



**FOLKESTONE & DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT by Alan F Taylor

At the March meeting we welcomed guest speaker Ian Gordon who gave us his illustrated talk on 'Woodward of Folkestone – Victorian at War with His Time'. Ian started by talking about Folkestone in the 1850s he said Folkestone had expanded since the coming of the railway in 1843, and that in the 1860s large houses were being built on the West Cliff where some large well-to-do family's would stay for maybe three months at a time during the summer.

He went on to talk about the life of Matthew Woodward and all the good work this extraordinary man did, but not without conflict, upsetting many people including his church wardens. Matthew Woodward was born in Brosely, Shropshire, at the age of 26 he went into his father's family business in Manchester. But he had long wanted to enter the church, and being disillusioned with the world of commerce, he let to work as a lay reader at St John's Liverpool, under Canon Fallon. At the same time he worked his way through St. Aidan's Birkenhead, preparing himself for ordination. On Trinity Sunday 1849 he was ordained curate of Hythe. Archbishop Sumner ordained him priest exactly one year later, and again on Trinity Sunday 1851, Woodward was made Vicar of Folkestone.

Woodward moved into a small terrace of cottages in Westcliffe Gardens only a few yards from his church, St. Mary and St. Eanswythe. From his room, he could see the stunted barn like shape of the church which his predecessor had left him. Woodward set about beautifying the church by painting the interior, he coaxed up to the well-to-do visitors for donations to restore and enlarge the church. In December 1705 the nave had been blown down in a gale, and had been re-erected 40 feet shorter. The anticipated cost was £2,500; he received a donation by an anonymous donor of £500 from a visitor and a similar amount from Lord Radnor. Although by November 1858 enough contributions had been received to set the work in hand it didn't start until 1859 to designs by the architect Hussey and local builder Mr Edwards.

After two years in Folkestone as a bachelor, Woodward married Roseamund Mary Barrow, the daughter of Sir George Barrow Bart, and they moved into the new parsonage, 10 Victoria Grove. Rosamund proved herself a good housekeeper helping where appropriate in his duties. Later in life Mrs Woodward became increasingly mentally volatile and instable. These difficulties may have sprung from post natal depression; she had borne a child virtually every two years since she had been married. Rosamund Penelope was born in September '54, Marianna in '56, Bertha a year later, Matthew in January '58, Louse Mary Eanswythe in August '60, Constance 10 months later and Ethelinda in 1862 Little Mary was born in '64 but died in 1865, and another Mary who was born and died on March 16th 1867. Herbert was born in 1868, and the youngest son Michael had yet to be conceived. Rosamund and her family spent a lot of time in Rome and she and all the family were eventually received into the Catholic Church which devastated Matthew Woodward.

Down the years Woodward made many changes much to the annoyance of the parishioners these included, doing away with the fishermen's wooden pews, putting flowers and candles on the altar and in 1863 he introduced new hymn books which also annoyed the organist, Mr Tolputt who resigned and went to Holy Trinity Church.

The Parish Church was the only Anglican Church in Folkestone until Christ Church was erected in 1850 which relieved the pressure on the Parish Church. Ian continued by tell us about the money Woodward helped to raise to install the Harvey Window in the West end of the Church (1885), to build St. Peters Church (1862), St. Michael's church (1865) , Holy Trinity church (1868), St Saviour's church (1882) and St. Andrew's Convalescent Home (1884).

In the Lent of 1898, Woodward was too ill to take all the special services for men, which he had pioneered in the parish. But he did manage, to climb up into the pulpit for the last time in April. His words on that occasion mirrored a sermon which he had preached on Vicar's Sunday, before the Mayor and Corporation, on his forty-first anniversary as Vicar of Folkestone. He referred to throne of God's majesty. Matthew Woodward died 1st May 1898.

Seventy-seven people attended the meeting seven of whom were visitors.

At the April meeting we welcomed Derek Boughton who gave us his illustrated talk on 'An Eighteenth Century Country Tailor; the account book of John Mount of Etchinghill.' Derek said he was asked to give a talk about the history of Elham, but suggested this talk about the account book of John Mount, a tailor working in the second half of the eighteenth century. Since this book was kept at the tailor's shop in Elham for as long as anyone could remember, it was ostensibly an Elham story. Derek was born and lived in Elham for most of his life, as had others of his family over the centuries. Derek went on to say he was a parish historian but not a parochial one, he said there was Historical Societies in Elham, Barham Downs, Lyminge and Bridge. Lyminge has a documented history for the Anglo-Saxon period, backed up by nineteenth century archaeology, and five years ago digs conducted by Gabor Thomas of Reading University, who last year uncovered the remains of a great hall which may date to the early part of the reign of Ethelbert of Kent in the 560s.

Elham, on the other hand, is not mentioned until Domesday Book, although it was already by then a largish village, and subsequently became very prosperous, particularly after it gained its Market Charter in 1251. The market determined the layout of the village, with two trading areas, of which the Square was also known as the Nether Market. Elham had a resident doctor from the mid seventeenth century. There was a tailor on both sides of the High Street in the early nineteenth century, with William Gibson listed from about 1850. Apart from making cloths for everyday use they made and repaired pink coats for the East Kent Hunt. Derek went on to talk about John Mount whose business was actually in Etchinghill. He showed us some of the pages from the account book and the inaccuracies and also bad debts. Rev. David Price, supposedly of Shorncliffe, and another by a Mr Laurence from Elham were two who owed Mr Mount money. Derek showed us a page from Andrew's Dury and Herbert's map of Kent, published 1st January 1769, which shows roughly John Mount's area of operation. His customers' included; Thomas Prebbels for making a waistcoat one shilling and three pence, a gabardine coat for Mr Howland, four shillings and three pence, other customers included the Kennets' from Saltwood, Master Nash and Master Horton both from Cheriton, the Elgars', Mr Brockman from Beachborough, Ingram and George Taylor, Master Wootton and David Rose.

Derek had cross-checked entries in the account book with Parish Records and the Overseers Accounts and in some cases there were inaccuracies, such as David Price from Shorncliffe who in actual fact came from Sheerness. Presumably he had been in the area when John Mount did work for him, and it may well be that he was related to the Rev. John Price, Rector of Lyminge.

Forty-seven people attended the meeting six of whom were visitors.

Nine members of the Society attended the Kent History Federation Conference this year, which was held at Dover on Saturday 11th May in the Old Town Hall. The following talks were held in the morning: Christine Waterman MBE – The Maison Dieu, Derek Leach OBE – Dover's Caves and Tunnels and Jon Iverson – The Western Defences of Dover. After a break for lunch there was a choice of visits: A Guided tour of the Maison Dieu, a guided tour Central Dover Churches, a guided tour of Western Heights Napoleonic and Victoria defences and Grand Shaft staircase, a guided tour of Dover College or a visit to Dover Transport Museum.

Sandgate School and Village

On May 1, Hilary Tolputt, one of the Society members, gave an illustrated talk on Sandgate School and Village. After a brief introduction on the early history of the school including William Wilberforce's sponsorship of education in Sandgate, Hilary concentrated on the years 1885-1922 under a remarkable headmaster, Arnold Henry Ulyyett. His entries in the School Log Book recorded progress of the pupils and teachers, illnesses and absences and gave a fascinating insight into village and national events.

Arnold Ulyyett, the son of Henry Ulyyett, headmaster of St Mary's school, Folkestone, began his career as a Pupil Teacher at his father's school. His character, his views on corporal punishment, the public lectures which he gave on science to raise money for the school and his experiments on X Rays, Radium and photography were discussed. Ulyyett took great pride in the monarchy and the Empire. On Empire Day, 1910 the Australian flag was flown at the school as part of their "twinning" with Sandgate School, near Brisbane, Australia, an event recorded in the Daily Mail and Daily Telegraph at the time.

The school curriculum was developed significantly under Ulyyett. Apart from the 3 R's, the excellent teaching of Religious Education, Physiology, Electricity, Magnetism, Geography, History, French, English Literature, singing, swimming and cardboard modelling, was mentioned, while lessons on the beach and visits to Folkestone Warren by train, the theatre and to Boulogne also took place. Ulyyett moreover, created a School Library and School Museum.

The school had an excellent record for the regular and punctual attendance of its pupils. Nevertheless, the prevalence of epidemics of diphtheria, scarlet fever and measles resulted in the closure of the school for prolonged periods. Ulyyett also decided to close the school when the Benvenue, a full-rigged ship was wrecked off Sandgate in a terrible storm in 1891. The Sandgate coastguards were on standby from 4am as the ship struck the bottom, watching the crew clinging to the masts while the heavy sea washed over the deck. The onlookers tried unsuccessfully to get a line aboard with a rocket firing device; launched the life-boat which capsized, with one crewmember being drowned, and it was not until evening the lifeboat managed to reach the stricken ship. The Benvenue crew had been clinging to the masts for sixteen hours. The event had a lasting effect on one of Ulyyett's pupils, Victor Foley, who painted a picture of the wreck of the Benvenue which now hangs in Sandgate Library.

Hilary concluded by discussing the Log Book entries for the 1914-18 War which included the death of the School caretaker in the sinking of HMS Cressy, the fire drills, the air raids and the epidemics of Spanish 'flu'. Twenty two of Sandgate's old boys who served in the forces died during the War. In 1922, Ulyyett succumbed to Spanish 'flu' and retired after thirty seven years as Headmaster and forty seven years as a teacher in Folkestone.

Sixty-six people attended the meeting 6 of whom were visitors.

We would like to welcome new member: Mrs Nora Rothery

Battle of Britain Diary Folkestone 1940

July 7th Three Spitfires of No.65 Squadron shot down late in the evening, all three pilots being killed; Hurricane operating from Hawkinge crashed at Chilberton Elms at 9.10 p.m., aircraft destroyed and pilot killed.

July 8th Three Spitfires from No.54 Squadron was attacked by formation of Bf109's while Spitfires were attacking formation of Messerschmitt Me110's which had crossed the coast near Dungeness. Two of the Spitfires were shot down, another damaged, all pilots safe, but one badly wounded. No. 32 Squadron had a Hurricane damaged off Dungeness, but it landed safely back at Hawkinge, while a Heinkel He111 bomber was shot down by pilot of No.85 Squadron off Folkestone. A Spitfire from No.610 Squadron damaged a Bf109 off Folkestone, the pilot landing back on French coast, although wounded. Between, 3.00 p.m. and 5.00 p.m. several houses were damaged by machine gun fire in Folkestone, one woman being killed; much aerial activity over the town.

July 9th About mid-day three Me110's shot down into sea off Folkestone by No.43 Squadron, while a workman was killed by a stray bullet in a house in Bournemouth Road.

July 10th To combat increased attacks by the enemy, whole squadrons of fighters were stationed at Hawkinge to help guard the convoys passing through the Straits of Dover. At 1.30 p.m., a Dornier Do17Z collided with a Hurricane from No.111 Squadron during an engagement off Folkestone, while another Hurricane from the same squadron was damaged, but managed to reach its home base at Croydon. A third Hurricane from No.111 Squadron crash landed at Hawkinge at 3.50 p.m. During the attacks on the convoy, the R.N.L.I. was informed that three airplanes have fallen into the sea off Dungeness. Lifeboat launched during the height of the attack, but only found wreckage and some bits of German uniforms. Two Hurricanes from No.32 Squadron shot down a Me110 in the same area about 2.20 p.m.

July 13th Spitfires from No.64 Squadron engaged some Bf109's south of Folkestone, one enemy fighter shot down, and another damaged – landed back in France, No.64 Squadron lost one of their aircraft which forced landed back at Hawkinge after being damaged by ack-ack fire over Dover, the pilot being uninjured. Hurricanes from No.56 Squadron were also involved in the same engagement, downing two of the German fighters.

July 15th Spitfire from No.74 Squadron landed at Hawkinge after being damaged during an attack on an enemy bomber, which was shot down.

July 17th Dornier Do17Z damaged in combat with Hurricanes from No.615 Squadron off Folkestone, bomber landed on French coast, no casualties. Two bombs dropped near Brookland Church, superficial damage by blast to surrounding buildings.

July 18th Spasmodic raids on Channel Ports, including Folkestone.

July 19th No.141 Squadron arrived at Hawkinge with their Defiant two-seater fighters. On their first patrol at 12.30 hours they were attacked at 500 feet by twenty Bf109's. Five Defiants were shot down south of Folkestone, while another landed near Hawkinge village – all within five minutes of each other. One gunner bailed out over the sea and was presumed drowned, seven crew members killed and one wounded. Hurricanes from No.111 Squadron intercepted the Bf109s and shot down 14 of them, the Germans claimed 12 Defiants shot down for the loss of one Bf109.

July 21st A Hawker Hector biplane was claimed to have been shot down near Folkestone by a Bf109, which was in turn shot down by fighters from No.238 Squadron.

July 22nd Attacks on convoys and shipping along south-east coast.

David Collyer