



FOLKESTONE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER No. 7 – Summer 2001

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT by Alan F. Taylor

I would like to start by apologising for the disruption at our past few meetings in the Holy Trinity Church Hall, which has been caused by the refurbishment of the toilets. Hopefully this has not caused you too much inconvenience and when the work is over we will all reap the benefits.

This year the Kent History Federation's one-day conference was held at Rye on Saturday, 12th May. The delegates met in the morning at the Thomas Peacocke School, where they were presented with three talks. The first one being an illustrated talk on *The Old Houses of Rye* by Mr David Martin, followed by *The History of St. Mary's Church Rye* by Mrs Josephine Kirkham, and to finish a talk on *The Life and Works of E.F. Benson* by Mr Allen Downend, Secretary of The E.F. Benson Society. After lunch, there was a choice of twelve walks/visits followed by afternoon tea back at the school. I thought this was an exceptionally good day; the talks were very interesting and informative and the weather was fine and sunny for the afternoon walks, therefore it was a shame only one or two Society members attended.

A photograph display on *Folkestone's Disappearing Churches* will be held in the Parish Church from 4th June for three months. Opening times – 10a.m. to 1p.m. daily, Monday to Saturday.

FOLKESTONE'S WAR MEMORIALS

By
Eamonn Rooney

THE LEAS MEMORIAL

A committee was appointed on 10th March 1919 to raise funds for a War Memorial and Club for servicemen. In October letters were sent out to over 800 householders asking for donations, but by January 1920 only £1,101 had been raised. Nevertheless, it was decided to press ahead with a memorial to be erected at the eastern end of the Leas.

The committee chose a design by F.V. Blundstone R.B.S; who had designed the Prudential War Memorial in Holborn and the Bridge Head Memorial at Stalybridge near Manchester. Mr Blundstone sculpted the memorial at his studio at 15a Douro Place, Victoria Road, Kensington, and E.J. Parlant made the work at his foundry at West Kensington.

THE R.A.F.A MEMORIAL

In 1977, Folkestone 'acquired' a third war memorial at the East End of the Leas, near the Leas Cliff Lift, placed by the Royal Air Force Association.

This memorial comprises a 7-ton block of basalt quarried at Criggon in mid Wales and donated by the quarry owner Amey Roadstone Corporation. The block was put in place by Messrs Jenner & Co., a local building firm. Affixed to the stone is a bronze plaque produced and fitted in place by Messrs Hambrook & Johns, Monumental Masons and Funeral Directors. Depicted on the plaque are Shakespeare Cliff and the first radar mast. Below is the sea and above are bi-planes, Spitfires, Blenheims and Hurricanes with the R.A.F. motto "Per Ardua Ad Astra" (Through Difficulties To The Stars). The cost of the memorial was £1,000.

GERALD SINSTADT – 50 YEARS IN BROADCASTING

By
June and Ken Paine

Born in Folkestone early in 1929, Gerald lived with his parents Win and Jim above the grocery business on the corner of Fernbank Crescent and Black Bull Road. During the first part of the Second World War the shop was bombed and his parents moved to Down's Stores in the parade of shops in Black Bull Road, near to the *Black Bull* public house. As there was no living accommodation with the shop, the family moved to Morehall Avenue. Gerald attended St. Mary's Junior School and was evacuated to Wales in June 1940.

On the night of 29th May 1941, Morehall Avenue sustained a direct hit from a parachute mine and both of Gerald's parents were killed; along with Alderman and Mrs Gurr, the Mayor and Mayoress at the time. It fell to Gerald's aunt, Mrs Rosa Paine, to journey to Wales to inform him of his parent's sad death. From then on she became his legal guardian and raised him along with her own son.

Gerald had passed the exams for the Harvey Grammar School and remained in Wales as an evacuee until the end of the war. On leaving school Gerald had a number of jobs, but really wanted to be involved in something to do with sport. On joining the army his ambitions were soon realised when he began his broadcasting career with the British Forces Network in Austria – albeit reading the weather forecast!

Later, while serving in Italy and Germany, he became Sports Editor with the British Forces Broadcasting Service. In 1959 he succeeded David Coleman at the BBC in Birmingham and became number two on BBC Sport a year later. After seven years on the sports staff at Broadcasting House, he turned freelance and worked for various ITV companies, including twelve years as Granada's football commentator and presenter. Since 1984, he has worked mainly on sports programmes for the BBC.

Gerald's principal sporting interest is football; he first covered the World Cup Finals in Switzerland in 1954 and, with the exception of the finals in Chile in 1962, has commentated on every one since. He has also commented on a variety of events at the Summer Olympic Games, principally rowing (where he has seen Steven Redgrave collect the gold in a record five different games) and canoeing; firstly for ITV in 1972, and then for the BBC since 1984. Gerald has also covered the Winter Olympic events of cross-country skiing and ice hockey and in 1988 he added greyhound racing to his television repertoire.

Managing a team in a Sunday Youth League in North London made Gerald aware of the shortage of qualified referees. When his team disbanded in 1986, he passed the exams and took up the whistle. Although he does not expect to get to Wembley in the middle, he felt honoured to be given a Middlesex Junior Cup Final at Craven Cottage. Nowadays he can be found on most Sunday mornings trying, with mixed success, to maintain good order and gentlemanly conduct on the playing fields of North Staffordshire. He is a committee member of the North Staffs Referees' Club – the oldest referees' body in the world – and was editor of the Club's centenary brochure.

Away from sport, Gerald's chief interests are writing and music. He is the author of two thrillers *The Fidelio Score* and *Whisper in a Lonely Place* (which has a Romney Marsh setting) and co-author of *Everton v Liverpool* on the Merseyside football derby. During the 1980s, he was Executive Producer for a number of television recordings of opera and ballet at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, the Kirov Theatre in Leningrad and the Bolshoi in Moscow. In 1984, he produced the recording of *Spartacus* with Irek Mukhamedov and Natalya Bessmertnova in Moscow before commentating on the Gold Medal successes of Britain's coxed four at the Los Angeles Olympic Games. It's no wonder then that he regards that particular year as one of the most satisfying in his long career.

Gerald lives in Stoke-on-Trent with his wife Margaret, a former Commercial Manager of Port Vale Football Club and now Director of the Tunstall Assurance Friendly Society, and stepson Ashley. Having derived so much pleasure from fifty years of broadcasting, Gerald says retirement is not on the agenda.

A limited reprint of 500 copies of Alan Taylor and Eamonn Rooney's *Folkestone in Old Photographs: A Second Selection* (originally published in 1992) is now available exclusively at Tesco's at the bargain price of £4.99.

Aside from the different cover, the contents are exactly as before and consist of a fine selection of historic local photographs. As with the first selection, the 'Streets and Trade' section is once again particularly strong; with its wonderfully evocative photographs of lost buildings, vastly altered byways, bountiful shopfronts and street parties. The other chapters focus amongst other things the Leas, seafront, harbour and transport, and an excellent standard is maintained throughout.

All in all an essential purchase if you don't already own the book.

And finally.... If you had a relative, or know of someone who had one, who was killed or injured in the German air raid of 25th May 1917, the Editors would very much like to hear from you.

Edited by Martin Easdown and Linda Sage
27 Hampton Vale, Seabrook, Hythe, Kent CT21 5SG
Tel: 01303 230202 Fax 01303 238120 email: marlinseabrook@aol.com
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