



FOLKESTONE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER No. 23 – Summer 2005

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT by Alan F. Taylor

At the March meeting our guest speaker was to be Julia Page who was going to give us her illustrated talk Sandgate to Rye – Napoleons Gateway 1803-05. However, due to very heavy snowfalls in the Maidstone area, she was unable to come. I stood in with my illustrated talk on Folkestone Water Colours 1820s-1850s. Despite the inclement weather 32 people turned out for the meeting.

For the April meeting I gave an illustrated talk on Folkestone Lifeboats, which attracted 61 people, four of whom were visitors.

The May meeting saw the return of Bruce Crook with his Magic Lantern Show, which attracted 55 people. His series of magic lantern slides, mainly on Sandgate, were put together by his grandfather in the 1920's and the notes that go with them were compiled with the help of Sandgate historian Colonel Richard John Fynmore. Bruce also showed about twenty comical moving slides, which I thought were great fun.

'The Peoples War', a documentary film made for BBC1 to celebrate the 60th anniversary of V.E. Day, was filmed in Folkestone using the Leas Cliff Hall as its main focal point. The Society was involved in this project and Ken Paine, who was playing drums in a band at the hall at the start of the war, was interviewed by the production team from Palookaville Pictures Ltd. for the BBC. Ken was featured a number of times during the ½ hour duration of the film, which was shown on BBC1 Thursday 5th May at 7 p.m. I gave the production team access to my photographic archive of WWII photographs; they copied 60 of them of which 48 featured in the film. There was quite a number of Society members at the Leas Cliff Hall on the day of filming including Harold Francis and Ronald Dutt who were both interviewed but sadly were not included in the actual film. I was there with my wife but we are far too young to have been interviewed, but we had a great time dancing. I was slightly disappointed that the acknowledgement was not more explicit, it appeared as Alan Taylor Historical Society! I wanted more of a plug for the Society.

I was very fortunate as Chairman of the Society and one of the privileged few to be invited by the Town Mayor Cllr. Mrs Ann Berry to a High Tea at The Grand on Friday 15th April. The occasion was held to introduce Admiral Lord Boyce as the newly installed Lord Warden and Admiral of the Cinque Ports. After the formal introduction and presentation of a crystal bowl and book entitled Folkestone: A Pictorial History by Charles Whitney, Lord Boyce and his partner mingled among the crowd while we were all tucking into the food.

Don and Shirley Gregory, Eamonn Rooney and myself have been attending meetings at the Old Glass Works in Mill Bay with the Folkestone Creative Foundation, in association with Canterbury Christ Church University College with regards to setting up a history centre in the Old High Street. The Creative Foundation Trust has given the use of 67 High Street free of charge for one year for use as a history centre. So watch this space.

Due to work commitments Linda Sage has resigned as our representative for the Kent History Federation meetings. I am please to announce that Fiona McNeill has taken on the job and will be attending the quarterly meetings at Maidstone.

The Society is continuing with its policy to donate about £50 worth of local history books/video film to all the primary schools in Folkestone. We have just made a donation to Sandgate Primary School and on

receiving the books the Head teacher Mrs Tite invited Mrs Tolputt (Chair of the Governors) and myself to an assembly to present the books to the children. After listening to a hymn sung by the children the Head said, "we have two visitors, Mrs Tolputt who is Chairman of the Governors and an author" then she explain who I was and why I was there. Mrs Tite then asked me some questions about the history of the town before asking the librarians to come out to the front so I could present them with the books and video film. I must confess it was quite a moving experience!

A photographic display was set up in the Parish Church for their Gift Day on Saturday 23rd April. The display consists of photographs of the church and views around the harbour and will possibly stay in the church for the duration of the summer.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new members: Mrs B. Rumens, Mr Jenner, Mrs Hedley and Mr D. Shakespeare.

On a rather sad note I would like to announce the death of our dear friend and member Daphne Heaver who passed away on 24th March aged 89. Daphne was a founder member of the Society and for many years she was our representative at the Kent History Federation meetings.

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

1 May 1812

FEMALE COURAGE: Last week three soldiers attempted to steal some faggots from a stack belonging to a man by the name of Jones, who keeps the Turnpike-gate at Hythe, on the Ashford road. The family had just retired to bed, hearing a noise and suspecting the cause from their having received a similar visit the night before. The man, his wife, and son, put on their great coats, and went out, a scuffle immediately ensued, Jones and his son were knocked down by the soldiers, when the woman attacked one of them and falling with him into a ditch, broke her leg. The man endeavoured to get off, but she held him firm with one hand, and supported her broken leg with the other, till a traveller passing near, and alarmed by the noise, came to her assistance, when he was secured and taken into custody by the staff corps guard....

4 March 1814

Mr Gyngell, the eclipse of all conjurers will perform at the Apollo Room Folkestone three evenings, viz. - This evening, tomorrow and Monday; and on Tuesday and Wednesday next, by permission of the Mayor he will have the honour to exhibit at the Guildhall, Hythe. (Mr G. advertises in Kentish Gazette 22 November 1814 from Dover where he appeared during Fair time billing with "that celebrated Tight Rope Dancer, Madam Godeav," from the Surrey Theatre. Mr Gyngell's performance included, also "The ANTI-COMBUSTIBLE MAN SALAMANDER Monsieur Du Paih" who would dance on red hot iron, immerse his bare feet and hands in boiling lead and fire. There was also a Master Gyngell billed to give a "pleasing performance on the swinging wire". Added to this was "The wonderful performance of the Learned Dogs" who waltzed and played at leapfrog. On the outside of the theatre the real Vauehall Pandaeon Minstrals. All this at Gyngells Theatre Elvey's Lane, Market Place, Dover).

28 June 1814

A handsome subscription has been raised by the inhabitants of Hythe to enable the poor to celebrate the return of Peace this day (when it will be proclaimed) by distribution of meat, bread and porter, to nearly 600 persons. The corporate body and townspeople dine on the occasion at the Swan.

30 August 1814

FOLKESTONE: To Be Sold By Auction by Mr. D. Major, at the North Foreland Inn, on 2nd September 1814 in one lot. The PITT lugger, burthen about 50 tons as she now lies on the beach near the Watch House, with all her masts, spars, rigging, sails and other materials, the whole of which are in very good condition. - Inventory: first, Second, third and fourth Jib; first, second and third fore-sail; first, second and third mainsail; great and small main top-sail; main-top-mast-stay sail; second and third mizen-sail; mizen-top-sail; standing and running rigging; 1 cable; 1 warp, 2 anchors, 1 night glass, and spars complete, except the mizen-top-mast. After which will be sold, a six-oared GALLEY, with mast, sail and sweeps.

9 September 1814

Turnpike from Dover to Sandgate: To be let: The tolls arising from the turnpikes near Sandgate and between Folkestone and Dover. In two lots, at the Guildhall, in Folkestone, on 12th September subject to the conditions to be then and there produced, to the highest bidder for one year, to commence on the 11th ...October next.

The tolls at the Sandgate gate were let for the last year at the sum of £354, and those at the Gate between Folkestone and Dover, with the Weigh bridge, at the sum of £264, and each will be put up separately at those sums. (5 lines omitted) By order of the Trustees: G. Thatcher, clerk...

18 October 1814

Folkestone Branch Auxiliary Bible Society: The first anniversary meeting of this society will be held at the Apollo Room, in Folkestone, on Friday the 21st Instant, when the company of those who are Friends to the Institution is particularly requested. The chair will be taken precisely at 12 O'clock, Folkestone October 17th 1814.

28 October 1814

About six on Tuesday morning last, during a heavy gale of wind, two collier brigs belonging to Sunderland, were wrecked on the beach, near Hythe. One the Atlas, Robert Armer master was lying on the main delivering coals for Messrs. Shipdem of that place. The other - Carthy, master in beating up channel, mistook the lights on board the Atlas, and at the coal yard for those of the South Foreland, and the master did not discover his error till the brig was within the breakers. We are happy to learn that the crews of both were saved by prompt assistance, but the vessels were beaten to pieces in the space of ten minutes and very few of their timbers remain capable of being used again. The beach is strewn with coals for several miles along the shore. Carthy, who was part owner of the vessel, had returned from a French prison, in which he had been confined eight years, only three months since.

10 March 1815

On Monday last, Vincent Pain, a son of Crispin, of Folkestone, for a considerable wager, picked up 100 stones, in Ingles' Field, deposited at a yard from each other. In the extraordinary short space of 44 minutes, being 16 minutes less than the time allotted, which he performed with the greatest of ease. Being at the rate of eight miles an hour.

14 March 1815

In the night of Thursday last, some malicious persons cut down and destroyed most of the fine young trees in the plantation of the Earl of Darnley, at Sandgate.

24 March 1815

There will be a ball at the Guildhall, Hythe, on Monday the twenty seventh of March instant, for the benefit of Miss Langdon, organist.

Ladies 4s- Gentlemen 5s - Tea and Coffee included.

Rev. James Croff and Mr Edward Tournay, Stewards.

7 April 1815

In the night of Saturday last, the counting-house and banking-room of R. Shipdem, esq. At Hythe, was burglariously entered by some person or persons, who, from circumstances connected with the robbery appear to have been well acquainted with the premises. The entrance was effected by forcing the sash and cutting a hole in the shutter so as to remove the bar, which fastened it. The locks to the desks were wrenched out, and notes, gold and silver, to the amount of nearly £50, with a watch, were stolen. Fortunately Mr Shipdem had taken to his chamber, property of the value of up wards of £4000. The robbers overlooked £10 in notes and 20 guineas worth of silver, done up in papers in one of the desks.

11 April 1815

FOLKESTONE HARBOUR COMPANY: Notice is hereby given, that pursuant to an Act...entitled: An act for constructing a Pier and Harbour at Folkestone a General Annual Meeting of the Proprietors... will be held at the Cistern House...on Wednesday the 19th ...April

By order of the Directors,
John Wilson

21 April 1815

RUN AWAY, and left their wives and families chargeable to the Town of Folkestone...WILLIAM WATT, Mariner, now or late belonging to the Elizabeth passage vessel, of Dover, and RICHARD SMITH, Mariner, who resorts at Dover and Deal.

Whoever will apprehend the above persons, or either of them, and deliver them to the parish officers... of Folkestone, shall receive TWO GUINEAS REWARD.

28 April 1815

The anniversary of the Folkestone Union Charity School on the Lancasterian plan was on Monday last, held at the Guildhall, Folkestone where a respectable attendance was given by the subscribers and friends to the Institution, John Bateman, esq. Having been called to the chair, and chosen President, they proceeded to the election of a committee, and the officers for the ensuing year, and after the accounts were produced and audited the report of the former committee was read from which it appeared that 140 boys and 30 girls had been educated under the above principle by the benevolent subscriptions and donations of the last year.

The progress of the children in their different branches gave every satisfaction to all present, who evinced the pleasure they felt, and their desire of promoting the good of so laudable an institution by commencing a fresh subscription with several handsome donations for the following year, including many new subscribers and donors, amongst whom was the Right Hon. The Earl of Darnley, William Wilberforce, esq., M.P. and others who were impressed with the great good in assisting a cause so calculated to promote the welfare of society, the improvement of morals, and the cultivation of the mind.

4 July 1815

On Thursday last a Coroner's Inquest was held at Folkestone before Henry Butcher, esq., Mayor and Coroner, on the body of William Dorman who was killed in a fray which occurred between a party of soldiers and young men belonging to that place. - The Jury after a very patient investigation of the circumstances returned a verdict of Wilful Murder against some person or persons unknown.

4 July 1815

On Thursday last George Dixon and John Bayley, two privates, belonging to the Royal Artillery, and John Bathurst, a man of colour, belonging to the band of the 95th regiment were fully committed to Folkestone Gaol, to take their trial for the murder of William Dorman, as mentioned in our last report.

11 August 1815

Thursday last being the anniversary of the Folkestone Friendly Society a most excellent sermon was preached before them, at the late Countess of Huntington's Chapel, by the Rev. T. Miller from the 107th Psalm and 31st verse:- Oh! That would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men - According to custom, the Society returned to the Apollo Room to dine.

15 August 1815

CAUTION: To Innkeepers, Publicans and others, against giving credit to Jane Baker (late Middleton) travelling with a Phantoccini Performance, as her husband, Philp Baker, shoemaker, of Hythe, ... will not be answerable for any debts she or her family may contract.

Witness my hand

PHILP BAKER

Edited by Martin Easdown and Linda Sage
27 Hampton Vale, Seabrook, Hythe, Kent CT21 5SG
Tel: 01303 230202 Fax 01303 238120 email: marlinova@yahoo.co.uk
Published by the Folkestone & District Local History Society ©2005
Registered Charity No. 295994