



**FOLKESTONE & DISTRICT
Local History Society**
www.folkestonehistory.org

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT by Alan F Taylor

At the December meeting we welcomed member speaker Chris Philips who presented his talk entitled 'The Local Token/Tradesmen's Tokens' which was illustrated throughout with pictures of actual tokens from three centuries. Chris started by saying during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Britain witnessed three waves of tokens struck to make up for the lack of copper and some silver coinage. In 1574 a coin in base metal was proposed but Queen Elizabeth disapproved on the grounds that coins made of such material were beneath regal dignity. At the same time, prices doubled, trade increased and more people were paid in cash. More money simply had to be found.

In the seventeenth century a reluctant blessing from the Crown was received by way of a proclamation in 1613 enabling tokens to be officially minted. A decision from the Privy Council in 1672 to stamp out token production failed since the Mint insisted on full weight coins making them too expensive and heavy to produce, leaving the door open for tokens.

The eighteenth century had its way paved by the seventeenth century with copper still not being looked upon as real money. Although a 'notorious abuse of the Royal Prerogative' this abuse was largely ignored with towns issuing tokens with authority from the mayor. Punishment was slight with a statute in 1744 bringing 2 years imprisonment for forging copper while gold and silver forging brought death at Newgate.

Official regal coinage had never reflected contemporary events and so tokens produced in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries took advantage of this. Areas of interest included Construction, Social and Political, Industry and Transport. This saw places like the Ketley Plane Canal illustrated on a token and John Howard of Portsmouth for prison reform. Some tokens had outdoor workers showing preference for non-industrial revolution industries, while a sailing barge near the Thames highlighted transport. In addition, ordinary advertising could be seen on tokens like Mailcoach, and Lackington, booksellers of Finsbury Square; and by now, a halfpenny was more commonly seen than before.

Chris then followed on with a look at Kent with a representative of 16 tokens in alphabetical order from Appledore to Tenterden giving a picture closer to home. This area highlights the agricultural areas with such places as Benenden showing a sheath of wheat and Brookland with a fleece, while further up the alphabet, Tenterden depicts the arms of the brewery company.

In 1797 it was decided to do away with tokens replacing them with large scale official re-coinage. This came about on 1st July 1797 Mathew Boulton manufacturer of many eighteenth century tokens with his Birmingham and Soho mints was given the contract to produce over 1,000 tons of twopenny pieces 'Cartwheels' as they became known. The nickname started because these coins contained

their full weight of (2oz) per piece, had a thick raised ridge around them and came from Soho Mint. They were followed in 1799 by an issue of halfpennies making copper prices rise so much that there was no issue of regal farthing until 1806/7. The shortage of copper caused melting down and by 1810/11 the shortage resulted in another wave of tokens.

By the nineteenth century tokens were mainly pennies caused by inflation. Fewer retailer's tokens were struck and patterns were plainer.

During the same period silver tokens appeared, particularly shillings. There was, however, no flood of silver tokens possibly for the following reasons. Penalties were stricter, being of larger denomination fewer were needed, the interest in advertisements was not so powerful and so there was not the incentive, and transport costs were lower taking away the need for local makers.

Permission for issuing silver tokens was withdrawn by Act of Parliament in July 1812 and in July 1817 a Bill was passed forbidding the further manufacture of copper tokens and ordering that all in circulation be presented to their issuers for redemption by January 1818 – with a few exceptions granted to 'poor-relief' tokens which were extended to the 1820's.

Forty-four people attended the meeting, one of whom was a visitor.

The January meeting was an open meeting where members bring along items of local interest. I took: a presentation book for Alderman Reginald G. Wood, J.P. and Mrs Wood, Mayor and Mayoress of Folkestone 1919 -1922. It listed subscribers to a set of Georgian silver candelabra and a pair of diamond ear-rings presented to Alderman Reginald G. Wood J.P. and Mrs Wood as a public acknowledgment of the able and gracious manner in which they carried out their duties as Mayor and Mayoress. An oak box inscribed on a silver plate, "Presented to Reginald Gilbert Wood Esquire. J.P. On His Admission As An Honorary Freeman of the Borough of Folkestone, 7th December 1945", there was also a scroll which went with it. Also a Manuscript Testimonial to Reverend Matthew Woodward, M.A. Vicar of Folkestone May 1891 on the completion of his fortieth year as Vicar of Folkestone. Also a manuscript dated 5th June 1901 from Folkestone Borough Council accepting the resignation of Mr John Minter who was Coroner for the Borough of Folkestone. Also, two albums of photographs on the revival of the Red-Rover coaching service by Mr McKerrow from Folkestone to Canterbury in 1913. Chris Philips brought two large format albums of postcards which are his latest purchases which haven't been shown before. Peter and Annie Bamford brought postcards on Military Folkestone and Sandgate. Mark Hourahane brought a selection of theatre programmes, posters and photographs. Vince Williams brought postcards on Sandgate Road, Dover Road and Radnor Park area and an album of ephemera on the Pleasure Gardens Theatre, also a slideshow of the World War One Autograph book belonging Ernie Horton. Andrew Beeching brought two family photograph albums containing photographs and Harcourt School plays, 1956-57 etc.

Eighteen members attended the meeting.

At the February meeting we welcomed guest speaker Len Howell who presented his talk entitled 'The Cinque Ports.' Len said the Cinque Ports was given to a group of towns on the south-east coast of England which were associated in the discharge of an annual service of ships to the Crown. The original five were Hastings, Romney, Hythe, Dover and Sandwich. He said the only major port now is Dover and last year's figures were: 11 million and seventy three thousand passengers, 2.18 million tourist cars, 80 thousand coaches, and 2.6 million lorries went though the port. He went on to say more than thirty other places in Kent and Sussex, and one in Essex, became joined to the different "Members." The towns of Winchelsea and Rye were attached to Hastings before 1190 and later given a special status as "Ancient Towns" with the standing of Head Ports. Each Member received the right to share in the privileges of the Cinque Ports, in return for undertaking to discharge part of the burden of ship service. In cases where the arrangement was confirmed by Royal Charter, the towns so privileged were known as "Corporate Members." Such were Pevensey and Seaford, Members of Hastings; Tenterden, Member of Rye; Lydd of Romney; Folkestone and Faversham, attached To Dover; and Fordwich to Sandwich. These had their own officers and were independent of their Head

Ports except in naval affairs and financially. The smaller members, in whose case the arrangement remained a private one, were "Non-corporate Members" and were subject to the government of the Head Port.

The whole organisation was designed to provide defence of the coast and cross-channel passage, but it had also a local significance in maintenance of the common privileges and direction of the common economic interests of the Port.

The origins of the Cinque Ports can be traced back to Anglo-Saxon times when certain south-east ports were granted the local profits of justice in return for providing ships. By 1100, the term Cinque Ports had come into use; and in 1155 a Royal Charter established the ports to maintain ships ready for The Crown in case of need. The chief obligation laid upon the ports, as a corporate duty, was to provide 57 ships for 15 days' service to the King annually, each port fulfilling a proportion of the whole duty. In return the towns received the following privileges:

Exemption from tax and tallage, right of soc and sac, tol and team, blodwit (the right to punish shedders of blood) and fledwit (the right to punish those who were seized in an attempt to escape from justice), pillory and tumbrel, infangentheof and outfangentheof, mundbryce (the breaking into or violation of a man's mund or property in order to erect banks or dikes as a defence against the sea), waifs and strays, flotsam and jetsam and ligan.

The leeway given to the Cinque Ports, and the turning of a blind eye to misbehaviour, led to smuggling, though common everywhere at this time, becoming more or less one of the dominant industries.

A significant factor in the need to maintain the authority of the Cinque Ports by the King was the development of the Royal Navy. King Edward I of England granted the citizens of the Cinque Ports special privileges, including the right to bring goods into the country without paying import duties; in return the Ports would supply him with men and ships in time of war (as in the Welsh campaign of 1282) The associated ports, known as "limbs", were given the same privileges. The five head ports and two ancient towns were entitled to send two Members to Parliament. A Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports was appointed, and also held the title of Constable of Dover Castle, and whilst this office exists today, it is now a purely honorary title, with an official residence at Walmer Castle. The town of Hastings was the head port of the Cinque Ports in mediaeval times. The towns also had their own system of courts.

The Court of Shepway was presided over by the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, a post which was once one of the most powerful and influential in the land, but since the decline in importance of the confederation, and in more recent times, it has become something of a sinecure – albeit one that is still highly respected. Later holders of the office have included William Pitt the Younger, the first Duke of Wellington, Sir Winston Churchill, Sir Robert Menzies, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and, at the present time, Lord Boyce.

William Pitt's term of office, from 1792 to 1805, coincided with the Napoleonic Wars and the threat of a major invasion from France. During this period, and largely under the direction of William Pitt, the Military Canal was cut across the northern limits of Romney March from Hythe to Winchelsea, while at the same time, all along the coast from Folkestone to Seaford a whole string of Martello Towers were hastily built.

Fifty six people attended the meeting, ten of whom were visitors.



We would like to welcome new members Mr M. C. Bennett and Mr Lee Rixon.

DUE TO THE HOLY TRINITY CHURCH HALL BEING REFURBISHED THE AUGUST MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE CHURCH ON TUESDAY 7TH. TERRY BEGENT WILL BE THE SPEAKER TALKING ABOUT FOLKESTONE'S NEW MUSEUM.

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