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Hythe Civic Society NEWSLETTER

No. 222 Feb/Mar 2022



TALKS

From February Talks will be held once again at Hythe Bay School at 7.30 p.m.

NB: There is a change to our previously advertised Talk on 22 February

8 February

How Far did your Ancestors travel before the Railways?
by Celia Heritage



22 February

The Wreck Hunter and Battle of Britain Archaeology
by Melody Foreman



8 March

Secrets Beneath Siena
by Wendy Fraser



22 March

Behind the Scenes of TV's Golden Years
by Wilf Lower



HORTON FAMILY DONATION

The Civic Society recently received a generous donation from David Horton and his wife Joan of glass plate negatives, old photographs and antique camera parts.

They belonged to Benjamin William Horton (BWH 1867 - 1949) a son of Benjamin Bassett Horton (1836 - 1905, former Mayor and businessman of Hythe who lived at Cold Harbour, Blackhouse Hill) who himself was a son of Joseph Horton (1800 - 1873), Hythe mills and collier brig owner and former Mayor.

BWH was a photography enthusiast, building his own cameras, dark room in the garden, and even creating and patenting an early instantaneous roller shutter - 'The Scroll'.

The negatives, taken in the late 1880s through to the 1900/20s were scanned revealing many photographs of Cold Harbour (a house that still stands) and the surrounding area, fascinating and rare military scenes of Shorncliffe Camp, and some of Hythe's mainline station amongst many others.

Work continues to identify the scenes and the camera parts, with a view to a small exhibition in the future. David and Joan Horton are delighted that this important local ephemera has found a home back in Hythe.



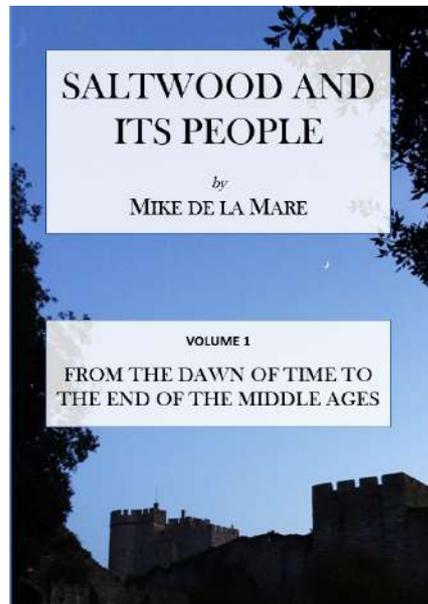
The picture shows two Horton brothers with Coldharbour in the background in 1900 - they are standing where Blackhouse Rise is now.

SALTWOOD HISTORY

The first volume of HCS member Mike de la Mare's history of Saltwood has now been published. *It is called 'Saltwood and its People: From the Dawn of Time to the End of the Middle Ages'*. Mike is hoping to produce three further volumes bringing the story up to the present day.

This first volume includes information on: the first human remains to have been found in Saltwood, dating from the Bronze Age; the possibility of one or more Roman settlements in Saltwood; the Anglo-Saxon cemeteries discovered near Stone Farm and the magnificent objects found in the graves; how Saltwood is described in the Domesday Book; the Archbishops of Canterbury and other notable people who held the castle and manor, as well as the part the castle played in the murder of Thomas Becket; an account of the manor of Brockhill and the de Brockhill family; what is known about the peasants who lived in these manors and worked the fields; the church of St Peter and St Paul and its rectors; and the establishment of the Hospital of St Bartholomew near the border with Hythe. A series of maps help the reader to locate the places discussed.

Mike is also a longstanding member of the Civic Society's Local History Group, and is grateful to them for the support he has received while preparing the book. The book has 170 pages and costs £6. It is on sale now in the Saltwood Village Shop.



We asked Mike how he came to write the book, and he told us:

"When we bought our cottage near the top of Bartholomew Lane in Saltwood, I wanted to find out when the house was built, who had lived there and so on. I wrote up what I had discovered, and thought it needed a short introduction about the history of the village. The research for that became rather compulsive, and to my surprise, the short introduction slowly started turning into a four-volume account of Saltwood's past.

Doing the research was fun but could be challenging. The various archives are at first intimidating (although not once you've found your way around); getting enough basic understanding of the language used in old documents was tricky, but not half as much as getting to grips with the styles of handwriting used in earlier centuries. Trying to see how all the things I'd found out fitted in with each other was like doing a giant jigsaw with missing pieces and without a picture on the box. After that there was the writing. For all the sorrow and frustration that the last two lousy years brought us all, they did at least allow me to tap away at my keyboard without too much distraction. I'm now immersed in Volume 2."

CRINKLE CRANKLE WALLS

Helen Severs

In October, I had the pleasure of a visit from members of the HCS, to inspect my unusually wiggly garden wall. Someone spotted the strange boundary on a map at the Heritage Hythe display in the Town Hall Undercroft last summer. The HCS then realised it was in a garden of a fellow member.

The houses and gardens on the South side of Hillside Street, from the corner of Lucy's Hill down to Elm Passageway, were built on an area known as the The Long Fields. The south-facing land has quite a slope and was divided into 5 parallel fields stretching all the way down to Elm Terrace (now known as Bartholomew Street). When my husband and I bought our house in 2004, the conveyancer thought someone was having a bit of a joke!

On the 1877 six inch Ordnance Survey map, the boundaries are shown as straight lines whereas the 1899 map shows my eastern boundary as having a wiggle. Therefore, I'm of the view that the wall was built around 1880-90, with a few subsequent repairs and new bricks to maintain the structure.

Crinkle crankle walls were designed to require far less bricks than conventionally built ones. It is only half a brick thick along its entire snaking length. The bricks are laid longways at the same angle as the slope. The wiggle provides strength and support. Without these curves, a straight wall this flimsy would easily topple over. In later years, some buttresses have been added for stability as, unfortunately, everything on Hythe's hillside heads south. The gradual slide down the hill has put pressure on the bend apexes, but the whole wall is surprisingly solid.

It's certainly an attractive and useful feature, it faces West and the wiggles are great for sheltering fruit trees from wind and providing warmth. My climbing cucumbers are very productive, and the Hythe Environmental Community Hop vines produced nearly a kilo of hops last summer.



NEWS FROM ST LEONARD'S CHURCH



Thursday 3 March, 7.00pm: Installation and licensing of Rev Michael Darkins as new Priest in Charge of the Parish of St Leonard

Thursday 17 March, 7.00pm: Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Monday 21 March, 6.00pm: "Friends of St Leonard's Church" Annual General Meeting

101 High Street: Restoration of the premises and fitting out of the shop, information and meeting areas are ongoing (although somewhat behind the original schedule) with the official launch of the St Leonard's 'Open Door' project now expected to take place early in March.

Concert programme: The 2022 programme of concerts organised by Friends of St Leonard's Church will begin at Easter with a performance on Good Friday of Michael Lewis's "Requiem for a Pandemic" and other works sung by the Shepway Singers. Further details will be published in the next issue of this Newsletter.

SOUTH AFRICAN GIFT DISTRIBUTION IN HYTHE

This article, which has been transcribed with photographs, recently came into the Society's possession. The author and date of the article is unknown, however Alderman Spicer was Mayor of Hythe from 1947-1949 which may give a clue to its provenance. Perhaps an example of an early food bank?

In a sequestered corner of Kent, the county where England's history started, lies the ancient port of Hythe, which was selected by the 'Food for Britain Committee' in the Eastern Transvaal to receive 272 parcels of their generous gift of food sent to this country.

In conjunction with the Red Cross Society, distributions were arranged at the Town Hall and various almshouses, to which the aged residents of Hythe were invited. The Mayor, Alderman P J Spicer presented the parcels to the fortunate recipients, and on their behalf expressed his very sincere thanks to their friends in the Eastern Transvaal who could be assured that their gifts were most gratefully received.

Hythe suffered considerably in the first world war, but it was in the second world conflict that the town made its greatest contribution to modern history. Denuded of four fifths of its normal population, attacked by bombs, flying bombs, and towards the end by cross channel shelling, it stood firm in the most exposed spot in what was known throughout the world as 'Hellfire Corner'.

Hythe, proud owner of an Elizabethan Charter, was first mentioned in a Saxon Charter granted by Ethelbert II, King of Kent, in 732. As a Cinque Port, although today shorn of most of its early powers, the town is steeped in the history and glory of the British Navy (NB not the Royal Navy).

The port actually dates back to the Roman occupation, but it was not until the reign of King John that it came into active operation. The British Navy has its origin in the Cinque Ports, which nearly 700 years ago had to furnish at their own costs a fleet of 57 ships, fully manned and without payment for 15 days in the year.

Hythe was represented in the first English Parliament, and as far back as January 1265 a summons was sent to the Jurats and Burgesses of the Town by Simon de Monfort, Earl of Leicester....

"To send two of the most lawful and discreet men of your Port to the Parliament."

Today in the ancient Town Hall in the narrow picturesque High Street is a magnificent oak scroll on which is carved the names of the Bailiffs and Mayors of the Town, the first being William Hampton, 1349. With the special protection of the Downs from north and north west winds Hythe is a popular seaside resort, where as early as 1832 it was spoken as a place where beneficial sea bathing can be enjoyed early and late in the year. A large percentage of its inhabitants are retired elderly people, who often live alone and find it difficult to manage on their one ration book. Surely no more worthy recipients of the Transvaal gift foods could be found.

We would be grateful if anyone is able to identify any of the persons shown in the photographs on the left. Please contact Alan Joyce, 01303 267085 or enquiries@hythecivicsociety.org.



Dear Members

Annual Membership Subscriptions 2022/2023

A reminder that the subscriptions will be due from the 1st April 2022.

They remain at £10 per household.

Members who pay by standing order will have their subscription paid on the date the standing order was set up. It would be helpful if Members who currently do not have a standing order take up this option. The standing order form can be obtained from the Treasurer Alan Joyce, Tel No: 01303 267085, E-mail:

treasurer@hythecivicsociety.org

Members who pay by cash or cheque will have a reminder note, including methods of payment, posted with the April newsletter. This will include details for payment by bank transfer.

If anyone has any queries please do not hesitate to contact Alan as above.

Once again thank you for your continuing support of the Society.

GIFT AID: This is a valuable source of income for the Society. Your annual subscriptions and any voluntary donations you make are eligible for gift aid. If you are a taxpayer all that is required is the completion of a simple declaration which is sent to the Treasurer. You do not have to advise HMRC. You can obtain the form by email enquiries@hythecivicsociety.org, or telephone Alan Joyce on 01303 267085.



Registered Charity No 283177

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KG GCB OBE DL

A VERY SPECIAL AND ENORMOUS 'THANK YOU'

On behalf of the Society's Executive Committee and all the residents of, and visitors to, Hythe, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all our behind-the-scenes helpers. Week after week you turn out to plant bulbs, clear the church yard, water the High Street planters, deliver Newsletters, keep numerous flower beds blooming, help plan our talks programme and work at Eaton Lands, etc. We want you to know that your hard work does not go unnoticed and is greatly appreciated by us all.

If you would like to help please contact enquiries@hythecivicsociety.org

PRINCES PARADE

In mid-January 2022 the Secretary of State for Transport approved the application by Folkestone and Hythe District Council (FHDC) to divert Princes Parade road to the north to run parallel to the Royal Military Canal. This is a major milestone for the development of the site. There are many other planning decisions to be taken, among which are approval of the details required by the initial planning consent.

One of these is the approval of how to remediate the contamination on the site as a result of its previous use as a rubbish tip. The ex-rubbish tip has been capped with soil but in order to build on the site piles need to be sunk into the land to a depth that will expose the rubbish. There has been much speculation about what the ex-rubbish tip contains and FHDC commissioned a detailed report from a specialist consultant. The Society was concerned to read the findings of this December 2021 contaminated land risk assessment report. The Society was also surprised that advance work to provide evidence for the report was undertaken knowing that potentially harmful risks were present apparently without appropriate precautions – risks to those who were undertaking the work and to the wider public, including those at Seabrook primary school. The Society has asked FHDC for a written assurance that while the processes of further risk assessment and deciding how to best remove the significant contamination risks are performed, that no more site works are carried out that could exacerbate the risks to the wider Hythe public.

HERITAGE HYTHE UPDATE

Following the successful series of events held last August to celebrate the Society's 75th anniversary + 1 year, we are working to produce an e-book of the +200 posters displayed across the town. In due course the book will be available to download from our website.

Even now some of the posters are still on display, for example at The Hope Inn, Sainsbury's, and The Lazy Shack at Fisherman's Beach. The e-book should be ready in the spring. As well as all the posters the book will contain added material, including some personal reflections on Hythe from various people.

Additionally, the Kent Photo Archive, a small voluntary body based in Maidstone is scanning a large quantity of photographic material from the Society's Archive. Material not seen by many previously will be made available for general viewing via our website www.hythecivicsociety.org.