



## FOLKESTONE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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

At the February meeting I presented our retiring Treasurer Tom Leftley with a framed print of Folkestone Harbour, drawn and engraved by William Daniell in 1823. The Committee also elected Tom an honorary life member in recognition of all his dedicated work for the Society.

You may recall in the last newsletter my son Andrew reviewed our latest booklet, *Folkestone under Water*, giving it a favourable report. Well it is pleasing to be able to tell you that it is selling very well and we have received many compliments; thanks to authors Martin and Linda.

A date for your diary: on 1<sup>st</sup> June at the Saga Pavilion Sandgate, there is a History/Heritage day where local Groups and Societies will be taking part. We will be putting on a photographic display, so watch out for more information nearer the time.

The Society has been invited to put on a photographic exhibition at the Leas Cliff Hall to celebrate their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary (13<sup>th</sup> July 2002). The display will consist of photographs of the Leas Shelter (forerunner of the Leas Cliff Hall), building the Hall, general photographs in and around the building, the opening by Prince Henry, and the refurbishment of 1985. The exhibition will be in the tea bar and will run for the whole of July.

At our last meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> March Paul Jarvis talked about Kent Mills. Before the talk started I was speaking to Paul and I asked him if George Jarvis who purchased Marsh's windmill from Folkestone (formerly Dawson's Mill) was any relation to him? He said he was his grandfather. What I found intriguing during his talk was that he referred to his grandfather coming to Folkestone, and seeing the area round Marsh's mill being developed, decided to keep his eyes open to see if the mill came up for sale. Sure enough the mill did come on the market and in 1885 George Jarvis purchased it for the bargain price of £35 and removed it to Bethersden where it was used for many years for timber sawing (*Watermills and Windmills* by William Coles Finch 1933). It had always been used for corn grinding at Folkestone however, and in Mr Marsh's time a bakery was worked in conjunction with the mill.

The mill was situated on land between Millfield (which took its name from the mill) and the junction of Cheriton Road and Cheriton Gardens. Where a century and a half ago there were open fields, and a windmill had the free play of the winds, there is now a residential district.

Because of the growth of buildings in the area the mill had to be removed and Mr Marsh considered whether he would transfer it and the business elsewhere. He had seriously thought of re-erecting the mill on one of the Martello towers along the coast, if permission could be obtained. "You'd get enough wind *there*" someone remarked. "And perhaps *too much*," rejoined another.

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The Society extends a warm welcome to the following new members: Mrs J. Cole, Mrs J.R. Davis, Mr & Mrs Ashbee and Mr & Mrs Edwards.

We announce with regret the death of former member Alan Beckingham 1<sup>st</sup> January 2002. Alan was helpful in stewarding for us in June 1989 when we had a photograph exhibition entitled: *Disappearing Folkestone* at a shop in Church Street.

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## FOLKESTONE'S FORGOTTEN SAILING SHIPS & THEIR CARGOES

By Alan F. Taylor

The days when Folkestone's inner harbour was thronged with sailing ships going about their business of unloading cargoes of timber, ice, and coal are long gone.

After the construction of stone piers at Folkestone (c.1809), colliers started to use the south quay to unload their cargoes. In addition two hoy boats the *Aid* and *Earl of Radnor*, which ran from Griffins Wharf, Tooley Street, London, took turns to call at Folkestone every seven days. Their masters were William and Jacob Spicer from Folkestone. This created a small increase in trade and the population of the town grew slightly.

A lustre jug depicting Joseph Spicer's hoy the *Earl of Radnor* and the iron bridge at Sunderland survives to this day in the Folkestone Museum. Sunderland was famous for its pottery ware, which was exported all over the world, forming a part cargo along with paving stones and glass bottles on southbound colliers. But by the 1820's there was an unexpected set back, the harbour mouth continually silted up with sand and shingle, which was caused by the prevailing south-west wind and tide.

The arrival of the colliers was recorded in the town's Coal Due receipt book, which is now in the library. The volume commences in June 1839 with the arrival of the *Jean and Mary* with 140 tons of coals for Mr Wedge, on which a duty of 10d per ton was paid. In a six month period 21 colliers arrived at the town with a total of 1,911 tons of coal, the most regular traders being the *Jean and Mary*, *Okehampton*, *Victoria*, *Hearts of Oak*, *Robert Garden*, *Rose* and the *Resolution* from Sandwich. The *Hearts of Oak*, *Rose* and *Resolution* were coasting smacks, capable of carrying a maximum of 20 chaldrons. It was unusual for coasting smacks to voyage to the North for glass or pottery ware, and they would have loaded a small quantity of coal, perhaps more as ballast than anything else, for on one occasion the *Resolution* only landed three tons of coal.

By 1840 the harbour was completely choked up and a huge bar of sand had accumulated at the mouth of the port. A great deal of money was spent on digging out the shingle by manual labour, and coupled with the decline in revenue from the collier brigs due to the fact that there wasn't enough water for them enter the harbour, meant the Harbour Company went bankrupt in 1842 and all the hopes of trade and prosperity vanished. The government put the harbour up for sale and the South Eastern Railway Company, who were building the railway from London to Dover at the time, purchased it for the bargain price of £18,000. They soon set about clearing the shingle and restoring the whole harbour to its full use. To stop it silting up again they built a groin out in a south-westerly direction from the end of the South Quay.

In 1844 the branch line to the harbour was built, dividing the harbour into two basins. The *collier jetty*, was used to unload coal, which was then transported in carriages to the coking ovens at the East Station. The coke was used by the Railway Company to power its railway engines and packet-boats.

It was for this trade that the Sunderland coal merchant Richard Page had laid down for him the schooner *Kezia Page* on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1846. She was named jointly after his wife and his two-year-old daughter. The daughter Kezia died in 1860 but the collier survived for another 23 years. She was re-rigged as a brigantine in 1879 and foundered off Flamborough Head in 1883.

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