



## FOLKESTONE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

### NEWSLETTER No. 29 – WINTER 2006

#### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT by Alan F. Taylor

Due to the lack of dealers taking stalls at the Antique Fair in the Grand on 3<sup>rd</sup> September we were invited to have a stall and some space for a photographic display.

We set up a photographic display on Folkestone Past and Present and Views Around The Harbour. We also had our usual bookstall, like those we have at our meetings, which took £88. The display created a lot of interest and we had many favourable comments.

At the September meeting we had a talk by Albert Granville entitled 'And How We Raised The Mary Rose.' Albert started by telling us how Henry VIII inherited the nucleus of a royal fleet from his father. However, faced with the ever-present threat of the French Navy as well as a strong, potentially hostile, Scottish fleet, he began an intensive programme of naval rearmament soon after he became King of England. He ordered the *Sovereign* to be built and as soon as she was finished the keels of the *Mary Rose* & *Pomegranate* were laid. The *Mary Rose* took part in the first French War (1512-1514), the second French War (1522-25). In 1544 war with the French broke out again and in 1545 in response to the English capture of Boulogne, a French invasion fleet set sail for the South coast of England. The *Mary Rose* was under command of Sir George Carew and on 19<sup>th</sup> July 1545, during the battle the *Mary Rose* sank. It was not the result of French gunfire, what precisely happened is not clear, but a possible explanation is that it was a result of mishandling and indiscipline amongst the crew. One survivor said the lower gun ports were open when the ship came about and she heeled over and the incoming water flooded her. After the battle, attempts were made to salvage her but it was over 400 years before she finally returned to Portsmouth.

The *Mary Rose* trust was formed in 1979 with H.R.H. Prince Charles as president. Full-time staff were appointed to carry out the work of excavating the ship and her contents. Albert Granville worked for the company, which owned the floating crane (Howard Doris), which lifted the *Mary Rose*; he was actually there when she was lifted.

Forty-nine people attended the meeting, four of whom were visitors

At the October meeting 48 members came to our Annual General Meeting. Officers standing for election were: chairman Alan Taylor, vice-chairman Don Gregory, treasurer Shirley Gregory and Hon. Secretary Trevor Page. There being no other nominations the officers were elected. The remaining committee members from last year are Peter Bamford, Eileen Frankland, Fiona McNeill and Ron Dutt. This leaves us one committee member short, but there were no nominations.

After refreshments a D.V.D film on 'Southern Steam' was shown.

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Fourteen people went to the Theatre Royal, Margate to see *My Fair Lady*. The evening started with a guided tour round this very old theatre after which we were provided with a very nice tea before watching the show.

At the November meeting Martin Lloyd's talk was about passports, assassins, traitors and spies. He told us the passport is a document familiar to all, used and recognised worldwide, and yet it has no basis in law: one country cannot oblige another to admit its subjects simply by issuing a document. But the state, by insisting on the requirement to hold a passport, provides for itself a neat, self-financing data collection and surveillance system. Martin told us the story of the passport from its earliest origins to the latest high-tech developments of today.

Martin spent 23 years in HM Immigration Service. He is a well-known public speaker and is also author of: *The Passport, The Trouble with France* and *The Trouble with Spain*. Fifty people attended the meeting, one of whom was a visitor.

#### **A date for your diary:**

A coffee morning has been arranged for Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 11am at the Langhorne Hotel, Langhorne Gardens.

#### **For anybody who has not yet paid their subscription a reminder that these are now due.**

We would like to welcome our new members: Mrs H. Monk, Miss J. Marjanovic, Pamela Hogg, Paula Demuth, Mr & Mrs McBride, Mary Leach, Cynthia Weeks, Mr F. Williamson, Anna Fowler and Pamela Brenchley.

On a rather sad note I would like to announce the death of Frank Root who died on October aged 84. Frank was a founder member of the Society but he hasn't been a member for a few years now.

May I join the Officers and Committee in wishing all our members a Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year.  
A.F.T.

### **CHANCE MEETING WITH A QUEEN AT FOLKESTONE**

by Basil Craggs

It all started by accident really, I was 14 years old, still at prep school and about to take the then dreaded Common Entrance exam, which my parents hoped I would pass, thus saving them the embarrassment of making excuses about why I had failed – but that was some time away.

Meanwhile, I was on my summer holiday from school. It was August, and a lovely warm summer, if I remember rightly. I had just been for a bike ride with my friends, but it was too hot, really, so I persuaded my mother to buy me a fishing rod, which she did after some attempt to make me content with a cheap hand line against which I rebelled somewhat vigorously.

We lived in Folkestone in those days, in a lovely flat overlooking the Harbour, so I was armed with the new rod and tackle, a packed lunch, one shilling for my bait, 6d for my all-day fishing permit in the Harbour, 2d for an ice-cream cornet and finally 2d for my bus fare home. "You can walk down to the Harbour – it will do you good", words of wisdom from a kind and fair father, but somewhat strict with his number one son. So, I took up my position on the outer breakwater pier of Folkestone Harbour and started to fish.

Happy moments! A lovely day, fish biting reasonably well, a couple of other fishermen to chat with – what more could I ask? Bliss, perfect bliss, from 11.30 until 2.30. Two Southern Railway steamers had come and gone to Boulogne with no problems. But what was this coming out of the heat haze from the direction of Dungeness Bay? Another steamer? Queer noises she was

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making, a kind of "thud, thud, thud". I couldn't see very well – too much haze – but she was an odd shape, with two sort of lumps sticking out of her hull, and when she came much nearer I could see two tall white funnels with smoke coming from both. Whilst musing as to what sort of ship this could be, my thoughts were rudely interrupted by a burly individual in blue jersey with 'Southern Railway' written across the chest.

"Now then, lad, reel in. The steamer's due to tie up any time now." I hastily did what I was told, but my eyes were riveted to this graceful white, black and green-hulled vessel, with two huge 'mudguards' emblazoned in gold. The legend 'Brighton Queen' was inscribed in a graceful curve, also in gold, on a blue background. I was astonished. Living in Folkestone, one was very used to the comings and goings of the S.R. steamers to France, but those had propellers, and a visit from a steamer from Brighton was indeed a novelty then for Folkestonians.

My Southern Railway friend told me that this beautiful steamer was called a Paddle Steamer as instead of propellers under the water the two very large wheels did in fact paddle the ship along, rather like a mechanical duck! What was she doing here in Folkestone, I asked?

"She has brought some holidaymakers from Brighton, Eastbourne and Hastings to visit Folkestone and she is about to cruise up the Channel Past Dover to the South Foreland Lighthouse and back. It's a one and a half hour's cruise, and the fare is two shillings." I was fascinated by this beautiful white-funnelled vessel lying alongside the pier whilst her passengers disembarked. There was a young officer standing by the gangway.

"Can I go on board and look at the engines? I have never seen a paddle steamer before. Will there be many passengers for the Channel cruise? I'm sorry I haven't two shillings for the cruise, but I would dearly like to go. When is the ship coming again? Words kept tumbling out. "Oh, I do wish I could have a look round. Will there be time before you sail?"

The young officer – I shall never forget his name, John England – let me aboard and he said, "You can stay aboard for the cruise. I'm on the gangway, so I shan't bother you for a ticket. Enjoy yourself, but don't get into any mischief!" I assured him I would be a model passenger.

I sat on the upper deck, just abaft the second funnel. Within 20 minutes, there was a short blast on the whistle, the clang of a bell somewhere down below, a great swirl of water coming from those two huge wheels, and Brighton Queen reversed away from the pier. Once we were at sea, I left the upper deck and went foreward of those huge paddle boxes – I was now becoming conversant with the workings and parts of this lovely vessel and that was what I had been told the 'mudguards' were called.

I went down to the engine room where the great piston rods and cranks were running at 25 revolutions a minute, everything so clean and fresh, the smell of oil and coal pervading the area. Then I left the engine room to go right out on to the open deck of the ship and there I heard the delightful "thud, thud, thud" of the paddle floats as they hit the water, a sound I have loved and never get tired of hearing more than 50 years later on our own Waverley.

Having explored the whole ship, I went into the salon in the stern, beautifully appointed with a gold corduroy-type material on the spacious seats around the inside of the hull. There was a lady neatly dressed in black, with a cap and apron. She had an enormous urn of water bubbling away, and rows of white cups with gold and blue bands and the legend P & A Campbell Ltd. There was a large card which invited you to have "Tea per cup 2d; Lemonade or ginger beer per bottle 4d; Plain cake per slice 2d; Fancy cakes each 3d" and various other items of a more substantial nature. I remembered I had spent my bait and fishing permit money, but I still had my 2d for the ice cream cornet and 2d for my bus fare home.

I've never had any refreshments on a steamer before. I can easily walk home. Yes! I will have a cup of tea and a slice of plain cake. The lady said, "Please sit at a table and I will bring it" and she did – and I am sure she gave me extra as the cake slice was very thick and she knew I only had 4d. What a difference in people then!

At 4.30 sharp, Brighton Queen returned to Folkestone and after a very grateful farewell to the Stewardess and John England, I stood and waved the beautiful little vessel God speed on her way back across Dungeness Bay and home to Brighton. Thus I was introduced to paddle steamers, the love of which has burned deeply these 50 years and more, and will continue to do so for as long as a paddle steamer exists.

I am, I suppose, basically a Campbell's man, having spent most of my early years close to that company's steamers. But I also have some reminiscences of the Eagle steamers – I did, in fact, sail in the Royal Eagle on her maiden voyage, that is another story.

Taken from Paddle Wheels No. 103 – Spring 1986

Don Gregory's collection.

Dear member if any one has any photographs of any paddle steamers in Folkestone that can be copied and returned to you please let Don know.



#### **THE BRIGHTON QUEEN (11) ex LADY MOYRA**

The Brighton Queen was launched from the shipyard of John Brown, Clydebank, in 1905 to order of Barry Railway, and named the *Gwalia*. In 1910, she was sold to the Furness Railway and became the *Lady Moyra*, working between Barrow and Fleetwood.

In 1919, she was purchased by a Mr. W. H. Tucker and returned to the Bristol Channel as a vessel of the Yellow Funnel Fleet, which ran in active competition with Campbell's White Funnel Fleet.

In 1922 she joined the Campbell fleet and was re-named *Brighton Queen* in March 1933, and was decorated with the coat of arms of Brighton on her paddle boxes. She was sent round to the Brighton station in June 1933 for the summer season and employed mainly on the south coast. She was lost whilst helping in the evacuation of Dunkirk.