



**FOLKESTONE & DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

www.folkestonehistory.org

NEWSLETTER No. 56- Autumn 2013

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT by Alan F Taylor

At the June meeting we welcomed guest speaker Peter Ewart who gave us his illustrated talk entitled 'Some Mother's Son-A Family Album's Poignant Story.' Peter said his wife purchased a family photograph album from a second-hand bookshop in North Gate, Canterbury. Peter said "why did you buy it?" his wife said "because I felt sorry for it". After Peter had had a good look at it he said would have done the same as she had and purchased it. He then proceeded to show us the photographs which were possibly a father who was always dressed in a suit, waistcoat, wing collar shirt and bow tie, a mother and their baby boy. The photos were all captioned with the age of the child. After a number of photos some of which were studio photos there were two boys. The first studio photo was with a back-drop of the sea and captioned, eldest child 5 years three months, 1903. The next photo there was two boys with their mother. The next one was of the eldest boy in Scottish army uniform; captioned '18 years old, 1917 Hazeley down Camp near Winchester, hut 38a'. The next photo was captioned 'approach to Hazeley down Camp August 1917' and the next one was a wreath captioned 'sent for Gordon's grave January 1918'. Peter thought it was quite obvious the album had been put together in chronological order after their son's death. Next was a memoriam card, the script started with the words 'Somewhere in France there's a sacred spot is a grave just newly made' ----- . The card was signed with the initials W.J.D. The last photo in the album was Gordon's mother and father with a nurse. Peter and his wife Lynne's problem was how to identify Gordon and his family so they painstakingly went through the photos time and time again looking for clues. One photo was captioned model yacht at Queensmere, 1912, this one was a studio photo taken by USA studios, London provinces. There was a cutting from a magazine entitled 'Astor muscle Development for Health and Strength'. There was also a group photo of soldiers captioned 'Winchester August 1917 aged 19 years', but still no real clues. Then Peter and Lynne found an emblem for the London Scottish 14th Battalion. Peter did some research and found that they lost 6,500 men in the Great War. There was also a cutting stuck in the album from 'The London Scottish Regimental Gazette' with Gordon's photo on it. Another photo of Gordon was taken outside a large house covered with ivy in 1908. In the corner of the page in very small writing Peter and Lynne found a caption '19, Allfarthing Lane - 10 years.' They then looked in the London A to Z and found there was an Allfarthing Lane in Wimbledon, they then looked at a map and found that it was just down the road from Wimbledon Common where there was a pond called 'Queensmere'. Peter and Lynne then looked through some London Street directories and found William J Davey at 19 Allfarthing Lane, Wimbledon. (Going back to the end of the album the initials at the bottom of the memoriam card were W.J.D). Their next move was to contact the Commonwealth War Graves Commission where they were given the following details 'Pte Davey, Gordon William (army No 514358) died of wounds 3rd December 1917 France. More research revealed that Gordon was born 11 February 1898 his father was a post office clerk, the nurse in last photo visited the family and took back a wreath (seen in the photo) back to Bapaume war cemetery France, where she put it on Gordon's grave. After Peter and Lynne's amazing research they took a trip to Bapaume war cemetery, France to pay their respects. They

put a posy of flowers on Gordon's grave plus a copy of the memoriam card written by Gordon's father. The visit was seventy years after Gordon's death.

Sixty-five people attended the meeting three of whom were visitors.

The July meeting was an open evening when members bring along items of local interest. There was a good variety of material including postcards, photographs, medals, a scrap book containing local press cuttings, Kentish first day covers and a very rare item by Vince Williams, a stone jar complete with tap and handle from the Gun Brewery.

Twenty-three people attended the meeting two of whom were visitors.

At the August meeting we welcomed guest speaker Richard Cross who gave us his illustrated talk entitled 'Folkestone's Archaeological History.' Richard said his talk covers over 500 years; he started with John Leland (1503- 18 April 1552). John Leland was an English poet and antiquary turning his attention to local history in 1529 he was described as "the father of English local history." From the Anglo Saxon period he saw the ruins of St Botolph and made observations. Leland didn't publish anything and upon his death his notebooks including medieval manuscripts were placed in the custody of Sir John Cheke. After changing hands a few times they were placed in Bodleian library, Oxford where they still remain to this day.

Richard then spoke about: William Camden 1547-1623; and William Lambard 1536-1601, who wrote a perambulation of Kent first published in 1876; William Somner 1598-1669, who wrote the first serious history of Canterbury; Edward Patter, who wrote a handwritten book on the history of Folkestone for the Earl of Radnor; Samuel Joseph Mackie, born in Dover 1823, who wrote Folkestone and Its Neighbourhood first published in 1856; Pitt Rivers 1827-1900, who wrote a book on the Excavations At Caesar's Camp, Folkestone published in 1882; and in 1907 the discovery of a Saxon Burial ground by the Borough Engineer on Dover Hill. The Folkestone Natural History Society was founded 4 April 1868 and at a meeting on 1st August a museum was proposed. The Corporation agreed to make available a room at the Sessions Hall beside the Bayle Steps. When the library and museum opened on Grace Hill (1888) the collection moved there. Alexandra Montague Brown was the first person to discover the Roman Villa on East Cliff in April 1918; S. E. Winbolt excavated the villa in 1924 and published a book in 1925. Richard then named a few people who were the Librarians and Curators at the museum and library on Grace Hill who were: Mr J. W. Walton, Reginald Howarth, Kenneth Sussams and Peter Davies. To finish Richard mentioned the more recent archaeological excavations which included Holywell (Channel Tunnel site), the Bayle 1990's, Roman Villa 2010, and Payers Park August 2013.

Fifty people attended the meeting five of whom were visitors.

Date for your diary: Annual Dinner to be held at the Portofino Restaurant, 124 Sandgate Road, Friday 18th October 7.30pm £15 each including gratuities. For details contact Alan Taylor – Tel: 01303 252567.

As you know the Folkestone & District Local History Society is a very successful and forward looking Society, both with its monthly meetings, talks and social events. However, in order to continue in this vein we would like to take this opportunity to invite more members to participate in the management of the society by becoming committee members/officers. The involvement required would be attendance at six committee meetings through the year and occasional assistance at monthly meetings. I know of your continued interest and support, therefore I hope you will consider the above. The A.G.M. is on October 2nd at 8pm at the Holy Trinity Church Hall. I look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Kind regards,
Alan F Taylor

We would like to welcome new member Mrs Linda King

Battle of Britain Diary Folkestone 1940



July 25th A convoy was attacked off Abbots Cliff by Junkers Ju 87 dive-bombers, escorted by Bf. 109's. One ship was damaged, the convoy already having lost five of the 21 ships during attacks off Dover. No. 610 Squadron intercepted the fighters, and shot down three Bf.109's. German 'E-boats' tried to attack the convoy. They returned later to finish off three of the crippled vessels.

July 26th A Junkers Ju 88A was damaged by fighters of No. 65 Squadron off Folkestone, killing one of the crew members, and a Dornier Do 17P reconnaissance bomber was also damaged about the same time.

July 27th Attacks on Channel Ports and convoys were increasing, the Air Ministry issued orders to Fighter Command to intercept the raiders approaching the ports with superior numbers wherever possible. The numbers of fighter squadrons at coastal aerodromes, including Hawkinge, increased to 28 from this date.

July 29th Folkestone Gap lightship bombed by six Stukas, two crew members were killed, seven wounded. One Stuka shot down, four Spitfires engaged a formation of Junkers Ju 88's and destroyed or damaged all of them, remnants chased back to France, while operating from Hawkinge, pilot killed.

July 31st The Spitfires of No. 74 Squadron shot down, one crashed into Folkestone harbour and the pilot killed, the other landed near the town, pilot was also killed. Another Spitfire from No. 74 Squadron was damaged by Bf. 109's off Folkestone, but managed to glide back to Manston. No. 32 Squadron on dispersal at Hawkinge from home station of Biggin Hill.

August 5th A spitfire from No. 64 Squadron shot down by Bf. 109's at Hawkinge, another machine from same squadron also shot down, the pilot of the latter was killed.

August 6th No. 56 Squadron was based at Hawkinge from this date, claimed one Stuka shot down during local raid.

August 7th Several days before the first shells fell on Dover, several fell in the Folkestone area – enemy calibrating guns. First shells to fall on this country from France.

August 8th Spitfire from No. 64 Squadron crash landed at Capel after suffering engine failure. During a dog fight over Hawkinge, one Spitfire from No. 43 Squadron stalled and fell from 29,000 feet to 16,000 feet before recovering. During the early hours of the day a convoy of 25 merchant ships attempted to run the Straits of Dover. Enemy 'E-boats' attacked and sunk three ships off Folkestone before dawn, and damaged another.

August 9th Dog fights over Dungeness at 9.25 a.m., involving four Bf.109's and British fighters.

August 10th Formations of Bf. 109's and Me. 110's carrying bombs under wings of fuselages were spotted. Second phase of Battle Britain started with attacks switched to aerodromes and ports in the south-east.

August 11th Hurricane from No. 65 Squadron, flying from Kenley, struck fence when the pilot undershot while landing at Hawkinge, pilot not injured. Dornier Do 17Z reported to have been shot down over Folkestone, one crew member wounded.

August 12th Hawkinge and Lympne aerodromes heavily attacked by formations of Junkers Ju 87 dive-bombers. At Hawkinge two hangers destroyed, as well as workshops and store buildings damaged. Runway cratered by 28 bombs, four aircraft badly damaged, five persons killed and seven seriously injured airfield unserviceable, but back in operation on following morning. Lympne was attacked twice, during the early morning 141 bombs were dropped, and about 3.00 p.m. a further 242 bombs smashed the three pairs of hangers, the Cinque Ports Flying Club lounge, bar and offices, all their remaining aircraft were destroyed. Station H.Q. received direct hit, and only the Air Ministry signal station remained intact. Seventy of the bombs fell in surrounding fields, aircraft unserviceable and fires blazed for three days. Two Spitfires of No. 54 Squadron managed to avoid the craters in the runway and landed at Lympne after Bf. 109's. Folkestone bombed twice, during late morning and again at 5.45 p.m. Two waves of Dornier Do. 215's escorted by fighters, dropped 200 bombs on the golf course (in mistake for Hawkinge?) and then straddled the town. Black Bull Road, Gordon Road, Canterbury Road and Linden Crescent hit, but only one person slightly injured and damage to buildings slight compared with numbers of bombs dropped – 99 of the bombs fell on the golf course. Just after 11.00 a.m. the first four-shell salvo fell in Millfield, Cornwallis Avenue, Shorncliffe Road, and Danton Patch, damage to houses including that of Mrs Stone, local centenarian – recently evacuated. Bombs also fell at Brookland, Lympne, Stowting, Paddlesworth and Aldington. Three Bf. 109's shot down, two falling to Spitfires from No. 610 Squadron in the New Romney area, one enemy pilot killed, others missing. A No. 32 Squadron Hurricane crashed near Folkestone, and a Spitfire from No. 610 Squadron was shot down by Bf. 109's escorting the Stukas making for Hawkinge off Dover. A second machine from the same squadron was shot down near Dover at 11.40 a.m., pilot was wounded.

August 13th Lympne again received bombs from enemy aircraft returning from an attack on Detling aerodrome near Maidstone. Fighters from No. 11 group, including some from Croydon, were on patrol over Hawkinge while the clearing-up from the previous day's raid was in progress. A Defiant two-seat fighter attacked Heinkel bombers coming in over Folkestone, shooting one down, the pilot being captured by the Army. The Defiant was also damaged, and landed outside Lenham vicarage. A Hurricane from No. 56 Squadron crash landed at Hawkinge having been damaged in combat, the pilot being uninjured. A Spitfire from No. 74 Squadron was shot down in the area after trying to engage a Dornier Do. 17P high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft, again pilot uninjured. Also downed in the Folkestone area was a Me. 110, the pilot of which was reported as being missing. While Hurricanes from No. 111 Squad were patrolling over Folkestone, they were vectored to intercept Dornier's which were returning from attacks on Eastchurch aerodrome, Sheppey at 7.00 a.m. Five bombers shot down in as many minutes.

August 14th At 6.50 a.m. the R.N.L.I. received a report of a British bomber down in the sea between Hythe and Dungeness. A fishing boat picked up some of the crew, while a third airman was rescued by Miss Peggy Prince in a canoe. Shortly after 1.00 p.m. the main force of bombers from Luftflotte 2 came cross the coast between Dover and Folkestone. Two Hurricanes from No. 32 Squadron forced landed at Hawkinge after interceptions, during which No. 615 Squadron lost a Hurricane near Dover while flying from Hawkinge. However No. 615 Squadron shot down two Ju. 87B Stukas, while No. 610 Squadron got two others and damaged a third, which forced landed in France.

David Collyer