

Margate Civic Society

(Founded 1968)

Registered Charity No. 257884



Spring 2013
Newsletter
Issue No. 370



**Margate Civic Society is a
Founder Member
of Civic Voice**

This year will see the 150th anniversary of the north Kent railway line reaching Margate in 1863. Coincidentally, this year is also the 50th anniversary of the opening of Arlington House. Whilst Arlington House might well be the first building which rail visitors to the town see on their arrival, it was an editorial decision which determined that this issue of the Newsletter would feature the railway anniversary. It is a further coincidence that the Arlington development, particularly Arlington Square, was built largely on the site of the former South Eastern Railway station which opened in 1846.

Rob Smalley, an expert on railways, has very kindly contributed a five-page article which tells the fascinating story of the different railway lines and the different railway stations that served Margate over the years. Many of our members will have enjoyed the many BBC TV programmes on railways around the country and I feel sure that Rob Smalley's article on pages 5-9 will be of much interest to our members in this anniversary year.

The Society's Jubilee Clock Tower Time Ball Restoration Project is progressing well with much support from our members and others. We are organising a coach trip to Greenwich Time Ball on 24th May for which full details are shown on page 3. Do book yourself a seat on the coach as it promises to be a great day out for Society members.

At a meeting of Margate Charter Trustees on 13th February 2013, a proposal was put forward by the Town Mayor, Cllr Will Scobie, that the Trustees request Thanet District Council to conduct a Community Governance Review with a view to inviting the public to determine whether they support the idea of a Margate Town Council to replace Margate Charter Trustees. That proposal was seconded by Cllr Clive Hart and passed by a majority vote. Of the 20 Councillors who comprise Margate Charter Trustees, only 13 were present at the meeting. If a Town Council were to be set up, there would be an increase in the level of Council Tax to meet the costs of another tier of local government in Margate. Is that what we really want? □

James Brazier
Newsletter Editor

Heritage Open Days 2013

This year's Heritage Open Days are **Thursday, 12th September to Sunday, 15th September**. Details of local organisations participating in this year's HODs will be listed in the Summer Newsletter. □

Welcome to new members

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members who have recently joined the Society:

Mrs Anne Miles
Dr Philip Gore
Peter Blem
Frank Thorley & Philip Thorley (joint Life Members)
Thanet Leisure Force (Corporate Member)
Leslie Logan
Donald Dennis
Laura Sandys MP (renewed as a Life Member)

...and we are very sorry to report the passing of the following former members of the Society:

Derek Austen (on 4th February 2013)
Anne Pilcher (on 8th February 2013)

Anne was made an Honorary Member of the Society following the sad death of her late husband, Jack, in October 2009. Anne had given valuable assistance to Jack during his many years service as the Society's Membership Secretary, Newsletter Editor, Newsletter Distributor, etc and will be fondly remembered by many members.

Reg Ward (a member of our Society for many years and a Freeman of the Borough of Margate)
Fr Ronald Steptoe

Our condolences go to their families and friends. □

Lynda Smith
Membership Secretary

Civic Day 2013

This year, we will be holding our Civic Day event on **Sunday 23rd June**. Plans are afoot for our Society to again participate in this national event which is overseen by Civic Voice. This year, we will be mounting a display on our Time Ball Restoration Project and the Town Pride awards in the meeting room at the back of Droit House from 11.00am to 4.00pm. We are most grateful to Thanet Visitor Information Service for making this space available to us. Do be certain to make a note of the date (**Sunday, 23rd June**) and the venue in your diary.

Your Committee very much look forward to seeing you at our Civic Day event this year and to you giving it your full support. □

Pamela Pople
Chairman

THE TIME BALL RESTORATION PROJECT - UPDATE

Margate Civic Society is pleased to announce that the Margate Jubilee Clock Tower Time Ball account now stands at over £2,000. The Society would particularly like to thank Gore Brothers Ltd for their most generous donation of £250 to pay for the printing costs of Mike Bundock's book on Margate Jubilee Clock Tower. Also, a most generous donation for £500 has recently been received from the family of Mr Tom Williams (in his memory).

The forthcoming book on Margate Jubilee Clock Tower, written by Mike Bundock, is proving very popular. Anyone who wishes to pre-order the book has until the end of March to ensure that their name, or that of someone else, (perhaps as a gift), is inscribed. The book will be launched at the Margate Civic Society Town Pride Awards evening on the 9th May 2013.

We are organising a coach trip from Margate to Greenwich on Friday 24th May 2013. Seats will be available to members and non-members at the price of £15, payable in advance please. For details of this exciting day out, see details on page 3 of this Newsletter. Any surplus made on this trip will go towards the Time Ball restoration appeal.

Clarence House will be considering our invitation to HRH The Prince of Wales to attend the ceremony on 24th May 2014. The exciting possibility of His Royal Highness's attendance is starting to stimulate wide interest.

The Time Ball sub-committee attended a meeting with Margate Museum in January and they are enthusiastic about mounting a Margate Maritime Heritage display incorporating the Time Ball. Evidence of public engagement is important for our fund-raising and we have registered the Project with the Heritage Lottery Fund.

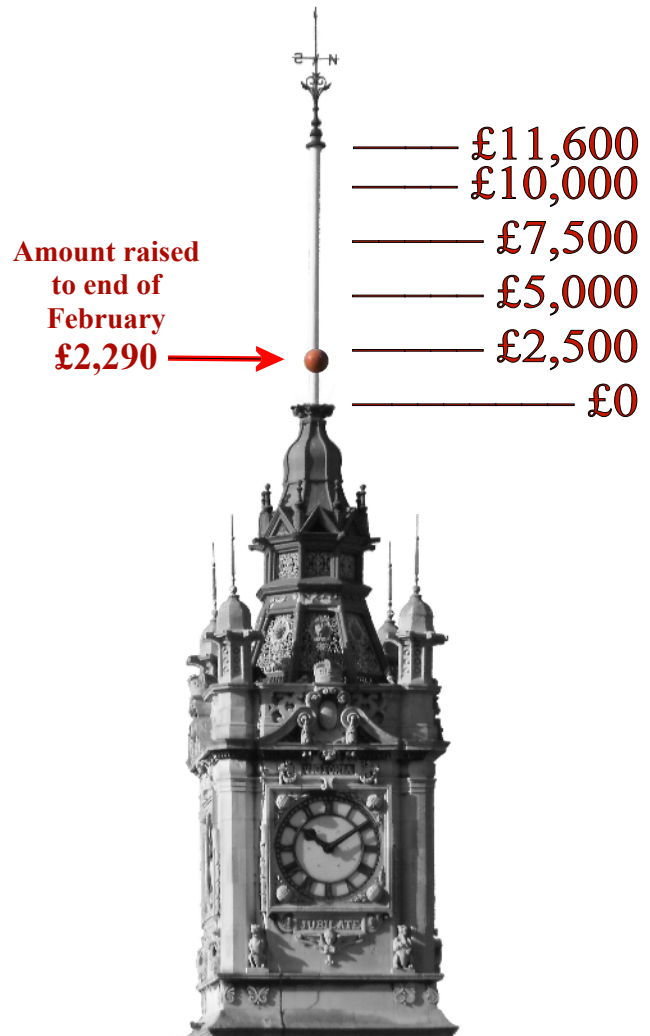
The Society has forwarded a request to Thanet District Council to have Margate Jubilee Clock Tower opened on our Civic Day, (to be held on **Sunday, 23rd June 2013**) when Mike Bundock has kindly agreed to hold a booksigning.

Lynda Smith
Chairman, Time Ball Sub-Committee

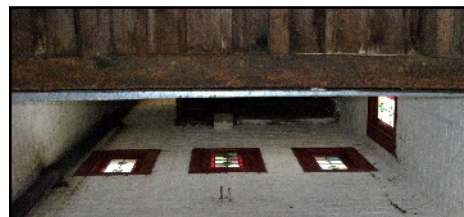
The photographs (*right*) showing the inside of the Clock Tower were kindly taken by Steve Vilette for publication in our Newsletter. They show not only the ladder but also the decorative stained-glass windows. Perhaps, these windows were originally illuminated by a gas-lamp thus allowing them to be appreciated from outside the building during the hours of darkness. - **Ed**



The tale that the Latin word 'JUBILATE' was deliberately used to mock the two-year lateness in the Clock Tower being completed in 1889 to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee two years earlier in 1887 is untrue. But it is a good tale!



The metal ladder affixed to the wall inside the Clock Tower allowing access to the top of the building. Note the single stained-glass window to the right of the ladder



The above photograph shows some of the decorative stained-glass windows on all four elevations of the building. On the front elevation and on each of the two sides, there are three windows whilst on the rear elevation there is only one window because of the access ladder affixed to that wall inside the building



Rear elevation showing only the one window



Close-up of a window

Time Ball Restoration Project

Details of our Coach Trip to Greenwich on Friday, 24th May 2013

We are organising a coach trip from Margate to Greenwich on Friday 24th May 2013. Seats will be available to members and non-members at the price of £15, payable in advance please. The coach will leave Cliftonville (The Wheatsheaf) at 8.45am picking up in Margate, Garlinge (The Hussar) and Birchington. We are due to arrive in Greenwich at 10:45am, and at 11:00am we have all been invited to view the Greenwich Time Ball and have it explained to us by Rory McEvoy, who is Curator of Horology at Greenwich. We will also meet Jonathan Betts MBE, Senior Curator of Horology, who, in his position as Master of the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers, has kindly agreed to attend the Margate Time Ball opening ceremony on 24th May 2014. There are also, of course, the National Maritime Museum and the *Cutty Sark* to explore. As a matter of interest and quite coincidentally, the date specified for the coach trip is exactly one year before our planned ceremony on 24th May 2014. Following our visit to the Greenwich Time Ball, you are free to enjoy the rest of your visit to Greenwich.. We will be leaving Greenwich at 3.45pm for our journey back to Thanet. The coach operator for the day will be Carol Peters with whom many of our members will be very familiar as an excellent organisation.

The coach will pick-up at:

The Wheatsheaf PH: 8.45am

Margate Marine Terrace (National Express stop at Beacon Bingo [formerly Crown Cash Bingo]): 9.00am

The Hussar PH: 9.10am

Birchington Square: 9.20am

Please contact Lynda Smith on (01843) 228174 for further details on the Greenwich coach trip or send a cheque for £15 per person, specifying where you wish to be picked up, to:

5 Addington Square
Margate
CT9 1NN

Cheques should be made payable to **Margate Civic Society Time Ball Account**. Numbered tickets will be sent by return of post.

Dependent on reaction from members, the Society may run coach trips to other places and will be interested to hear your views on this, and on suggested venues. □

See also our new feature column on page 14 titled
CLOCK TOWER CORNER illustrated with
readers' old photographs of the Clock Tower

Forthcoming Book:

Margate Clock Tower by Mike Bundock

The following is a synopsis, provided by Mike Bundock, of his book which is due to be published by Margate Civic Society in May 2013:

Margate's Clock Tower was designed and built as one of the many Jubilee memorials dedicated to Her Majesty Queen Victoria in the latter part of the nineteenth century. All of the costs of the Margate Clock Tower were covered by public subscription and, although it stands in a prime position on the resort's popular seafront, it is easy to pass by with only the most casual of glances or even unnoticed in the rush of everyday life. The fact that the clock still tells the time and chimes the passing hours today is a testimony to the vision of all who have been involved with the clock over the past one-hundred-and-twenty-five years.

It is estimated that there are as many as two hundred free-standing clock towers in the British Isles, but Margate's is almost unique (there is at least one other, at Brighton) in having the rare addition of a Time Ball as a finishing feature. This Time Ball was functional for a number of years, but more as a novelty feature rather than a serious aid to navigation.

Drawing upon a number of original sources, this book, the first dedicated solely to the history of the town's Clock Tower, will cover the period leading up to the local Council's decision to choose a clock, the specification, design and building phases, concluding with a description of the grand unveiling ceremony. A detailed description of the building will be included along with the technical specifications of the clock mechanism and a special feature on the Time Ball.

It is intended that this illustrated text will put the tower into context, not just in connection with other British clock towers, but with other Time Balls and Jubilee memorials in general.

To pre-order a copy of the book, which costs £10 plus £2 p&p, please contact Lynda Smith on (01843) 228174, email membership@margatecivicsociety.org.uk. All pre-orders must be received by the end of March. □

Did you know... ?

...that Oscar Wilde lectured at the Cliftonville Hotel on 'Personal Impressions of America' at 3.30pm on 26th July 1883? His notes on that lecture were sold at Sotheby's on 19th July 1993 (Lot 26).

The Cliftonville lecture, and a subsequent one at Ramsgate, were advertised in *Keble's Gazette* on 21st July 1883.

Source: *Oscholars*, The Wilde Calendar

With thanks to Nick Dermott for this snippet

Nominations for Town Pride Awards 2013

This year, the Society received six nominations for Town Pride Awards. All of the properties nominated for the 2013 Town Pride Awards are shown below:



Old Town T.Stall, Market Place, Margate



*Lady Tesla's Loose Leaves & Mud,
9 King Street, Margate*



*17-23 [formerly Warrior Crescent] Dalby Square, Cliftonville
(including 21-23 [formerly Warren Court Hotel] Arthur Road and new-build houses in
Arthur Road and Dalby Road). Development by Town & Country Housing Group*



*Roller Coaster House and associated housing,
All Saints Avenue, Margate.
Development by Town & Country Housing Group*



*Priory Mews, 8 The Square,
Birchington
- conversion of hay-store
and new-build.
Development by Priory
Homes*

*Maman House, 234/236
Northdown Road,
Cliftonville*



The results of the judging for the Society's 2013 Town Pride Awards will be announced at our meeting to be held on 9th May 2013 when presentations of the Awards will be made to the winners. □

All trains to Margate!

This year - 2013 - will see the 150th anniversary of the north Kent coast railway service from London to Margate. The arrival of a direct line service from London to Margate made a very significant contribution to the development of our town as a seaside destination during the second half of the nineteenth century. Rob Smalley has very kindly contributed this article to our Newsletter to mark this 150th anniversary.

As late as the seventeenth century and early eighteenth century, the Isle of Thanet – like much of east Kent – was a series of localised communities. Transport was by sailing boat using sea and river links which, in turn, were dominated by wind, tide and current. Reaching London was a time-consuming, even treacherous, journey – the worse from south-east Kent, as rounding the North Foreland required a change of wind-direction mid-journey. There were no canals in east Kent and the roads, even after the advent of Turnpike Trusts in the eighteenth century, were described as “ruinous beyond imagination and seasonally “unpassable” owing to mud up to four-feet deep”.

Yet the Isle of Thanet was an area of first-quality soil and the surrounding seas had plentiful fish. The little industry of the time served local agricultural needs and boat-building. Opportunities to change were very limited, but change was happening.

London was expanding with the industrial revolution. The growth brought with it overcrowded conditions and associated smells and disease. An estimated 20,000 cows were kept in the city yards and cellars to provide fresh milk. Also kept in the city were an estimated 10,000 horses for buses, delivery wagons and taxicabs. In addition, slaughter-houses and other work were centrally located long before water and sewerage were provided.

Escaping from the least desirable aspects of city life led, effectively, to health tourism. Hoys carrying around 70 passengers could expect to reach Margate in eight hours or so in favourable conditions, but more often took eleven hours – and could take twice that. Seasickness was a perilous hazard and, when low tide prevented reaching the

pier, small boats to shore – with undignified alighting – were an extra negotiable charge. Although the hoys grew to carry 100 or more passengers, reliability of the journey time had to await paddle-steamers in the 1820s.

Unsurprisingly, a short trip to Gravesend was the choice Kentish destination for Londoners until the railway was built.

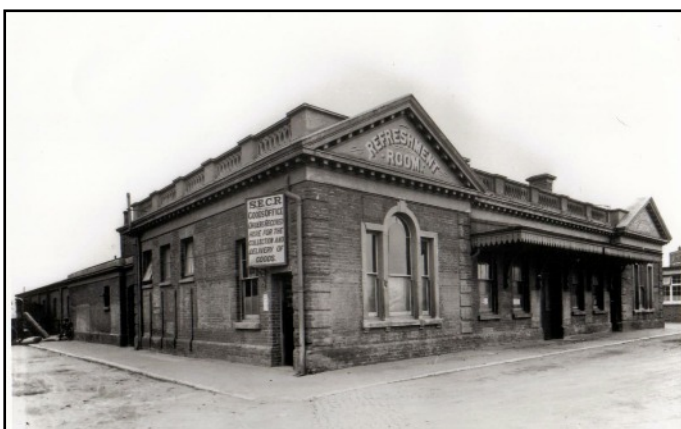
The South Eastern Railway (SER) was conceived primarily as a means of connecting London with the channel port of Dover and, on opening, securing the lucrative Royal Mail contract for letters and parcels to Europe and the Empire in the east. The route, initially from London Bridge, was shared with the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway as far as Redhill because Parliament only foresaw the need for one railway southwards from London. However, from Redhill the SER turned eastwards on a largely level and straight alignment across the Weald to Ashford from where the main line continued to Dover and a branch followed the valley of the River Stour through Canterbury to Ramsgate by May 1846, quickly extended by November to Margate.

Ramsgate Town station was a terminus at the top of Chatham Street, the locomotive then attaching to the rear of the train to draw the train via Westwood to Margate Sands station, built broadly where Arlington Court is today. Near each station was a public house named “The Shakespeare”, not commemorating the bard, but instead the name of the locomotive hauling the very first train. (The Ramsgate pub is now called “The Great Tree”.)

Patronage of seaside Margate mushroomed resulting from the much easier access. Sunbathing was not recognised as



The present sign outside The Shakespeare Public House, Canterbury Road, Margate



Courtesy of Anthony Lee

Margate Sands station before its closure and subsequent use as the Casino restaurant and dance hall. When this photograph was taken, the railway was being run by the South Eastern and Chatham Railway (SECR)



Courtesy of Anthony Lee

The former Margate Sands station being used as the M.C.C. (Margate Catering Company) Restaurant c. 1928. Note the changes to its windows and the portico replacing the former canopy at the entrance



Courtesy of Richard Clements

An early photograph of Platforms 1 & 2 at Margate Station (LCDR) which finally opened for service on 5th October 1863

a pastime, but the health-giving properties of sea air and seawater (“the colder the better”) were sought. Knowledge of medicine and disease was still rudimentary, but bathing and drinking of seawater was believed to be strongly beneficial. Modesty, of course, was preserved by Benjamin Beale’s bathing machines, another early Margate benefit. Naturally, the housing stock expanded to accommodate visitors in both hotels and guest-houses, and was given added impetus by the arrival of a second railway line.

The SER reached along the north Kent coast to Gravesend and, after purchase, through the Thames and Medway canal tunnel to Strood. From there, bridging the River Medway posed a substantial financial obstruction and the SER chose instead to provide a ferry service from Strood to the Blue Boar pier at Rochester and the Sun pier at Chatham. East of that needed horse-drawn carriage (or wagon) or coastal barge and the success of the SER main-line railway through Ashford encouraged a new rail solution.

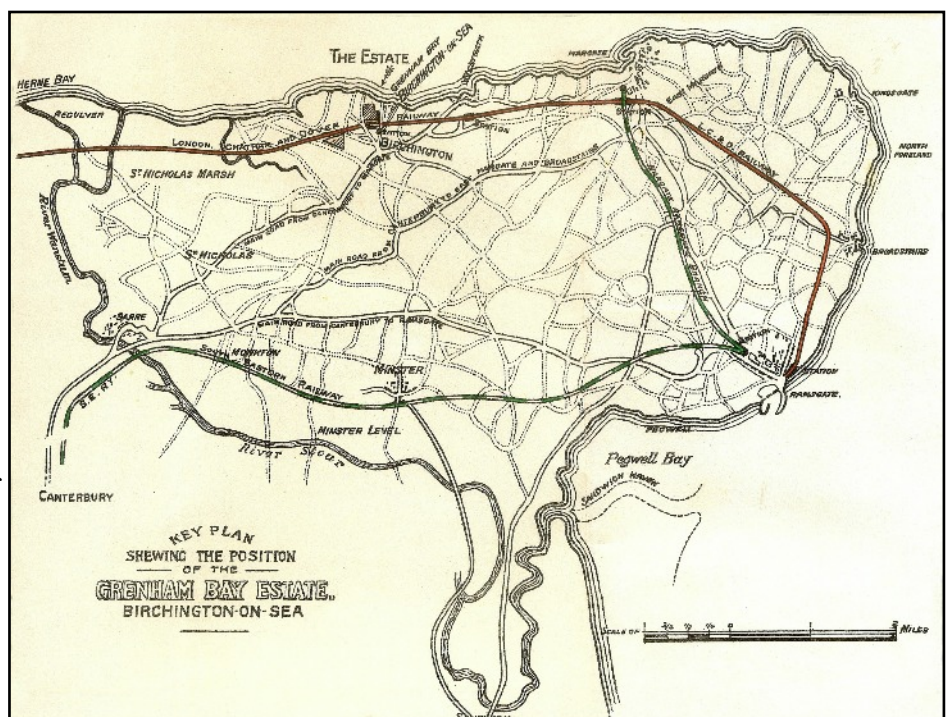
The East Kent Railway was promoted linking the Strood line across the Medway to Chatham and Faversham. With works underway, the company name was changed to the London, Chatham and Dover Railway (LCDR) and from Faversham the main route was extended, again through Canterbury, to Dover. Simultaneously, new extensions were being made westwards to London independent of SER and eastwards from Faversham to Whitstable, Herne Bay and Margate in 1863. This extension crossed the Reculver marshes some 70 years before the A299 Thanet Way was constructed.

Works on a separate railway had been started with the intention of linking Margate, where a station was built just east of the SER terminus, with Broadstairs and Ramsgate Harbour station (the Merrie England site under the East

Cliff). An embankment was constructed across the (now) Dreamland site, but no permanent track was laid because, by then, the line from Faversham had become the natural connection. The redundant embankment became part of the ornamental Italianate gardens and the surplus station was turned into the Hall by the Sea in 1867 with room for 2,000 people and achieving fame as having the largest stage in England.

The Isle of Thanet was now served by two competing railway companies but the LCDR had a route that was thirteen miles shorter. To address the inequality, the SER built a new direct rail route from London through Sevenoaks to join with their existing line at Tonbridge and, as Margate traffic blossomed, a new junction at St Lawrence so that trains could run direct to Margate without the delay of reversal at Ramsgate.

During the nineteenth century, Parliament gradually started to introduce limitations to working hours in part to recognise industrial accidents caused by tiredness and, in 1871, Bank Holidays were created. The extra time and general wealth creation brought the opportunity for ever more seaside trips; for Margate generating over £2 million in July and August alone. Equally, competition with other towns meant Margate started to add entertainment to its sands and bathing. The Theatre Royal began life in 1787 but now the New Grand Theatre - later named the Hippodrome - was built in 1899 in Cecil Square (where the Library and Court House now stand) for an audience of 1,800 people. By 1901, Margate was by far the dominant Kentish seaside destination, followed some way behind by Ramsgate and Folkestone then, perhaps surprisingly, Broadstairs. Gravesend had been eclipsed by the attractive alternatives as overland travel had become easier. Entertainment efforts continued as Cliftonville Lido opened in 1927 and the progressive £½-million development of



Courtesy of Birchington Heritage Trust

This map, published by the Grenham Bay Estate in 1902, shows the separate lines of both the London, Chatham and Dover Railway (in red) and the South Eastern Railway (in broken green) serving Thanet. Note the former importance of Shottendane Road shown on this map as being the main road from Canterbury to East Margate and Broadstairs. How times have changed!

Dreamland Amusement Park was completed in 1933 with Dreamland Cinema opening in 1935.

Residential development had also surged. The Duke of Wellington had condemned the earliest railway proposals which would merely “encourage the lower classes to move about”, but he had underestimated the way landowners would seek to develop their land. At Westgate, for example, within a few years of the railway station opening in 1871, 130 substantial houses had been built, many with verandas. The Westgate-on-Sea LCDR station promoted its seaside interest but the promotional description emphasised it as “a quiet, eminently respectable location with no musicians or excursionists”. The “City Express” of 1896 left Holborn Viaduct at 5:10pm and arrived at Westgate-on-Sea at 6:45pm on Fridays, with a Monday return arriving into Holborn at 9:48am. By 1911, a group of rail travellers known as the Association of Kent Coasters could arrange comfortable private saloons to be attached to business trains.



An early engraving of Westgate-on-Sea Railway Station (LCDR) which opened on April 12th 1871

Residential expansion also increased local travel and in 1870 the LCDR opened an additional station for Margate, adjacent to and briefly called Ramsgate Road, then re-named as East Margate, finally becoming Margate East. However, the continued expansion of the Thanet towns (Margate’s population increased from 21,000 in 1891 to 46,000 in 1921) led to the introduction of another form of transportation - trams. The Isle of Thanet Electric Tramways and Lighting Company opened in 1901 and provided a convenience, novelty and frequency that scooped much of the local travel market. Together with their successor motor-buses they ensured that Margate East would never play a significant role, although it lingered on until 1953. The steps from the road to the platforms remain to this day.

Cost pressures had grown upon the railway companies from the late nineteenth century, despite the huge volume of travel. The fateful, aggressive competition between the SER and the LCDR, fomented by their General Managers and arch rivals, Sir Edward Watkin and James Staats Forbes, had left a legacy of duplication across Kent. The resolution decided upon was to leave the companies as separate undertakings but, from 1899, to combine the operation through a new body, the South Eastern and Chatham Railway Joint Management Committee. In Thanet, this would mean significant change and simplification - but not before WWI intervened.



The flight of steps on the south side of the bridge over Ramsgate Road. Note the lengths of railway line being utilised as hand-posts. Another flight of steps complete with railway-line hand-posts can be seen on the north side of the bridge

After WWI, Government auditors identified a cost to the railway companies of £150 million for war service, but only in 1923 was the much smaller sum of £60 million paid. Instead, railway profitability would be addressed by reorganisation and the ‘Big Four’ railways were formed, the Southern Railway assuming control of virtually all railways south of London.

So, it was 1926 before the SER and LCDR lines were linked by digging a deep cutting at Dumpton and an embankment and viaduct across to a new, rather grand station in Ramsgate, which still stands. Margate, too, got a similarly styled station but here the link to the SER alignment at Tivoli enabled the substantial freight depot to be relocated from the cramped passenger forecourt area. Two stations, Ramsgate Harbour and Margate Sands, were closed together with much of the SER route from St Lawrence to Salmestone and the LCDR tunnel from



Station Road c. 1905 (note the ornamental gas-lamp and the eye-catching station-entrance sign)
 Courtesy of Anthony Lee

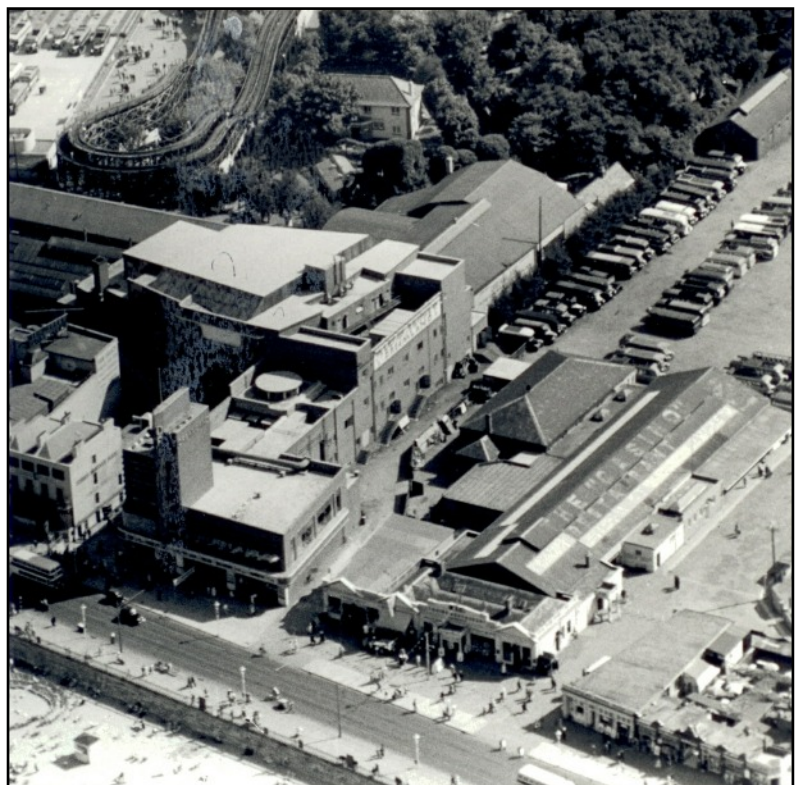


Courtesy of Thanet District Council

This 1931 aerial photograph shows both the former Margate Sands station operating as the Casino Restaurant (with THE "CASINO" RESTAURANT on its roof) and the Hall-by-the-Sea (with DREAMLAND PLEASURE PARK on its roof). The original Dreamland Cinema can also be seen between the Hall-by-the-Sea and Marine Terrace. Also, note the Sun Deck on Margate sands

Dumpton to Ramsgate sands. To partially address access, particularly to the beach, at Ramsgate, a wholly new station entitled Dumpton Park (for east Ramsgate) was built in the new cutting. New maintenance sheds for locomotives and carriages were provided at Ramsgate, although locomotive servicing and a turntable were retained at Margate.

Before the invention of the internal combustion engine, almost every necessity was either made locally or brought in by rail and Birchington, Westgate and Margate each had a goods yard and shed. Large volumes of coal were conveyed by rail for domestic and commercial users and coal merchants were based in railway yards for that reason. Although the Kent coalfield produced two million tons per annum during much of the twentieth century, the coal was too friable and unsuitable for domestic use, and Welsh and Midlands pits were the usual source. Coal was crucial, too, in the development of both (town) gas and electricity supply. Margate had gas street-lighting by 1830, pre-dating the arrival of the railway, with the town's gas-works related to the Harbour, but the Isle of Thanet Electric Tramways & Lighting Company had its generating station at St Peter's with its own siding. Another essential for



Courtesy of Thanet District Council

This 1937 aerial photograph shows THE "CASINO" RESTAURANT and the new Dreamland Cinema which opened in 1935



Part of a railway line believed to be used as a railway boundary marker in Station Road. Margate Railway Station, seen in the background, is a Grade II listed building. See also picture on right

Margate was ‘Passengers Luggage in Advance’. To save the encumbrance of baggage, the railway would collect luggage from your home and take it to your holiday residence in time for your holiday and there are no stories to compare with lost airline luggage!

Holidaymaker volumes continued to grow with increasing leisure time and shorter working weeks and the railway services brought an ever-widening catchment area within reach. One of the earlier direct trains ran daily from Birkenhead, Merseyside to Margate via Birmingham, Oxford, Reading and Guildford. Other services from Nottingham and Manchester would run at weekends. Indeed, the Southern Railway went to great lengths to encourage seaside trips even inventing ‘Sunny South Sam’ a uniformed and avuncular railwayman in person, poster or even Madame Tussard’s wax figure to help guide visitors. All this supplemented the mammoth flows of day- or longer- trips from the London suburbs which together, on Saturdays, would use every carriage, locomotive and train-crew that could be found!

The Second World War produced its own conundrum. Initially, children were evacuated from London and other cities to ‘safer’ coastal locations. The new arrivals, of course, needed food supplies which were all part of the evacuation. The dramatic ‘blitzkrieg’ advance in April/May 1940 caused a rapid re-appraisal and all those city evacuees, now supplemented by children from coastal homes, had to be re-evacuated. From Thanet, 6,121 children were sent by train – Margate children to Lichfield. Equally, the Dunkirk rescue over nine days required one-third of a million soldiers to be conveyed by train at a moment’s notice. Of the 548 special trains run, 75 left from Margate and 82 from Ramsgate. “The Times” newspaper wrote a leading article commending the railway “especially the Southern Railway, which has conjured up a seemingly endless succession of trains and has lavished upon the emergency its great and peculiar experience of the handling of masses”.

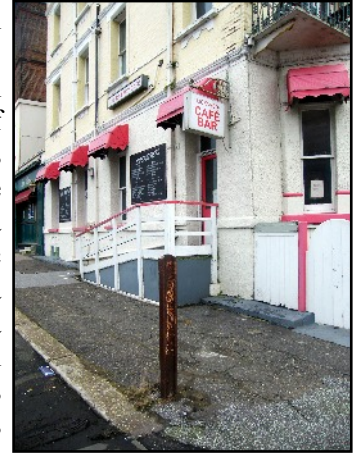
As London grew, commuting by rail changed from a weekend to a daily journey, especially as the working week reduced to five days. The twentieth century saw trains get longer, i.e. heavier, and steadily larger steam locomotives designed to haul them. A limiting factor was the curves and junctions of the initial railway design and the bridges

incapable of coping with heavier axle-loads. However, the Southern Railway had a policy of electrifying the rail services and, again interrupted by the cost and disruption of a World War, new electric trains were introduced via Chatham in 1959 and via Ashford in 1961 with clockface timetables. This revolutionised cleanliness for lineside washing as well as the trains and stations, and brought further benefits in faster acceleration and frequency. Regrettably, the overall journey time to London was not appreciably better because of additional stops at expanding intermediate towns and this situation has continued to date. The hi-speed services recently introduced are very reliable but bring a major improvement to rail travel by removing the real Thames ‘barrier’. Until recently, arriving at Victoria or Charing Cross meant an ever-more expensive cross-London journey by Underground, taxi or bus to reach trains from King’s Cross, St Pancras and Euston to all of Britain north of London. Today, a change of platforms at St Pancras, two minutes across the road to King’s Cross, or a short walk to Euston opens up convenient and frequent links countryside, saving time and money. Margate to York in three-and-a-half hours and Margate to Sheffield in around four hours, illustrate the step-changes in convenience and superiority to the rigours of motorway, and especially M25, driving.

Rail travel brought prosperity to nineteenth-century Margate and enabled the first half of the twentieth century to see further growth. The access of today enables us to travel more freely and invites others, in the era of more demanding convenience, to reach us here. Rail continues to evolve and connect us in today’s world. □

Rob Smalley

Editor’s Note: A special thank you is given to Rob Smalley for writing this article for our Newsletter and to Anthony Lee, Nick Dermott (TDC) and Richard Clements for allowing their photographs to be used to illustrate the article. JB



Another part of a railway line seen on the opposite side of Station Road. See also picture on left



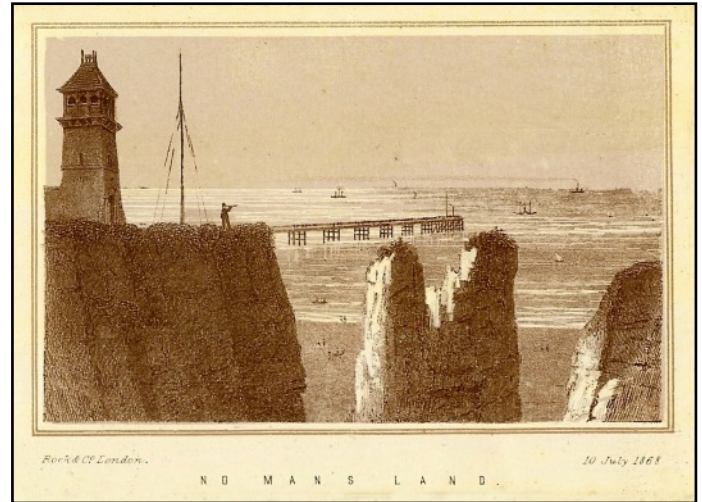
The original 1863 water-tower at Margate Station - now used as a general store

The Prince's Album of Margate - published by Rock & Co, London (1868)

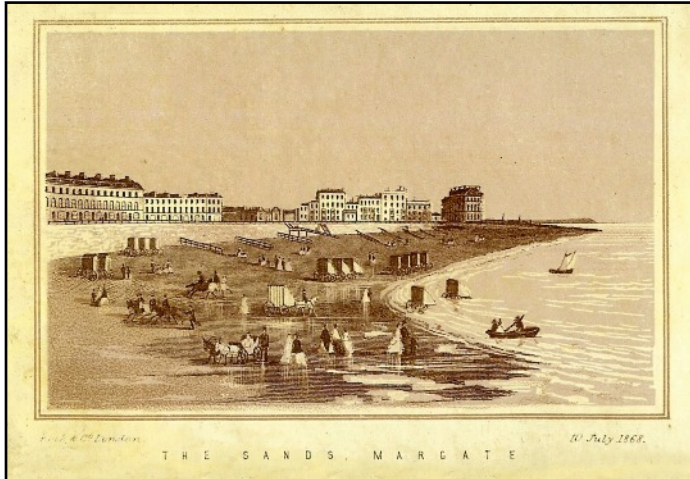
This little booklet contains twelve delightful images of Margate. Each portrays a different aspect of the town when it was in its ascendance. Only a few years previously, the London, Chatham and Dover Railway (The Kent Coast Railway) had opened its station in the town enabling direct rail communication with London and making travel to the town so much more convenient. Many of the buildings shown in these images remain today but few look as elegant as they are portrayed in these pictures.

The title of the album refers, undoubtedly, to the Prince of Wales - later King Edward VII - a bust of whom can be seen on Margate Clock Tower.

Of course, a number of the buildings shown in these images have long gone - particularly the iron pier (always known to locals as The Jetty), the Cliftonville Hotel (once the best hotel in the town) and Holy Trinity Church. There is also a gaping hole in the middle of Marine Terrace. But, thankfully, many of the buildings do still remain although most do not look anywhere near as elegant as they are portrayed in these images. Margate is unquestionably in the early stages of regeneration and we are very fortunate in still having such a large number of fine architectural buildings many of which, over time, will - I feel sure - be restored to the benefit of our town.



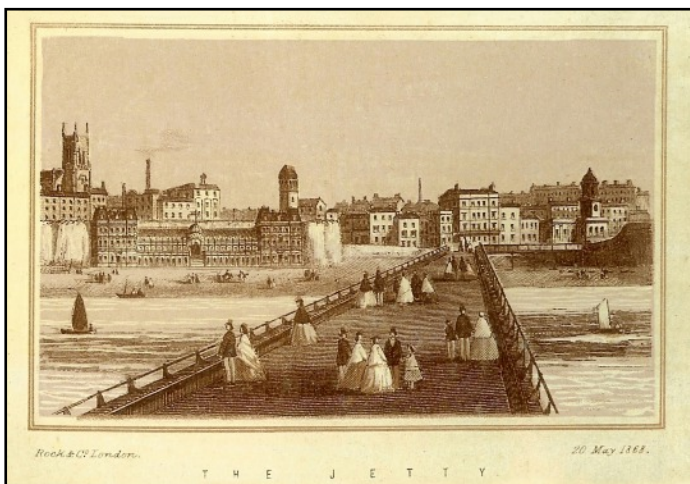
No Man's Land



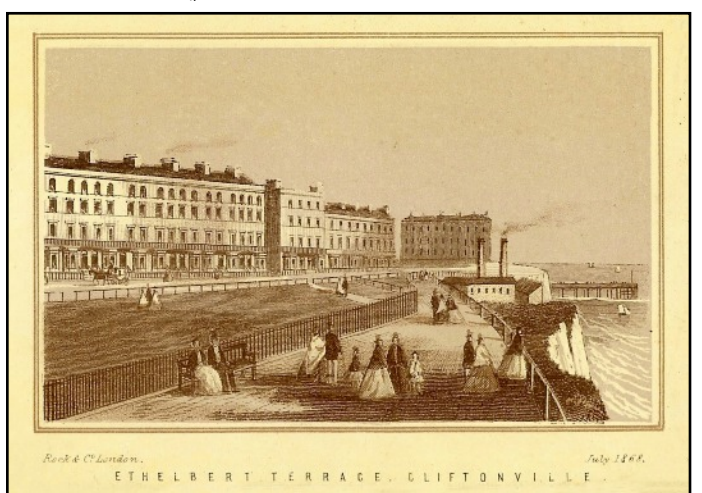
The Sands, Margate (Margate Sands railway station can just be seen)



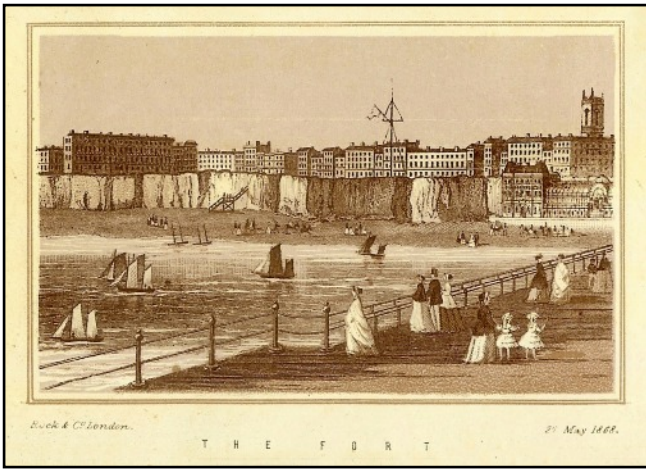
Cliftonville Hotel & Ethelbert Crescent



The Jetty



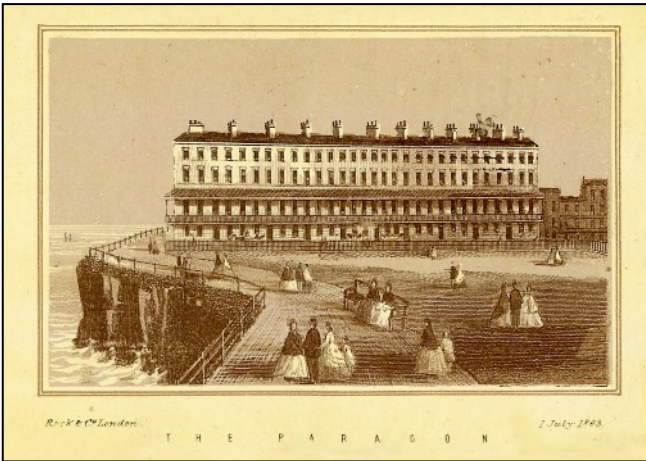
Ethelbert Terrace, Cliftonville



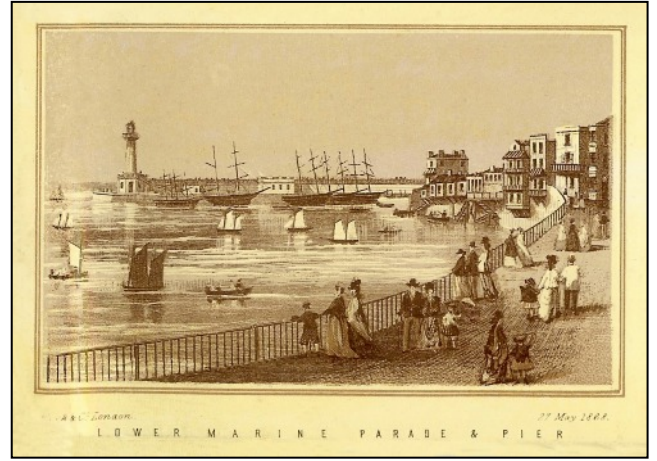
The Fort



*Warrior Crescent & Ethelbert Square
[now Dalby Square], Cliftonville*



The Paragon



Lower Marine Parade & Pier



Upper Marine Terrace



Lower Marine Terrace



Royal Crescent



The inside back cover to the album

Westgate's War Memorials

On 11th November 2012, the War Memorials Trust in conjunction with English Heritage launched the War Memorials Online website www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk with a view to collecting images and information on the condition of every war memorial in the United Kingdom. Your Editor has uploaded some of his photographs of all Westgate's known



war memorials (as shown on these two pages) to that website as well as images of most other war memorials in Thanet. Do visit the website if you have not done so already. □ **JB**

Recreation Ground War Memorial, Lymington Road

This was Westgate's WWI war memorial until the British Legion memorial (below) was built in 1923



British Legion "Lest we Forget" Memorial

This is the town's civic war memorial that was provided by the town's ex-servicemen in 1923 as they wanted a war memorial that was a focus of remembrance as they considered the Lymington Road War Memorial did not serve that purpose. WWII names were added in 1952



United Services Club War Memorial

This WWI and WWII memorial is affixed to a wall in the Club's premises on the south side of the Town Hall Buildings



B-24 Liberator Memorial Plaque, West Bay



Victor Jones Memorial Bench



Christ Church WWI Memorial (former Congregational - now URC)



In grounds of Summerlands Lodge - oak tree planted by Christopher Leckonby Phipps

These Wellington House School war memorial boards were held in the school chapel until the school closed and the boards were transferred to St Saviour's Parish Church in 1972. The two boards are mounted either side of the west door.



WWI names of the fallen



WWII names of the fallen

All of the war memorials illustrated on this page can be found in St Saviour's Parish Church



General view of Memorial Chapel showing some of the individual war memorials



Memorial Chapel - Dedication Plaque



Cross of Blessing and WWII Parish War Memorial



Parish War Shrine (WWI)
This original war shrine (on card) was found behind the church organ six years ago



WWI Parish War Memorial & Roll of Service



Chandelier in memory of Lt Christopher Moor



Plaque in memory of Major Lewis J. Jones



Altar Cross and candle sticks in memory of Mayor Alfred Herbert Tyler



Votive candle holder in memory of Lt Marc Lawrence - Iraq 2003

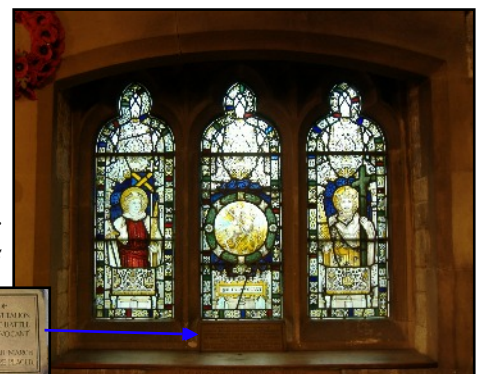


Prie Dieu in memory of Lt Francis R. Laver



Left:
In memory of Lieutenant Ronald Morgan

Right:
In memory of Captain Leonard Neville Rogers



CLOCK TOWER CORNER

Do you have any old family photographs showing the Clock Tower?

John Tribe sent in this charming postcard of his father, Fred, taken at the Clock Tower in the summer of 1933 when his father was serving as a Police Constable with Margate Police Force as PC 42. In those days, the Clock Tower was used by Margate Ambulance Corps as a Dressing Station incorporating a collection point for children who had become separated from their parents whilst on the sands.

The postcard is simply addressed to PC 42, Margate Police Station, Margate and bears a postmark showing that it was posted from Dagenham, Essex on 8th August 1933. Note the 10 pm collection! The message - written upside down - reads (with punctuation added):

Sorry your helmet 'as hid your face. When little Jean was asked who found her, it was Mrs Gardner not Police-man. Still, this will be a relic of one of the many lost children you have to keep you busy.

Kind Regards

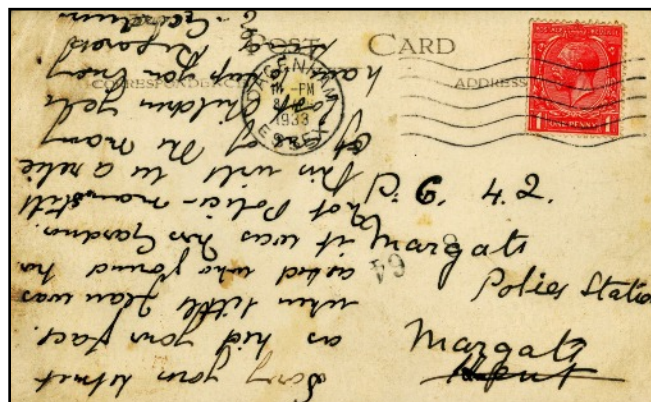
E. Gardner

From the message, it would appear that the little girl in the photograph, Jean, had been found as 'lost' by Mrs Gardner and taken to the Clock Tower for collection by her parents. It would seem that a photographer took this photo and perhaps her husband had purchased this photograph of his wife as souvenir of their visit to Margate. On their return home to Dagenham, the Gardners perhaps thought that they should send the postcard to the policeman in the photograph. Of course, we shall never know the true circumstances but, presumably, Jean was duly collected by her parents from the Clock Tower and all lived happily ever after.

The Tribes lived at Grove Gardens for many years and John has many very fond memories of our town. John and his wife, Sheila, now live at Whitstable.



Front and back of postcard sent to PC 42



If any of our members have old family photographs featuring the Clock Tower, please do send them in for publication in our Newsletter stating the year the photograph was taken and whether it was taken on a special occasion, e.g. Margate Carnival. The Clock Tower is probably Margate's best-known landmark and certainly its most decorative building. As such, it is likely to have featured on many old photographs.

Photographs should be sent to our Editor (see back page for contact details) either electronically or by post. All photographs received by post will be treated with care and will be returned without delay.

Please do look out your old photographs of the Clock Tower and send them in for publication. □

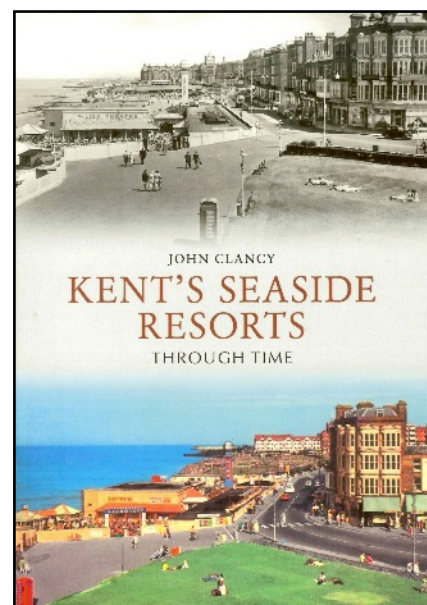
JB

Book Review

Kent's Seaside Resorts Through Time by John Clancy. Published by Amberley Publishing at £14.99, softback, 96pp, full colour, ISBN 978-1-4456-0363-6. Copies of this book are available from W. H. Smith, Margate Museum, and Turner Contemporary.

This is another of the 'Through Time' books aimed at the nostalgia market and the quality of the reproduction of the images - mostly in colour - is again superb. This book contains a fascinating selection of 'then & now' photographs of Kent's seaside resorts. Over a quarter of the book relates to Margate and over half of the book relates to Thanet so our local area is extremely well covered. Most of the early pictures are from Edwardian postcards and one cannot help but notice the huge numbers of visitors that the seaside once attracted. We still have much of the fine architecture and we still have the sands. Perhaps one day the visitors will return to our coastline and see what they have been missing when jetting off to the Mediterranean and to other overseas locations. This book will be much enjoyed by lovers of the Kent seaside and it deserves a wide readership. □

The front cover of this new book shows The Lido, Ethelbert Crescent and Cliff Terrace, Cliftonville



What's On

Margate Civic Society (talks all start at 7.30pm at the Walpole Bay Hotel)

Date	Subject
2013	
4th April	'Famous Folk in Thanet' by John Robinson
9th May	Presentation of our Town Pride Awards for 2013 followed by 'Herne Bay Clock Tower' by Mike Bundock
24th May	Coach trip to Greenwich (see page 3 of this Newsletter for details)



Westgate Heritage Centre (in the back of St Saviour's Church) - **Spring/Summer Programme 2013**
Open first Saturday of each month 10.00am to 12.00pm. At 10.30am, there will be a talk on some aspect of Westgate history by Dr Dawn Crouch. **PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF TIME FOR THESE TALKS.** In addition, from 4th May, Westgate Heritage Centre will be open every Wednesday and Saturday morning from 10.00am to 12.00pm during the summer months

Date	Subject
2013	
6th April	'1883 - A new look for a fashionable watering place?' - What was the importance of the arrival in Westgate-on-Sea of the Revd John Hawtreay, founder of St Michael's School?
4th May	'Lighting the Town' Part 1 – by Gas Gas was not usually an exciting subject, but for the Westgate Estate it meant rivalry, intrigue and even skulduggery. Come along and hear what happened. This talk will include a "dramatic reading" based on archive material in the House of Lords' Library and elsewhere. It should bring a smile to your face.
1st June	'Lighting the Town' Part 2 – by Electricity The Westgate Estate was famed for being in the vanguard of fashion. So, why did it have to wait so long to be lit by electric light? This talk will also include a "dramatic reading"
6th July	PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE FOR THIS MEETING TO BE HELD AT CHRIST CHURCH URC HALL IN WESTGATE BAY AVENUE Laying the foundations' 2013 is the 130th anniversary of the laying of the Foundation Stones of Christ Church Congregational Church (June) and St Saviour's C.E. Church (August) - two important events, which led to the creation of two very different communities. There will be an opportunity to look at the interior of this fine Victorian building
3rd August	Members' Day - some of the Committee will share the results of their recent research
7th September	150 years ago an historic event took place, which was to lead to the creation of a new and fashionable watering-place – the Westgate Estate. On 28th August 1863, the first train of the new London, Chatham and Dover Railway Company arrived in Margate carrying the Directors of the Company – the Heritage Centre celebrates this red-letter day

Come and browse through our collection of material and photographs of Westgate, which is growing all the time. We have large-scale maps and plans which reveal great detail about your street or area



Replacement *Victory* Lugger Memorial Plaque to be Unveiled on 27th April 2013

Some of our members might remember the original plaque that was affixed to the wall near the steps leading to the promenade on Margate's stone pier. It was put up to commemorate the loss of the Margate lugger *Victory* and its crew of nine men who perished in an attempt to rescue the crew of the American vessel *Northern Belle* which became stranded off Kingsgate during a terrible storm in 1857. The original plaque took some rough punishment over the years and, on one occasion, was washed into the sea and smashed in two. In recent weeks, a temporary notice (see accompanying photo) was erected on the same site. A new marble plaque is due to be unveiled on 27th April 2013. □

Margate Civic Society

www.margatecivicsociety.org.uk



Founded in 1968, the Margate Civic Society is a registered charity. It is a founder member of Civic Voice and is affiliated to both the Kent Federation of Amenity Societies and the Kent History Federation.

The Society's purpose and aims are to encourage high standards of architecture and town planning in Margate and its environs (Birchington, Westgate-on-Sea, Cliftonville, Westbrook, Garlinge, Acol, Sarre and St Nicholas-at-Wade); to stimulate public interest and care for the history and character of the area; and to encourage the preservation, development and improvement of features of general amenity and historical interest. To this end, Town Pride awards are given annually to those buildings which have been refurbished, cleaned or modified and which, in the opinion of the Society, have enhanced the appearance of the town. New high-quality buildings are also eligible for the award. The Society also vets planning applications and makes known to Thanet District Council any objections to those applications which it considers necessary.

Evening meetings are held monthly between October and May at the Walpole Bay Hotel, Fifth Avenue, Cliftonville. The lectures, mostly illustrated with slides, are interesting and of local interest; they are also varied in their appeal. A few afternoon meetings are sometimes also held. A Newsletter is published four times a year.

Committee for 2012/13:

President: Mr Ralph Handscomb

14 Eastern Esplanade, Cliftonville, Margate CT9 3AB (Tel: 01843 293169) (e-mail: handscomb@talktalk.net)

Chairman: Mrs Pamela Pople

Hurston Cottage, Sloe Lane, Westwood, Margate CT9 4DX (Tel: 01843 221689) (e-mail: pamela@hurstoncottage.co.uk)

Vice-Chairman: Mr Harry Scobie

45 Cornwall Gardens, Cliftonville, Margate CT9 2JQ (Tel: 01843 291298) (e-mail: harryscobie@hotmail.com)

Secretary: Mr Geoff Orton, 25 Norman Road, Westgate-on-Sea CT8 8RR (Tel: 01843 835085)

(e-mail: geoff.orton@tesco.net)

Treasurer: Mr Mike Wilton

30 Barrington Crescent, Birchington CT7 9DF (Tel: 01843 844717) (e-mail: wilton@btinternet.com)

Membership Secretary: Mrs Lynda Smith

5 Addington Square, Margate CT9 1NN (Tel: 01843 228174) (e-mail: lyndylou_smith@talktalk.net)

Newsletter Editor: Mr James Brazier

"The Moorings", 25 Barnes Avenue, Westbrook, Margate CT9 5EQ (Tel: 01843 298038) (e-mail: jasbrazier@talktalk.net)

Planning and Conservation issues: Mr Mike Thompson,

7 Seymour Avenue, Westbrook, Margate CT9 5HT (Tel: 01843 832834)

(e-mail: mike.thompson6565@btinternet.com)

If you are interested in joining our Society, please fill in the enrolment form below:

✂

Enrolment/Renewal Form

I enclose the sum of £

Name:

Address:

Tel: **e-mail:**

Subscription rates for 2012/13:

	Individual	Joint	Junior (under 18)	Corporate
Annual (Paper Newsletter*)	£9.00	£13.00	£2.00	—
Annual (Electronic Newsletter#)	£8.00	£12.00	£1.00	£15.00
Life Membership	£75.00	£100.00	—	—

and send it to the Membership Secretary, Mrs Lynda Smith, 5 Addington Square, Margate CT9 1NN

* A Paper Newsletter means that a black-and-white printed copy of the Newsletter will be delivered to you

Electronic Newsletter means you will have a full-colour copy e-mailed to you which you can view on screen or print