



FOLKESTONE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER No. 11 – Summer 2002

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT by Alan F. Taylor

The Society has just published its ninth booklet "Dickens in Folkestone" by Ann Nevill MA (Oxon). If you haven't already got a copy I would strongly recommend that you purchase one, as I consider it a most interesting and well-illustrated publication.

This year the Kent History Federation's One-Day Conference, held on 11th May, was hosted by the Friends of Lydd. I was the only member from our Society who attended this year. The delegates assembled in the Community Hall in the morning where we were presented with three most interesting talks, "Romney Marsh; Survival on a Frontier" by Jill Edison, followed by "Kent Monumental Brasses" by Philip Lawrence and "The Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway" by Derek Smith. After a break for lunch, we assembled in groups to go on our selected tour. I went on a conducted walk around Lydd and the Town Museum, our guide was Paul Jarvis (who spoke to our Society about Kent Mills at the March meeting). This was a most interesting afternoon, I didn't realise there were so many listed buildings in Lydd! Well worth a visit if you haven't been!

The Society has been very busy on the photographic display front. A display of Enbrook Estate and Sandgate High Street was set-up in the Saga Pavilion on Saturday 1st June to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. A display on the History of Sandgate Road consisting of 120 photographs was set-up in the Holy Trinity Church for their Jamboree on Monday 3rd June (this was also to celebrate the Jubilee) and it was estimated that they had over 2000 visitors. This display was left in the church for three weeks. A photograph display of Views around the Harbour, Blessing of the Fisheries, St. Peters Church and School was set-up in St. Peters Church for the Blessing of the Fisheries ceremony held on Sunday 30th June.

This year's annual outing was enjoyed by 45 members and friends who left Folkestone on Saturday 6th July at 9 a.m. for Kintbury (five miles from Newbury) to board a horse-drawn narrow boat the "Kennet Valley," which took us on a two hour trip on the Kennet canal. The boat had a gift shop and licensed bar and during our trip we enjoyed a buffet lunch provided by the proprietors. After disembarking from the Kennet Valley we made our way to "The Living Rainforest" at Hampstead Norreys, Berkshire, where we saw some of the wonderful plants and wildlife the world is losing as rainforests disappear. We left at about 4.30 p.m. to make our way home arriving in Folkestone at 7.30 p.m. I would like to extend our sincere thanks to Tom Leftley for arranging such a magnificent day out.

A photographic display of the Leas Cliff Hall and its forerunner The Leas Shelter was set-up on 1st July to run for the whole month in the Leas Cliff Hall cafe bar to celebrate the Hall's 75th Anniversary. June and Ken Paine were at the Leas Cliff Hall with their albums of photographs and memorabilia for the public to see from the 8th July for one

week, and were also giving guided walks round the hall for people visiting the celebrations.

Our Treasurer Shirley Gregory is standing down at the end of this year (October), so if there is anybody willing to fill this post or knows somebody who would, will they please contact me or our Secretary, Peter Bamford. We will also need two committee members.

On a rather more sombre note I would like to mention that our dear old member and friend, Daphne Heaver is now in Tranquility Care Home, Cheriton Gardens.

The Society extends a warm welcome to the following new members: Mrs Audrey White, Mrs P.F. MacKenzie and D.K. Toft.

HIDDEN SECRETS OF A NOVEL

by Patrick Marrin

FOLKESTONE CIRCULATING LIBRARIES revealed in the book **THE BASTILE; OR THE HISTORY OF CHARLES TOWNLY, A MAN OF THE WORLD (IN FOUR VOLUMES)** *William Lane 1789*.

On the front of this odd volume pasted down I found the attractive label of W. Tiffen's Hythe Library, which I decided to remove, and therefore soaked off. Underneath that was the label of Roden's Library and Reading-Room, Hythe (printed by W. Tiffen), so this too was removed. Underneath this was found a hand-written inscription "Purday's Library, Folkestone", dated 1795. Therefore this little volume revealed the succession of the earliest Circulating Libraries in Folkestone and Hythe from 1795 to 1820.

With the help of Mr Goulden of the British Library I am able to state that Mr Thomas Purday, first listed as schoolmaster, was active as a bookseller in Folkestone between 1791 and 1806.

William Roden took over Thomas Purday's business at Folkestone in April 1806 and was Printer, Stationer, Bookseller and Circulating Library proprietor until March 1811 when his Library and stock-in-trade were sold between March and June.

William Tiffen took over this business, but this was not the end of W. Roden who set up as Bookseller and Circulating Library proprietor in Hythe in August 1811. The Hythe business did not thrive as by late 1814 he was bankrupt and his stock was sold by auction in January 1815.

We know from the evidence of this book that it was W. Tiffen who purchased it and, we presume others, and set up his Circulating Library and book selling business in Hythe as well as Folkestone. He seems to have prospered as he was still in business as late as 1854 in Folkestone.

This was not the end of the Purday family in local book selling. After quitting Folkestone he moved to London and was active in the book trade. He seems also to have had a Circulating Library and book selling business in Margate as well as a connection in Sandgate, as the guides sold by W. Tiffen from 1816 on all mention "Sold by Mr Purday Sandgate" and in 1847 he publishes his own guide to Sandgate.

Boyhood capers in Folkestone.

In 1925, when I was ten,
The summer holidays were set,
And with clean ancient towel and 'cozzie' wend
My way down to the Fishmarket.
There on the Stade, we three or four would meet,
Knowing that it would be Spring Tide.
The sea would rise above the Landing Stage,
And slow along the passage glide
To the double sets of steps that raised
In each direction, up on to the Stade.
'Twas there we'd lay our clothes in little heaps
Old shirt, old shorts, and plimsolls made
To last the holiday's few weeks.,
No socks to lose, or even vest it seems,
Then I would don that awful cotton 'cos'
When wet, would stretch down to one's knees,
Which didn't seem to matter more
Than getting in that lovely sparkling sea!
Smooth cobbles, warm beneath our feet,
We'd disconnect a chain from post, to be
Our 'jumping off' spot to compete,
So all the London visitors could watch
Our antics in the air, to see
Us swim, and jump, and dive from off the Ring,
(That ring's still there, I went to see!)
We'd all jump in together, and then sing,
"Come throw your mouldy pennies down!"
Another trick that we'd show off to them,
As they stood 'gawping' on the chains,
Was from the doorway of the "Ship"
We'd race across the road and quay,
Some three or four, all shouting, "Hip, Hip, Hip,
Hooray, as we jumped in the sea,
Straight out, as far as we could get, and freeze
Into silly comic postures
That we'd seen in Mack Sennett comedies!
Then slowly surface and come up

Beside another lad, and with a mouth
Of water, squirt into his face,
Which always gave the 'Visitors' a laugh
So throw more coppers down apace
Some we'd catch, but some sank to the bottom
So then we'd wait until the tide
Had ebbed away, then among the flotsam
We'd find enough cash to divide,
Then go to 'Cozzi's' for a bag of chips!
So in our school holidays
When High Tides meant that we could do our tricks
We'd have some coppers for a day!
Then home to tea, my Mum would say
"Where have you been? What have you had to eat?"
Tell me, what did you do all day?"
"I went down the Market" I'd reply
Just for a swim, and had some chips!"
Just as well the truth she'd never find,
Or else my earhole would be clipped!
Then from my skin I'd wash away the brine,
To bed I'd go, so happy-tired,
To dream that each tomorrow would be kind,
And sun would shine again for me!

R.G.Hammond. June.1997.

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