

Herne Bay Historical Records Society

Founded 1932

Registered Charity No. 1148803

Custodians of the Town's Archive



Quarterly Newsletter

Autumn 2016 Issue No. 3

Welcome

Recent Society Events

AGM

Our Annual General Meeting took place on 6th October with a very healthy attendance of fifty-one members and two visitors. During his address, our President John Fishpool, announced the decision that had been taken by the Society to move our archives from the Seaside Museum building. Please see page two for further details of this milestone in the Society's history.

Last year's committee was reappointed and I know that you will join me in thanking them for their efforts over the past twelve months. As we look forward to an important year ahead, I feel sure that we can all count on your continuing support.

History Day

We were favoured with over two hundred visitors during our annual History Day event held at the Clock Tower Information Centre, 81 Central Parade on Saturday 27th August. The main theme this year was Shops and Shopping in Herne Bay, and volunteers had assembled a wide range of text and images covering nearly two centuries of trade in the town. Our ever-popular street directories were available for visitors to study, generating lots of interest as visitors sought to find out who had previously lived in their homes. Pete Watson displayed a period large-scale map of the town where he had added the names of shops and the various trades pursued, showing the numerous changes to good effect. Two costumed walks were offered, and while the response was limited, the participants were very appreciative.

Watch this space for news of next year's event.

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Andrew Tatham's talk



Andrew Tatham with his book - *A Group Photo*

We were very fortunate to secure a booking for author and artist Andrew Tatham to speak to us in October. Andrew has become well known for his research into the lives of the Army Officers shown in a World War One photograph. Through a well-crafted film, Andrew skillfully brought to life the lives and times of those depicted and this was supplemented with a most interesting talk. Those fortunate enough to be able to attend, were treated to a masterclass in the scope and possibilities of research as well as sharing in a range of emotions.

Rehousing the HBHRS Archive

Mike Bundock

Many of you will be aware that the HBHRS owns an extensive collection of archive material that has been collected during the eighty-four years of our existence. The basis of the collection was formed from items once owned by Messrs Bowes, Farley, Ridout and Welby and this solid foundation has been supplemented at various times with generous donations from both members and the public. We have recently been most fortunate in being able to add material from the important archive of the late Harold and Anne Gough.

From soon after its formation until sometime around 1939, the Society had its own premises in Mortimer Street. When Herne Bay Branch Library was established by KCC in the High Street just prior World War Two, the upper floor served as a reference library and museum. Much of the HBHRS collection was on display with the remainder stored in a room that doubled as a research room for the use of society members. In the early 1990s a change of KCC policy meant that the upper floor of the library was converted to office use and the museum closed. Canterbury City Council (CCC) purchased 12 William Street and after work this building opened as a museum in 1996. For the past twenty years, most of our archive has been housed in a store room on the top floor of what is now the successful Seaside Museum under a long-term loan agreement.

Access to material in our collection has by necessity been restricted due to practicalities. The top floor of the museum is via a steep set of stairs and due to the volume of our collection, space is at a premium. With the recent transfer of the day to day operation of the museum from CCC to a trust run by volunteers, it was hoped that we could secure space within the museum building for use as a publicly accessible archive. Sadly, the layout of the building and the overall space constraints have meant that this has not proved possible. So while the HBHRS remain fully supportive of the aims of the Seaside Museum, we have taken the bold step of giving notice of termination of the present loan agreement.

By means of a generous donation from Peter Goodwin of Messrs Wilbee & Son, Estate Agents, we have been given the free use of a storage area in Little Charles Street. It is intended that this will be used as a store area for our collection, with a limited amount of space available for sorting and cataloguing. This however only takes us so far, and subject to contract, it is intended that the Society will take on the lease of the ground floor

of the Clock Tower Information Centre from next April. If this comes together as planned, the intention is that this will become our Archive Centre, with access for the public who will be able to undertake research on our collections. This will mean that for the first time in nearly eighty years, we will have our own front door – an important move forwards, as we will once more be able to establish and strengthen our own identity.

These ambitions do not come without a cost, but due to a mix of our accumulated reserves and the pledge of a generous donation, we will be able to cover many of the immediate costs. Please help by supporting our forthcoming fundraising efforts, especially the Wit & Wisdom evening to be held at Herne Bay Junior School on 19th November. This event last year was well received and great fun, so we look forward to a similar result this time.

In preparation for this move, work has already been undertaken in conversion work within the storage area to make it suitable for our use. So far the room has been cleaned, lined out and some demountable shelving has been sourced and installed.

The task of moving our collection out of the museum is a big one and work will be starting very soon with the checking of boxes and artefacts against a master inventory list. We will be working alongside helpers from the museum and HBHRS volunteers will be needed so that both parties can ensure accuracy. Sessions will not exceed three hours in duration, so if you feel able to help us for one or more sessions, this would be much appreciated. Colleen will be project managing this checking and removal process for the HBHRS, so please contact her for more details. Your help will be appreciated.



Part of our vision is for the HBHRS to have our collection stored in neatly labelled boxes and files.

We will keep you updated regarding developments with both our storage area and the Heritage Centre as further details become available.

Some Recollections of Herne Bay 1930 to 1950 (continued from last quarter)

Michael Weeden

Now, let's return to half way up the Broadway on the south side, where stood Elsie's Dairy, the place my father worked pre-war as a milk rounds man, serving a large part of the West Cliff, including the celebrity, Cecily Hill, sadly killed in an air raid on Canterbury, a companion of the then Sultan of Jahore. Then, other than Edwards the builders, there were no businesses until the corner with Sea Street where there were a butcher's and a few other shops. Further along was the Convent and its school, a few shops I don't recall and the Railway Hotel on the corner of Station Road, run some years later by Peter Smoothy, then the Yorkshire Bakers and Gladden's the fishmongers. Along from there was Wells shoe shop, although I'm not sure if they owned it at that time and after that, post war was Ron Edwards fishing tackle shop. Ron, a national champion angler was very well known in fishing circles and famously featured in Jack Hargreaves 'Out of Town' TV programme in, I think, the 1950s and 1960s. Further along, still going east was the East Kent bus garage, and a parade of shops. On the corner of Beach Street was a pub, the name of which I can't recall, (The Queen Victoria) then a florist and a sports shop, later owned by a well-known Kent cricketer (Alan Knott).

Next was the Public Library, where Harold Gough was a Librarian for many years, close to which was Gordon Brace the chemist and a furniture repository and auctioneers, which later, Barrie Smith was associated with, then yet another ironmonger, Bew's, owned by another well-known champion local angler, Jack Bew. That shop was an Aladdin's Cave and I can still recall the not unpleasant smell of various oils, turpentine, creosote, etc. they stocked. Jack Bew also doubled as a fishing tackle and bait shop, long before Ron Edwards opened his fishing emporium and I clearly remember often seeing him on the pier, when it extended for almost a mile, spinning for bass in the early evening with a very long rod which allowed him to walk along the pier, lifting his line over the numerous lamp standards along its length. Then came Garland, the men's outfitters, the son of which, Ken Garland became a prominent bookmaker in the town. I believe the outfitters became a cycle shop in later years. Westminster Bank, before the 'Nat' bit was added, was on the corner of William Street and on the opposite corner, Lloyds Bank, next came John Messenger, the surveyor who was a well-

known hockey player who, sadly, was killed when hit in the chest by a hockey ball.



An early twentieth century view of the High Street between William Street and Beach Street

On the corner of Underdown Road was an Italian delicatessen by the name of Bossi and although the family had been in Herne Bay for many years, as Mr Bossi senior had not become a UK citizen, he was interned at the beginning of the war as an 'alien', someone I could not think as being the slightest threat to our war effort or security. I think the same happened to the senior Mr Maccari. Next door was a shoe repairer, a tobacconist, where I bought my first packet of five Players cigarettes, then Percy Ransom's grocery store, the son of whom, Stuart, was a school chum of mine. Next door to them was The Health Food Store run by Mr & Mrs Jack Airey, which as with Bew's, I still recall the various smells of the herbs they sold. Then came Dunn's the bakers followed by, tar rah, tar rah, the Weeden's Ideal Fish Shop. It was originally owned by my maternal grandmother and her sister, my mother's aunt. During the day, fresh or 'wet' fish was displayed on a large slab and at lunch time and again in the evening, the fish fryer came into action, serving fish and chips, to eat in or take away. The fish arrived daily from Ramsgate by train and was delivered from the station by a horse drawn cart, later replaced by one of Packer's taxis. Fish was kept in a large ice box and ice was replenished during the week by a van from Canterbury. During the war, a large number of troops were stationed in Herne Bay, many in vacated houses in Victoria Park and our shop's small dining room was usually crowded by soldiers, most far from home, for whom my mother took upon herself to act as a 'surrogate mum', cheering them up and dispensing cough mixture, etc. when they were under the weather. Almost a local, Florence Nightingale! Next door was a dairy, it may have been Pengelly but I'm not sure, then Percy Mewett the butcher.

To be continued next quarter.

200 Years Ago

Pete Watson

I recently found, while trawling our 'local' newspaper, the *Kentish Chronicle*, a news item which gives us a real insight of life in the (still) small fishing village of Herne Bay, and the often treacherous conditions the boatmen (Coast Guards) had to endure in the course of their duty (principally to prevent smuggling, but also to protect legitimate shipping, and assist those in peril). Until 1905, the 'Preventive Coastguard' had its own block of family accommodation near to Lane End, at the seaward end of what became Albany Drive. Here is just one of the reports from 1816 - 200 years ago.....

1st October During the tremendous gale on Sunday night, the ship *Appleworth*, from Demerary, bound to London, struck on the Mouse Sand and sunk in deep water. The crew, with the exception of one man were saved by the intrepid exertions of the Herne-bay boatmen. In recording the above catastrophe, we cannot withhold our need of praise to this useful class of men, who, at the imminent peril of their own lives, have in many instances rescued their suffering fellow creatures from a watery grave.



The Blockade Station, Western Esplanade

8th October The following is a more particular account of the loss of the *Appleworth* West Indiaman, noticed by us on Tuesday last:- Between ten and eleven o'clock on Sunday evening, after breaking away from two anchors, she drove before the wind upon the Mouse Sand, and immediately bilged. In this state the ship lay, making signals of distress by shewing lights and firing guns, till the ammunition became wet by the waves. The guns were heard by the Herne Bay boatmen, about one on Monday morning, when four of them immediately put to sea in a small boat, in the expectation of being followed by their lugger, the *Aid*, as soon as the flow of water (the tide being at the ebb) would permit. The lugger reached the ship at the distance of twelve miles

from the shore, between four and five in the morning, at which time the wind having veered a point towards the north, the ship was beating obliquely over the sand, and before any effectual aid could be afforded, it being dangerous to approach too near, she drifted off the edge of the sand, and instantly sunk, stern foremost, in 14 fathoms of water. The captain with the pilot and crew remained to the last moment on board, and it was only by the repeated assurances and exhortations of the boatmen that the ship was sinking, that they were induced to quit her.....

..... this is the fifth instance in the short space of three years, during which these boatmen by their promptitude and seamanship, have providentially been the means of saving, at the risk of their own, the lives altogether of upwards of sixty seamen on this part of the coast, without obtaining any reward by the preservation of the vessels or cargoes. It is to be hoped, however, that their meritorious endeavours will yet meet that remuneration which they so justly merit from those who can best appreciate their services.



A typical West Indiaman

1st November At a meeting of the merchants at Lloyd's Coffee House, London, on Wednesday, the sum of forty pounds was voted to eight boatmen belonging to Herne-bay, as a reward for their conduct in saving the crew of the *Appleworth* West Indiaman, which was lost on the Mouse Sand on the 29th September last.

Ed. This article serves as a reminder of the wealth of information about the local area that is available from early newspapers. These days, many titles are available on-line, but at present, two of the more recent titles of interest to us, the *Herne Bay Press* and the *Herne Bay Argus*, have yet to be included in these subscription services. Fortunately, the HBHRS has a good run of original copies of both titles and these will be made available for consultation in our Archive Centre in due course.

The East Cliff Shelters

Mike Bundock

Some readers may recall that a few years ago, the delightful wooden shelter on The Downs close to the Kings Hall, was completely destroyed by fire. Sadly, today the space where this structure once stood stands empty and the shelter has yet to be replaced.

What is less generally known is the background to the shelters and when they were built. I say shelters, as there were originally two. One stood adjacent to the present day Kings Hall (the building lost in the fire) and another that judging by the image included in this article, looks to be identical, originally located on the grassed area close to where Beacon Avenue joins Beacon Hill. It is not known when this shelter disappeared and I would welcome any comments or thoughts from readers on this point.



A sketch drawing taken from *Herne Bay Illustrated*, edited by J. Watkinson. 1889.

The Downs had long been a popular part of town with both residents and visitors alike offering plenty of scope for walks and fresh air. By the 1880s, this area was generally known as the East Cliff Recreation Ground, after the land transferred into the town's ownership from the Collard Estate.

The story of the shelters originates early in 1889, when members of the Local Board (the precursor to HBUDC) proposed that the sum of one hundred pounds be promised towards the "most desirable object of erecting shelters on the East Cliff for the comfort and convenience of visitors". This promise was however not without conditions, one of which was that the sum needed to be matched by funds raised by voluntary effort.

Once the decision to go ahead with the shelters had been taken, as often seems to be the case, a committee was formed, in this instance consisting of no less than thirty-one gentlemen connected

with the public life of the town. Their duties were mainly administrative, managing the overall process of choosing a design, supervising the construction work and overseeing the finances.



A picture postcard showing the long lost shelter on the upper part of The Downs. c.1920.

Design of the shelters was thrown open to competition and while we do not know the exact number of entries, at least twenty designs were received. A listing in the newspaper tells us that some of the proposed designs were received anonymously using nom de plumes such as "Charity", "Desideratum" and "SS". The chosen design was a shelter to be constructed of Pitch Pine that had been submitted by a Mr. J. R. Withers of London. Tenders for the construction of the two shelters were invited, and after consideration the contract was awarded to local builder Mr. A. S. Ingleton. It is interesting to note that the East Cliff Band Stand, a structure that appears in some of our early photographs, was known to have been in use on The Downs some years before the advent of the East Cliff Pavilion.

A rather attractive weather vane can be seen in the line drawing and you can just make out that this looks like a fish. Usefully, the local newspaper for October 1889 tells us that this was in fact a representation of a mackerel. Mr. Ingleton had reportedly tried to get this finishing touch made in London but he was unsuccessful. Happily this was in the end made by a local craftsman Mr. Arthur Pilcher, who duly obliged with a stylised mackerel constructed in zinc.

There are moves presently afoot to try to get the shelter that stood next to the Kings Hall rebuilt. It is hoped that part of the rebuilding costs can be met by CCC using proceeds from the insurance claim associated with the loss of the original. Let's hope these efforts are rewarded.

[This article has been researched using the *Herne Bay Illustrated*, edited by J. Watkinson 1889, picture postcards of The Downs and contemporary newspaper reports from the *Herne Bay Herald*].

Picture Gallery

This quarter I have included three colour images that originally appeared in the HBUDC promotional brochure for the town, published for the 1913 season. Our town council commenced publication of these town guides in 1911 and unknown quantities were printed on an almost annual basis right up until the early 1970s. When comparing, it is interesting to observe the changing fashions throughout the decades. Looking at the three views below, the wide range of transportation that the artist has managed to include in the first is quite impressive. Based upon these pictures alone, it is easy to see why so many people were persuaded to visit.



Society Contacts

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Officers

President	John Fishpool 01227 366863
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Secretary	Pete Watson 07783 386477
Membership Secretary	Sybil Kent 01227 637446
Publicity Officer	Margaret Burns 01227 369365
Treasurer	John Fishpool (as above)
Curator & Archivist	Mike Bundock (as above)
Assistant Curator & Archivist	Colleen Ashwin-Kean (as above)
Events Co-ordinator	Colleen Ashwin-Kean (as above)
Publications/merchandise	John Fishpool (as above)
Newsletter Editor	Mike Bundock (as above)
Committee Members	David Birch, Margaret Wood

Membership

The Society welcomes applications for membership. The current subscription is £10 per year (renewable 1st October each year). Please contact the Membership Secretary, Mrs Sybil Kent (contact details above) for further details. Members are able to participate in a number of activities, including attending our popular winter lecture series, assisting in the sorting of our extensive collection in preparation for cataloguing and research work towards our ongoing projects.

Our Publications

The Society has produced a number of publications and these are available for purchase by members and the general public. Our books are available from the Herne Bay Seaside Museum, 12 William Street, A Bundle of Books, 6 Bank Street and Demelza Bookshop, 165 Mortimer Street. Alternately, books can be purchased directly from the Society via John Fishpool (contact details above). We are able to post books worldwide and we would be pleased to quote postage and packing costs.

Titles currently available:

HBP 1 – Herne Bay's Piers by Harold Gough.

HBP 2 – Herne Bay's Hotels and Public Houses by John Fishpool.

HBP 3 – Mills & Milling in the Herne Bay Area by Harold Gough.

HBP 4 – Schools and Colleges in the Herne Bay Area by John Fishpool and Pauline Turner.

HBP 5 – A Town at War – Herne Bay in the Second World War by John Fishpool.

HBP 6 – Victorian Herne Bay by Mike Bundock.

HBP 7 – Smuggling in and Around the Herne Bay Area by Harold Gough and John Fishpool.

HBP 8 – Public Houses in the Herne Bay Area by John Fishpool.

HBP 9 – Will Scott & Herne Bay by Kay Steventon and Judith Ford.

HBP 10 – The Kings Hall Herne Bay – Celebrating 100 Years by Mike Bundock.

HBP 11 – Herne Bay Then & Now: A Pictorial History Celebrating 180 Years.

HBP 12 – Herne Bay in the Great War 1914-1918 by John Fishpool,

The cover price of each title is £7.50, except for No. 11 which is £12.00.

We have several new titles in the course of compilation, so we are hoping to expand this list over the course of the next year or so. Please see page eight for details of our planned launch in December. Ideas for new titles are always welcome.

Events and dates for your diary

Herne Bay Historical Records Society

We hold a series of ten winter lecture style meetings between October and April. These meetings are held in the hall of the United Church, situated next to the Fire Station in Herne Bay High Street. Doors open at 6:30pm for a 7:00pm start. These meetings are free to members, and visitors are welcome for a donation of £2 per head per meeting.

Our meeting dates for 2016/2017 are listed below. Further details available from our Events Co-ordinator.

2016

17 th November	More tales from the cemetery, Pete Watson
1 st December	Herne Bay by train - a journey through time, Mark Jones

2017

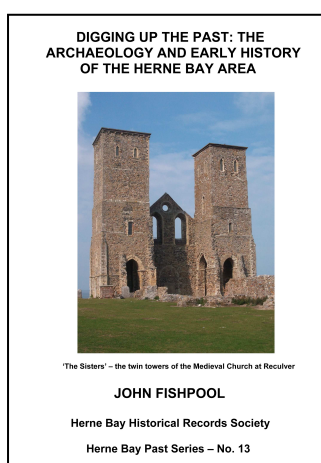
2 nd February	Herne Bay's changing High Street, Mike Bundock
16 th February	Non-conformists of Herne Bay, Peter Watson
2 nd March	The secret life of Northfleet, Christoff Bull
16 th March	Studd Hill, a Motorist's Mecca, Margaret Burns
7 th April	Members Evening – Projects update and display

Other Events of Interest

19th November 2016 Fund raising quiz evening.

To be held at Herne Bay Junior School, Kings Road. 7:00pm for a 7:30pm start. Questions set and presented by Gideon Scott. Food and soft drink supplied. Tables to consist of a maximum of eight, but individuals and smaller groups will be most welcome. £7.50 per head. Please support us.

Forthcoming book launch



We are pleased to announce that at our 1st December meeting, a new title, the thirteenth in the Herne Bay Past series will be launched. Our President, John Fishpool has been busy compiling a much-needed volume on the early history of the Herne Bay area. The scope of the book takes us from prehistoric times up until around 1830. The book is well illustrated and contains 54 inner pages. The usual cover price will be £7.50, but copies can be secured by members at the bargain price of £6.00 – a great Christmas present idea!

The HBHRS is grateful to Philip Gambrill of PG & Co. for his contribution towards the cost of printing this newsletter.



Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors
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