attempted in vain to destroy. It moved towards Folkestone and was there hauled on shore. A kind of rival ship, in consequence existed between the mariners of both towns, and the principal hero of the battle produced the following elegant extempore on that occasion, which tradition has preserved to us:-

There was a monstrous whale he was sent here by the flood,
The Doverers could not catch him, but the Folkestoners could.

14 October 1803

NAUTICAL GENEROSITY – A few days since, a Gentleman of respectability, with his family arrived at Folkestone from France, from whence they escaped in a neutral vessel bound to Antwerp. When they arrived eight leagues abreast of Folkestone, the Captain hailed a fisherman, turning his quid, exclaimed “He is an Englishman and a brother; let him jump into the boat. I’ll give him a passage and his children too and when I get them to my house, I’ll blow their jackets out as long as they are able to fill them;” which he actually did: and for this praise-worthy conduct the Gentleman, who has since arrived in town, remunerated him in a handsome manner.

28 October 1803

Folkestone, October 26. A battery has been erected on Cobb [sic] Point, which commands the anchorage in East wear Bay and off Folkestone. In case of alarm the Cinque Port Volunteers are to rendezvous at East are under Mr. Pitt. [sic] The guns and ammunition for the Fencible boats were yesterday landed at Folkestone, but most of the boats are on the herring fishery, which has been uncommonly abundant.

4 November 1803

Folkestone November 2nd. Since the arrangement, which gives to Mr Pitt and part of the Cinque Port Volunteers the defence of East Wear Bay, great exertions have been made to render the country inaccessible in that quarter. All parties seem to concur in thinking the security of the town and its neighbourhood an object worthy of attention, as it is the rear of the camp at Shorncliffe. While several hundred men are employed in scarping the ridge which keeps up the hill communication with the cliff and the town, the town itself has been strengthened by the Captain of the Fencibles with all fencible guns, formed into batteries along the beach, which are to be manned in case of sudden alarm by the inhabitants – while the Sea Fencibles are employed at the regular batteries, and in launching their boats. As there will be more than twenty of these guns, eighteen pounders, this will present a very formidable aspect in front of the town.

18 February 1812

About 12 o’clock on Friday evening last soon after Andrew Smith a fisherman of Folkestone who occupied a house by the sea – side near the lower end of Radnor Street, had retired to rest, he was suddenly roused from his repose by the rude assaults of Neptune, who, instead of adopting the usual mode of ruffians who break into the houses by the door or windows, boldly attacked the end wall, and by his battering power soon levelled it with the ground. About three rods of the wooden breast work which was put up to protect the houses were at the same time swept away.

4 August 1812

The Government, in order to check the escape of French prisoners, as also the guinea and smuggling system, gave orders, a few days since, for the seizure of all gallies of a certain description, carrying eight oars; 17 were seized at Deal, 10 at Folkestone and Sandgate. They are a beautiful description of boats, about 40 feet long, painted on the outside so as to elude the sight at sea in the night; so neatly and lightly

constructed that nothing can catch them, and in calm weather they can row over to the French shore in two hours.

10 November 1812

Monday night, William Farley, a seaman belonging to the Perseverance sloop, now lying in Folkestone harbour, was unfortunately drowned; he in company with the master and another seaman had been on shore at the True Briton public house which they left perfectly sober about ten o'clock in the evening. When the master hailed the vessel for the boy (whom they had previously left on board) to come on shore with the boat, but who not immediately answering, Farley pulled off his boots and plunged into the water with intent to swim to the vessel in which act he was drowned.

13 November 1812

About nine o'clock on Thursday morning the 5th instant as a Folkestone boat containing five persons was leaving Gravelines it was suddenly swamped in the surf and melancholy to relate three of the crew, viz. Michael Boxer, his son Jacob and Thomas Elgar all belonging to Folkestone were drowned. The two others with great difficulty saved them selves by swimming to the shore.

4 December 1812

On Monday night, a boat was seized off the coast of Folkestone containing 300 tubs of contraband spirits. Early on Wednesday morning last was seized on the cliff behind Folkestone church by J. Scott collector of the Customs of that place and H.M. Franklyn, Riding Officer, assisted by a detachment of the 2nd battalion of the 95th Rifle Corps a boat loaded of contraband spirits of £900 value.

11 January 1814

LADIES BOARDING SCHOOL, FOLKESTONE. Miss Foster returns her grateful acknowledgements to her Friends and the Inhabitants of Folkestone for the liberal encouragement she has experienced, and respectfully acquaints them and the Public that her SCHOOL will, re-commence/ON MONDAY the 24th instant when she hopes by her attention and improvement of her pupils to meet a continuance of their favours. Term for Boarders 20 guineas per annum; day scholars 10s 6d per quarter. Music, Dancing etc. by approved Masters on the usual terms. High Street, Folkestone.

26 April 1814

Two bye-boats it is understood are to be established at Folkestone, for better communication with France. For which the harbour now nearly completed is particularly calculated.

26 April 1814

At a general sessions of the peace, holden in the Guildhall, Folkestone, on the 23rd April before J.C. Lawson esq. Recorder. The only matter of any importance was an appeal against the poor-rate, by Mr R.C. Wakefield and Mr Thomas Saffery, on account of the harbour not being rated, but they having failed in proving the service of the notice the appeal was quashed.

1 July 1814

The Proclamation of Peace was yesterday made at Folkestone. The Mayor attended by the Town Clerk and Members of the Corporation paraded the streets with a band of music, accompanied by an immense concourse of people, who rent the air with their shouts.

The Mayor and his friends then adjourned to the Folkestone Arms, where an excellent dinner was served up, and the day spent with great conviviality. In the evening it was intended that the town should be brilliantly illuminated.

5 July 1814

The town of Folkestone was illuminated on Thursday evening and presented a very pleasing effect from the exertions of its inhabitants who appeared determined not to be excelled by any of their neighbours on the coast.

The residence of the Mayor, in Radnor Street, exhibited the Regent's Plume, with G.P.R. in coloured lamps and a transparency with the words "Sacred to Peace." The house of the Deputy Mayor, Mr T. Baker had G.R. and crown as had that of Mr J. Sladen the word "Peace" in variegated lamps. The residence of Mr. Harvey near the church was tastefully ornamented with a pyramid of lights over the portico. The Folkestone Arms Inn made a conspicuous figure at the top of High street, Lower down appeared a transparency of little Nicholas attempting to grasp the globe with ludicrous lines:

"By striving thus to grasp the ball,

I lost my wits, my wife and all."

Farther on an Anchor ingeniously lighted with variegated lamps: in the same street among several transparencies one with the words "To our brave Allies." The Rev. Mr. Ball reminded us of one who contributed greatly to the cause of this evening's display by the name of "Wellington" over his door. The Rev. F. Dawson had the following on a flag, "He hath made our enemies to be at peace with us, and the crowned heads and princes to be united." Upon Grace Hill was a crown and diamond in coloured lamps.

The residence of Mr. Richard Holman, in Dover Street, was tastefully ornamented; besides a number of lights in each window the columns of the portico were entwined with variegated lamps. To the pediment was suspended a brilliant star, and in the centre a transparency executed in a very superior style, representing a female figure as Peace with the olive in her hand, the words Peace and commerce on a label at her feet. The emblems of commerce and beneath these lines of Pope:

"O stretch thy reign fair Peace from shore to shore,
Till conquest cease and slavery be no more:
Till the freed Indians in their native groves,
Reap their own fruits and woo their sable loves"

19 July 1814

Our readers will with us experience pleasure in learning that a School on the Madras system is establishing at Hythe. The premises are to be fitted up for the reception of 100 Boys, and will commence in a week or two: and from the liberality of the subscriptions it is hoped the school may in a short time be considerably increased. A school on the same system has been for some time established at Sandgate, the beneficial effects of which are already felt.

Highly to the credit of the inhabitants of Folkestone, we learn that a charity school will be opened there next Monday on the Lancastrian system supported by voluntary contributions; and which to quote the address of the Committee "does not exclude children of any religious sect but affords instruction without prescribing or rejecting the peculiar creed of any religious party; liberally opening the door of education to all."

26 July 1814

On Monday the 18th instant the part of the 95th rifle corps stationed at Shorncliffe had a most elegant fete at that rural and delightful spot known by the name of the Cherry Gardens at the foot of Caesar's Camp. The tables ornamented in the most rural manner were placed under the shade of the trees whose thick foliage prevented the too ardent rays of the sun from penetrating. The mild southern breeze gently fanned the leaves and produced a sensation of the most agreeable freshness. The view of the Roman works on the surrounding hills, the woods, the sea, with the distant view of the coast of France all combined to render this one of the most desirable spots for such an occasion. This romantic spot is situated in the rang of hills stretching from east to west parallel with the coast and as it were scooped by the hand of nature out of the face of the hill in the form of a segment of a circle facing the south; so that here the chilling northern blast never penetrates to check the luxuriant growth of shrubs and flowers. About four o'clock upwards of 40 ladies and gentlemen sat down to an elegant dinner consisting of every delicacy which the season could afford. The band of the corps attended and played many select airs. After dinner the merry dance on the green commenced with the lively air of *Mrs Macleod*", which was kept up till tea was announced; after which it recommenced and continued with great life and vivacity until the shades of night descended closed upon the scene and admonished the company to depart.

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