

Margate Civic Society

(Founded 1968)
Registered Charity No. 257884



Winter 2007
Newsletter
Issue No. 345

"The love of our town leads us"

President: Mr Ralph Handscomb

Chairman: Mr Steve Villette

A Happy New Year to all our members. By the time this newsletter is distributed, last Christmas will have become another memory – hopefully, one that is full of joy.

Traditionally, Christmas is a time of looking back over the last year and so it is appropriate that this issue contains reports on all of the Society's meetings during 2006 held at The Walpole Bay Hotel. These reports, which were each sent to the editors of both the *Isle of Thanet Gazette* and *Thanet Extra* after each meeting, will remind those members who attended the meetings of just how interesting the talks were and will also give a flavour of our meetings to those members who have yet to attend them. Certainly, Ralph Handscomb is to be congratulated on consistently finding such good speakers for our meetings over many years. Very sincere thanks are also expressed to the editors of those local newspapers for very kindly publishing those reports. The local press often comes in for much criticism but, as a community, we would be poorer without it.

Thanet District Council is also subject to much criticism – sometimes deserved; sometimes not – but credit must be given to the Council for its positive action on two matters which both occurred in the run-up to Christmas. Firstly, at its meeting on 14th December, the Council approved the proposed extension of the Westgate-on-Sea Conservation Area. About twenty members of the public from Westgate attended that meeting and were delighted when all councillors voted unanimously in favour of the proposal. Coming so soon after the listing of *Ellingham* (an important 'Queen Anne revival' house off St Mildred's Road) as a Grade II building, the extension of the conservation area is very good news for Westgate and should ensure that the town will retain its unique character. Much credit must also go to council-officers Nick Dermott and Louise Dandy for their successful efforts in achieving the extension of the conservation area.

The other matter for which TDC deserves credit was the opening of the Tudor House for members of the public to experience a traditional Tudor Christmas. The Old House was decorated with native evergreens such as holly, yew, ivy and mistletoe. The tables were covered with Tudor-style tapestries, there were many traditional sweets on display and visitors could buy traditional arts and crafts objects. It was lovely to see the Old House looking so charming and to see so many of the public – particularly the children – clearly enjoying their visit to the Old House. Much credit must be extended to Heather Sawney, TDC's recently-appointed Arts Development Officer, for making all the arrangements and for putting on such a marvellous display. □

James Brazier, Newsletter Editor

Welcome to new members

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

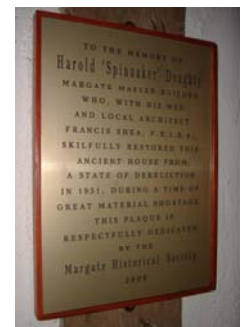
Miss L. Foster
The Jordan Family
Jim & Mrs Pamela Mills
Mr & Mrs Reynolds
Mrs Gay Schofield
Ms Adrienne Simons
Mrs Joyce Smith
Robert & Ann Smith
Chris & Gillian Whittingham

Many thanks also to those members who have given donations to the Society – always very much appreciated. □

Pat Snow
Membership Secretary

New Plaque unveiled at the Tudor House

During the Christmas opening of the Tudor House, Mrs Barbara Doughty, widow of the late Harold Doughty, unveiled a plaque on the wall inside the Tudor House on Saturday, 16th December.



The plaque reads:

TO THE MEMORY OF
Harold 'Spinnaker' Doughty
MARGATE MASTER BUILDER
WHO, WITH HIS MEN
AND LOCAL ARCHITECT
FRANCIS SHEA F.R.I.B.A.,
SKILFULLY RESTORED THIS
ANCIENT HOUSE FROM
A STATE OF DERELICTION
IN 1951, DURING A TIME OF
GREAT MATERIAL SHORTAGE.

THIS PLAQUE IS
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
BY THE
Margate Historical Society
2006

Correspondence

The article in the last issue of the newsletter on Margate's Art Deco cinemas invited members to send in their memories of the long-gone Regal and Astoria cinemas. A number of readers responded to that invitation. Those responses included the following two letters:

From Mrs Audrey E. Price (living at Bushey Heath, Hertfordshire)

I have just received the Civic Society newsletter which I think is greatly improved in layout and content. I especially enjoyed the article on the Art Deco cinemas, the Regal having special memories for me.

As requested, I am enclosing my account of events as I remember them and hope it will be of interest to you. It is rather unusual to say the least!

I look forward to visiting Margate every year and seeing my favourite places. I would just mention that my husband John Brinton Price was the great grandson of David Price FRCS (doctor and friend of J. M. W. Turner RA) of Hoopers Hill House, Margate.

I must say the passing of Alan Kay – our old friend from our student days – was such a shock. I had visited him at his son's house only recently.

Enclosure from Mrs Price:

My first memory of the Regal Cinema was of the most exciting Saturday-morning film-shows for the children – the high-spot of the week for me. Jack Hulbert and *The Perils of Pauline* are the only ones I remember.

Many years later on 24th August 1940 during an air-raid, we were obliged to hold our wedding reception at the Regal Cinema restaurant, that being the only venue suitable as all hotels and guest-houses were occupied by troops from all over the world – but mainly Canadians and Poles – as an invasion by the German forces was expected. The restaurant had a huge expanse of glass and, for safety reasons, we had to keep our guests at the back of the restaurant and hope for the best. Earlier on that day, we were married at Holy Trinity Church which was rather traumatic, so much so that the Revd Cowell stopped the wedding service to ask whether we wished to carry on as gunfire was getting very loud. Needless to say, we did proceed!

The air-raid siren went off about 9 a.m. that day, as I remember, and my mother asked me to go to the newsagent on Trinity Hill but, on the way back, I was terrified to hear and see a German Stuka flying just above my head at roof-top level. I can still see those black crosses on the aircraft.

That's not quite the end of the story – we left for our honeymoon at a London hotel but, unfortunately, this was the first night of the bombing of London and we spent that night in the hotel's wine-cellars! We made our escape to the Lake District!

Incidentally, my husband was in the RAF and was training, in a sleepy Wiltshire village, to be a rear-gunner and he was a bit concerned to find himself in the front-line of war activity!

From Mrs Joan L. Jarrett

My friend (Mrs H. Jennings) passes your magazine on to me and your recent article about the Regal Cinema was of great interest. Way back in 1937, I worked there as an usherette and the article brought back a lot of happy memories. A Mr R. Foort was the manager and, at all times, was to be seen wearing evening dress. There was also an under-manager and a head commissionaire who was always just inside the main entrance-doors and he would always open these doors for you. The second commissionaire was in the main foyer and he would open the door for you to enter the auditorium, then the usherette would show you to your seat. You really did get to know all the regulars, especially the ones in the back seats. The uniforms we wore were a pleasant shade of green and light grey. The hats were a bit of a joke and it was just like wearing a large floppy pancake. Also on the staff were two page-boys who did various little jobs but I am sure it must have been very boring for them most of the time.

There were three shows daily: matinee and two shows in the evening. During these evening shows the lovely Compton organ would rise up from below the stage and the organist would give a recital for about fifteen minutes, during which time the lights would come on and the ice-cream girls would appear.

The restaurant on the first floor had a view right across Cecil Square and a good viewing point to see all the people coming and going. At that time, Cecil Square consisted mainly of offices but also the lovely Hippodrome theatre.

I would just like to add that your magazine has now arrived in Fremantle, Western Australia. My son, who is a sports and travel writer, phoned to say that he found it most interesting and it brought back memories of when he used to go to the Saturday-morning shows for children at Dreamland Cinema. □

Cliftonville Farmers' Market wins prestigious award

Our congratulations to Cliftonville Residents' Association for winning the Best Farmer's Market in Kent award. The prize was given at the Pride of Kent Awards ceremony held in Tunbridge Wells last autumn. The event was sponsored by BBC Radio Kent and *Kent Life* magazine. Cliftonville Farmers' Market is self funded and recently celebrated its fifth anniversary. Quite an achievement for a small group of volunteers!

The Cliftonville Farmers' Market is held on the Oval Lawns, Eastern Esplanade on the last Sunday of each month from 10am to 1pm. If you haven't yet visited the market, you should give it a try. Not only is there a fine array of produce on sale, there is also a very good atmosphere which makes a visit a most enjoyable one. □

TOWN PRIDE AWARDS 2007

I am sure that most of you will have noticed some of the tremendously exciting new buildings, additions and upgrades that have been taking shape in our area during the last year. Have you been to Margate Old Town recently or through Westbrook and Cliftonville too? Have you noticed the major projects which have been undertaken?

What about the environs of Margate covered by the Civic Society – is nothing happening there? Until a year or so ago, Westgate and Birchington – for example – attracted a good share of the prizes but, just lately, we have received hardly any nominations.

Just a reminder that to qualify for a Town Pride nomination all that is necessary is to be a project which, in your opinion, has enhanced the built environment of our area. All nominations will be judged in early spring 2007 and the winners will receive their awards at our meeting in May when the event is usually very well covered by the local media. To demonstrate how much we value all your efforts, all qualifying nominations will be mentioned at the Awards Ceremony. The nominations don't always have to be grand projects, indeed winners in the past have included a set of railings and a garden but they should be a visual enhancement.

Go out on a sunny day and have a good look around to see what you can find to boost the image of our district. You can do your bit simply by thinking positively and making a nomination which even if it does not become a winner will demonstrate that the members of Margate Civic Society really do care for their surroundings and greatly appreciate any efforts to improve our built environment.

I hesitate to mention Town Shame nominations as that is what you seem to like best and is what attracts the most attention. Thanet District Council seems at last to be coming to grips with some of our long-term eyesores with strong action like compulsory purchase orders. I am sure that we all wish them well.

Whatever you decide to nominate – Town Pride or Town Shame – just pass your idea on to me (see back page for my address) or via any Committee member. The closing date for nominations is the end of February 2007.

Happy hunting. I look forward with eager anticipation to hearing from you. □

Tony Snow, Hon Secretary

Turner Contemporary Talks

The theme of Turner Contemporary's latest *Designed for You* programme of talks is coastal architecture which should appeal particularly to our members. Details of the first four talks are shown on page 11 of this newsletter. If you haven't yet attended any of the first-rate talks put on by Turner Contemporary at the Margate Media Centre, you really ought to put these dates in your diary. You will not be disappointed and admission is free! □

Don't forget to watch out for the Rock Doc Walks in 2007!



Dr Alisdair Bruce (the 'Rock Doc') pointing out the horizontal layer of flint at Pegwell Bay on the Rock Doc Walk – December 2006

On a bright Sunday morning in early December, local geologist Dr Alisdair Bruce led a Rock Doc Walk around Pegwell Bay. During the two-hour walk, Dr Bruce explained the geological importance of the Thanet coastline as well as drawing attention to the range of edible plants that can be found in abundance at Pegwell Bay. It was good to see a number of Margate Civic Society members on the December walk and particularly to see a number of children also clearly enjoying the walk. Don't be put off by the two hours. There was relatively little walking involved although strong footwear is strongly recommended. Those of us who attended the talk he gave in February 2006 will be aware of the extent of Dr Bruce's knowledge of fossils in particular and of geology in general. These walks, which take place in different locations around the Thanet coastline, are organized by Thanet Coast Project. Civic Society members are strongly recommended to watch out for the dates for walks in 2007 and to put their names down for them. You will not be disappointed and the walks are also free! □



Dr Alisdair Bruce leading the Rock Doc Walk at Pegwell Bay – December 2006

Reports of our Meetings held in 2006

February

Seventy members and guests attended our February meeting to hear Dr Alisdair Bruce give a most interesting and thought-provoking talk on Coast Erosion in Thanet. The speaker informed those present that we are currently in what is known in geological terms as 'ice-house conditions' notwithstanding today's concern regarding global warming and its unknown consequences on the future of our planet. It was perhaps appropriate that arrangements had been made for this talk to be given in February during a particularly cold spell. However, members and guests were undeterred by the weather and knew that they would receive a very warm welcome at the Walpole Bay Hotel where we hold our meetings. They were not disappointed. Dr Bruce's talk looked at the ever-changing coastline around the Isle of Thanet due to the effects of erosion and was illustrated by fascinating slides of 'seastacks' at Whiteness Bay and 'keyhole caves' at Broadstairs. We were also shown slides of lengths of cliffs before the construction of promenades and sea-defence works and noted how those works had resulted in the loss of what had been most attractive cliffs. Dr Bruce also spoke about the different 'fossil zones' evident in our chalk cliffs and explained how they can be dated (within a few million years). At the end of his inspirational talk, many of those present were looking forward to the warmer weather and to making plans for walks along many of the bays featured in the talk to see for themselves much of what they had seen on the slides that evening.

March

Members enjoyed a most interesting evening at our March meeting when Michael Baker, Margate Lifeboat's Operations Manager, gave a talk on the RNLI and the Margate Branch. As an introduction to the work of the RNLI, we were shown a short video which provided an overview of the different types of in-shore lifeboats, off-shore lifeboats and even hovercraft-lifeboats in use around the country's coastline. As a voluntary organisation without Government funding, we were told that the cost of providing the national lifeboat service was £119 million last year and that the RNLI was totally dependent on voluntary donations, particularly legacies, in order to fund the service. We were also told that Margate had its first lifeboat in 1864 and that Margate's two lifeboats (one in-shore and one off-shore) had been launched a total of 41 times in 2005 bringing 50 persons ashore. Bearing in mind the rough seas when the lifeboat is launched, it was reassuring to be told that each of Margate's current lifeboats is self-righting within five seconds. At that stage, the thoughts of many of the audience turned to the nine crew members of the surfboat *Friend to all Nations* who lost their lives off the Nayland Rock in 1897 and who are commemorated by the magnificent figurative bronze statue on Margate's seafront. The talk reminded everyone of the importance of the RNLI service generally and of the

dangers which the volunteer crew members face each time our lifeboat is launched to help those in distress at sea.

April

At our April meeting, members benefited from much sound advice given by Elizabeth Gaylor from Kent Trading Standards and Peter McLaren from Kent Fire & Rescue Service. We were given an outline of the work of Kent Trading Standards and were warned about rogue traders and cowboy builders and how such doorstep criminals exploit the vulnerable members of our community, particularly the elderly. The sound advice to be ever on one's guard against tricksters was followed by constructive advice from Peter McLaren on how to prevent accidents in the home and particularly those accidents which call upon the Kent Fire & Rescue Service, as most serious accidents do. We were told about the dangers of electrical faults and the need to check our smoke-alarm batteries every week. The whole evening was most informative and everyone went away from it with a significantly increased awareness of the many risks we face in our own homes every day. Some members went home and checked their smoke alarms only to discover that the batteries had expired and that, had there been a fire in their homes, they would not have had a smoke alarm to warn them!

May

At our May meeting, the results of the judging for the 2006 Town Pride Awards were announced. This year, nominations had been received from Society members for five properties in Margate to be considered for Town Pride Awards following their recent renovation/improvement. The works to each of the properties nominated for Town Pride Awards were considered to have enhanced the built environment of Margate with works to each of the properties having been carried out to a very high standard. This had made the judging for the Society's prestigious annual awards more difficult. However, two properties in particular attracted high marks from the judges and both were in Cliftonville – Fairfield Mansions in Fifth Avenue and Walpole Heights in Third Avenue: each was awarded a Town Pride Plaque and Certificate. A third property – 4-5 Lombard Street and the adjoining building at 25 Hawley Street in Margate Old Town – also attracted a good number of marks and was awarded a Commendation Certificate. The owners of these three properties attended the meeting and were presented with their awards by our President, Ralph Handscomb. Whilst only five properties had been nominated for Town Pride Awards, a higher number of other properties had been nominated for Town Shame: one being the derelict former Illano clothing factory in King Street which, it was reported at the meeting, had caught alight only three days earlier. Properties such as this were considered to be a disgrace to the town but there are signs that the derelict factory and some of the other properties named for this year's Town Shaming will see improvements in the coming year.

Following the presentation of the awards, members received a most interesting talk by Thanet District Council's Conservation Architect, Nick Dermott on

Margate Old Town. We were reminded of the extent of the many improvements carried out to properties in the Old Town over the last two decades and of the financial grants awarded by the Council to facilitate those improvements. The talk complemented the Town Pride Awards and the speaker was thanked for his major contribution towards the successful enhancement of many fine buildings throughout Thanet.

October

The society held its first meeting of their 2006/07 programme on 5th October. After a short Annual General Meeting, at which the committee was re-elected unopposed for another year, Chief Superintendent Peter West, Area Commander for the new Canterbury and Thanet Area, Kent Police, addressed the meeting. He gave a most interesting presentation on the future of policing in Margate and the Thanet towns following the recent restructuring of Kent Police under six Area Commanders (there were previously nine). He also explained the need for the changes that have been made by Kent Police in order to face the challenges of the future in dealing with crime. The meeting welcomed the news that the numbers of PCSOs (Police Community Security Officers) throughout Kent were to be increased and hopes were expressed that the presence of these additional PCSOs would successfully deter much of the anti-social behaviour which is all too evident throughout much of Thanet. Chief Superintendent West spoke of the gang warfare which has erupted in parts of Thanet and how fights between gangs are organised using mobile phones as a means of rapid communication. These gangs often descend on towns using the railway and are often visitors from towns along the north Kent railway line. Only time will tell whether the latest restructuring of Kent Police will succeed in their fight against crime and the employment of extra PCSOs will succeed in suppressing the growing anti-social behaviour by a minority of the public. Concern was also expressed about the ubiquitous graffiti and the litter which detracts so much from the beauty of the town. It was felt that much of the problem was attributable to alcohol and drug abuse.

November

At our meeting in November, we had a most interesting talk on the Thanet Coast Project given by its Manager, Tony Child. The Thanet Coast Project is now in its sixth year and, during that time, has expanded its activities into many areas involving the conservation of our important coast. Indeed, we learnt that the Thanet Coast Special Area Conservation, with its chalk reef and caves as well as its sand and mud-flats, had European designation status. The project's Thanet Coastal Warden Scheme had attracted a good number of volunteers to act as its 'eyes and ears' as well as organising beach-clearing operations for those foreshore areas not covered by the Council's own beach-clearing work. The project had also organised a number of sea-shore safaris which had been well attended by children and the foreshore walks led by Dr Alisdair Bruce (the 'Rock Doc') had also been a great success. All aspects of

nature, including bird migration, were covered by the talk and much interest was shown in the turnstones which migrate each year from Baffin Island in Canada to stretches of coastline particularly between Westgate and Margate. Indeed, research has revealed that the turnstones return to the same bay each year. A management scheme review of the project is currently under way covering the next six years for which Lottery funding will, hopefully, be forthcoming.

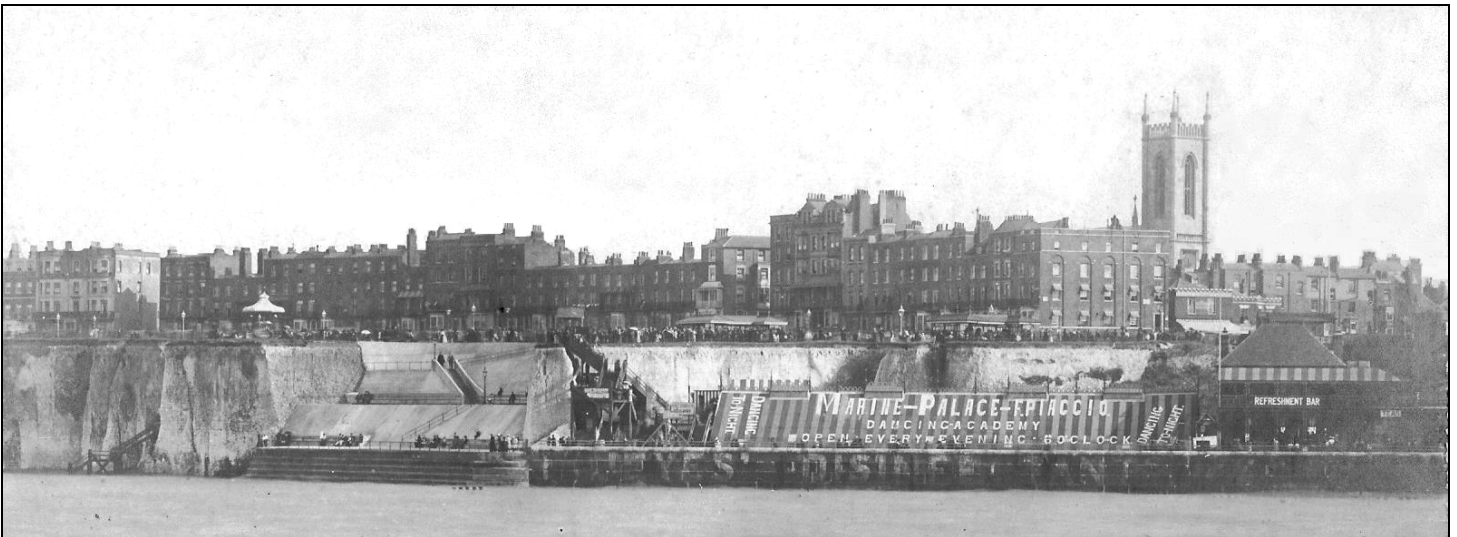
December

At our meeting in December, we were given a most interesting illustrated-talk by Mick Tomlinson on Dreamland: past and present. The speaker needed no introduction as his long involvement with Dreamland Amusement Park and his love of the park and its many rides over the years is known throughout the town. Mick told us that, on leaving school, he had trained as an electrician but shortly after he had obtained his qualification, he went to work for Dreamland in 1969 and had subsequently spent most of his working life there. His first job there was painting scenes along the track of the Ghost Train. But before working at Dreamland, Mick in the 1960s had built a model of Dreamland. Whilst he still has a number of his original models of some of the rides; other models had not survived his moving house and other events during the last 40 years. However, Mick did bring along to the meeting some of his more recent working models which delighted the audience.

Mick told us that the first ride at Dreamland was the scenic railway which opened on 3rd July 1920. Interestingly, it was suggested that the scenic railway might have been second-hand. Today, it is a Grade II listed building and one of Margate's treasures. We also learnt that an earlier scenic railway had been opened at Melbourne in 1911 and that it was also still operating. Sadly, one of Dreamland's most popular rides – the Caterpillar – is no longer with us. It came to Dreamland from America in 1922 and John Henry Iles held the European rights for many years. Another ride which brought back many memories for many was the River Caves, sometimes known as 'The Tubs'. Mick told us that this ride had been brought to Margate from Wembley after the British Empire Exhibition of 1924-25 had closed. We were told of the miniature railway that had run for many years and learnt that one of its original locomotives was still in existence locally.

Of course, 'Lord' George Sanger featured in the talk and Mick told us that three of the original cages used by the circus proprietor in his menagerie at Margate are still *in situ* at Dreamland. What was also not known by many in the audience was that the former Garden Café at Dreamland had been housed in a once-time airship shed. However, for most, the talk brought back many happy memories of Dreamland in its hey-day with mention of the Queen Mary building, the Magic Garden and the good-old fireworks every Thursday evening evoking much response from those present. Mick's talk was one of pure nostalgia for many and much enjoyed by everyone in the audience. □

THE OLD AND THE NEW MEET AT THE RENDEZVOUS



The photograph of the Marine Palace recently donated to Margate Museum by Arnold Schwartzman

Within three weeks last October, two entirely unrelated events took place locally and it was felt that they could be linked through an article in our newsletter. One relates to Margate's past: the other to its future. But both relate to that stretch of land between Fort Point and Droit House: that area was known as the Rendezvous which was once an important commercial area of our town.

The first of these two events took place on 11th October when representatives from David Chipperfield Architects – the design team appointed by Kent County Council to produce plans for the Turner Contemporary art gallery – gave a presentation to the public at the Media Centre in King Street (formerly Lloyds Bank). Around 80 members of the public attended that meeting. Whilst no architectural plans of the new building were revealed, the audience was informed by the architects that the building would be located between the lifeboat-station and Droit House. Subsequent to that meeting, there has been speculation that the actual site of the new building will be somewhere between the lifeboat-station and Fort Point, i.e. the other side of the lifeboat-station. However, what was made quite clear at the public meeting was that there was no KCC money available to re-site the lifeboat station! No doubt there will be further discussion on this point leading, one fears, to yet further delay on this project. In the meantime, do not be surprised if the total estimated cost of the proposed Turner Contemporary building is increased and the estimated completion date is extended yet again. There does appear to be a total commitment by KCC to see the project through to completion but will the end product ever live up to the high expectations which we were previously promised and, more importantly, will the Turner Contemporary be successful in acting as the catalyst in putting Margate back on the map and provide the much needed revitalization our town so desperately needs? Only time will tell.

The second event to report is more tangible than the recent developments on the Turner Contemporary. Whilst not directly related to J. M. W. Turner, it does relate to the Rendezvous site. Sent from the other side of the world, an unsolicited package was safely delivered to Margate Museum containing two original old photographs which had been kindly donated to the Museum. They had been sent by Arnold Schwartzman OBE, now a resident of Los Angeles, California (see the following article in this newsletter). One photograph showed the Marine Palace and the other showed the Broadstairs lifeboat *Christopher Waud Bradford*: both date from around 1895. The photograph of the Marine Palace shows the name F. Piaggio painted on the roof of the building. Frank Piaggio leased the Marine Palace from 1895 and, judging by the signwriting shown in the photograph, it would seem likely that the photograph was taken during his first summer season. The other photograph showed the Broadstairs lifeboat at the end of its wooden launching ramp. This lifeboat has been kindly identified by Chris Sandwell as being the *Christopher Waud Bradford*, a 39-foot self-righting lifeboat, which was in service at Broadstairs from 1888 to 1896.



The photograph of the Broadstairs lifeboat Christopher Waud Bradford recently donated to Margate Museum by Arnold Schwartzman

The photograph (c. 1895) of the Marine Palace donated by Arnold Schwartzman was taken from about half-way along the Jetty and shows very clearly the Fort Bandstand, the Fort Steps leading to the Marine Palace, the roof of part of the Marine Palace with the wording MARINE-PALACE - F. PIAGGIO on the top row, DANCING ACADEMY on the middle row and OPEN EVERY EVENING - 8 O'CLOCK' on the bottom row. The REFRESHMENT BAR can also be seen as can Holy Trinity Church and the large number of people enjoying themselves. The 600-foot sea-wall which was built circa 1874 can also be seen. The sea-wall enclosed three acres which had been reclaimed from the sea and given over solely to public entertainment. It is just possible to read the wording along the front of the sea-wall advertising JEYES' DISINFECTANT: this advertisement was to be seen by those on the Jetty rather than those visiting the Marine Palace. It was perhaps a coincidence that the town sewer discharge into the sea was just a few hundred feet opposite this advertisement! This most interesting photograph is one that the Museum did not have previously (nor was it known to any of the staff or volunteers at the Museum) and, therefore, makes an important addition to its collection of pictures of Old Margate. It is important that pictures such as this one are offered to the Museum for safekeeping and enjoyment by others before they become lost for ever.

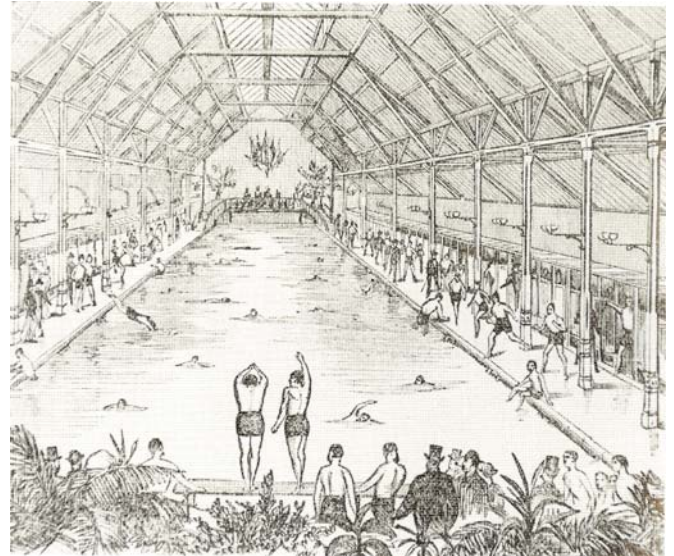


The above photograph shows the debris after the Great Storm on 29th November 1897 when the Marine Palace was wrecked. Although the sea wall appears from this photograph to be intact, it was breached in a number of places. This photograph was taken by Margate photographer G. E. Houghton: his studio was in Fort Road. This storm occurred just four days before the loss of life of nine members of the crew of the surf-boat *Friend to all Nations* when it capsized off the Nayland Rocks resulting in the whole town going into mourning.

The Marine Palace was opened in 1884. Ten years earlier, an aquarium had been built on the three-acre site. It is believed that the Margate Aquarium Company was wound up in 1877. In 1879, a skating rink was operating on the site. There was also a switchback railway on the site and many sideshows. It can be seen that the whole of that area was used for amusements and was a rival to Sanger's Hall by the Sea and his zoological gardens (later to become Dreamland).

The Great Storm of 1897 destroyed the Marine Palace, the switchback railway, the sideshows and the bridge linking the Jetty to Bankside. After the storm, the site was

used for a variety of purposes. There were ambitious plans for a Margate Kursaal to be built similar to the then-famous Kursaal at Southend-on-Sea but they came to nothing. For nearly twenty years, the site was an eyesore. In 1915, the site became known as the Rendezvous when the Rendezvous Grand Circus was staged there and that name is still used today – more than 90 years later. Margate Corporation eventually purchased the site in 1923 and used it for a number of years as a coach park. Today, much of the site is used as a car park but its surface is in a sad state and is rarely used to any extent.



There were two swimming baths inside the Marine Palace. This picture shows the men's baths: there were separate baths for ladies. The roofs were made from corrugated metal sheeting. The water was changed with every tide



This Mauchlinware souvenir money-box features a transfer view of the Marine Palace and dates from the mid-1890s

Just a short distance away from where the Marine Palace once stood was the home of Mrs Sophia Booth where Turner stayed as a lodger during 1827-38. The decision to locate the proposed Turner Contemporary art gallery on the Rendezvous site has generated much interest in the exact location of Mrs Booth's house. Let's us hope that, when the new gallery is built, it has a longer life than that which the ill-fated Marine Palace had!

The kind assistance of Margate Museum staff with this article is gratefully acknowledged. □

Mrs Booth's house where Turner stayed as a lodger 1827-38



The previous article in this newsletter featured the now long-gone Marine Palace. Just a short distance from the site of the Marine Palace is the site of Mrs Booth's lodging-house where J. M. W. Turner stayed as a lodger during 1827-38. Mrs Booth's house (Harbour House) is marked with a 'x' in the middle photograph. The protruding chalk cliff nearest Mrs Booth's house is roughly where the lifeboat-station now stands. The large house between the cliff and Harbour House was the Custom House. The kind assistance of David Hannaford at Margate Library in locating these pictures is gratefully acknowledged. □

Arnold Schwartzman OBE

In his covering letter sent with the two photographs referred to in the separate article in this newsletter, Arnold Schwartzman simply wrote that, as a nine-year old, he had attended Holy Trinity School and that, as a student, he had purchased the two photographs from 'the old junk shop opposite the Town Hall'. He didn't give any indications of when either of those took place but it was deduced that the old junk shop he referred to was that run for many years after the Second World War by Dr Frank Horvath who was an émigré from eastern Europe and who is still remembered fondly by many older Margatonians.

An exchange of e-mails between Margate Museum and Arnold Schwartzman supplemented by the Internet elicited further details of the donor of the two photographs. Born in London in 1937, his parents had the Majestic Hotel at 12 Lewis Crescent, Cliftonville for many years after the Second World War. He attended Holy Trinity School in 1946 and, in 1947, having failed his 11-plus examination, went on to King Ethelbert's Secondary Modern School at Birchington for four years before attending the Thanet School of Art and Crafts from 1951 to 1953 before then going on to study graphic art at the Canterbury College of Art. After establishing himself as a successful graphic designer in British television, he moved to Hollywood, California in 1978 where he has made a number of films including the Academy Award winning film *Genocide* (1981). In 1982, he was appointed Director of Design for the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. He is the author of several books on design and, in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2002, he was awarded the Order of the British Empire for services to the British film industry. Margate should, indeed, be proud of Arnold Schwartzman's achievements as a successful film-maker, designer and author. □

Editor's announcements

Owing to pressure on space in this issue of the newsletter, both the Heritage Quiz and the previously-announced article on Frog Hill have had to be held over until the next issue. □

Early in 2006, the Society made application to English Heritage for the former Margate Ambulance Corps building in Fort Road to be listed as a building of historic or architectural interest. Whilst that application was not successful, the developers of the adjoining site did successfully incorporate the façade of the Ambulance Corps building into their new building and very good it looks too! □

The Society hopes to be able to launch its website shortly in the New Year. An announcement will be made at one of our monthly meetings when that launch becomes imminent. □

St John's Church, Margate

Restoration Project

Sunday, 30th July 2006 was a special day in the life of St John the Baptist, the Parish Church of Margate. During the 10.30 family Eucharist, the church community, led by the vicar, the Revd Brian Sharp, held the celebration and dedication of the completion of Phase I of the Church Restoration Project. A Christian place of worship has existed on the site of the present church since around 1050 AD and a description of how the present building evolved into being is to be found in Robin Colyer's booklet *A Short Guide to Margate Parish Church; Past, Present and Future*. Within the booklet there is a description of the vision for the church to evolve to accommodate the needs of a 21st century worshipping community.

To achieve this vision has been a long and arduous road. An enormous effort by the church community has been put into raising the £275,000 required and many good ideas and talents have come to the fore. A number of the teak pews were sold for use as seating, or the wood was made into a variety of items by some artistic church members. There has also been a lot of generosity shown by members of the wider community to contribute to this project.

In January, the builders moved in and the sound of the hammer blows resonated throughout the building. The church community was able to watch the developments taking place behind the 'site' barrier as the skills of the builders and craftsmen were put into good effect and the whole project was overseen by the church architect, Mike Duncan. Every Saturday morning at 10am there have been – and still are – prayers said asking for God's guidance for the project and now, of course, for the best use of the reordered church.

St John's Church is a beautiful place of worship where the ancient and modern blend well together. There is an interesting collection of hatchments within the church and also a number of memorials. Some of the latter have had to be moved during the reordering, but this has been carried out to good effect. The medieval font was dismantled and rebuilt where it can be seen more clearly. There is now a kitchen, and cloakroom facilities which ensure a comfortable welcome. There are new spaces at the back of the church and two upper gallery areas reached via a spiral staircase. The view down the nave from the upper gallery is breathtaking. Glass doors were installed on the south porch and the west door, the intention being to allow the passer-by a glimpse of God's mystery within. Sadly, within several hours of hanging the doors, most of them were destroyed by vandals. This has caused disappointment within the church community, but not to be daunted from their task of Christian outreach, the Parochial Church Council on behalf of the church community is now exploring the best way forward.



The back of the Church of St John the Baptist showing the reordering after the removal of a number of pews

In spite of the upheaval and inconvenience of the work, the very atmosphere of the building has been filled with a sense of joyful anticipation. The building is already being used in new and different ways (an art and craft exhibition was held in August) and more ideas are forthcoming. The church remains open on Mondays from 11.45 to 12.45 and is also open on Tuesday to Friday each week from 10.30 to 12.30. The St John's community will be delighted to welcome any visitors who come to see the reordering work. Any enquiries can be made to the vicar's office on telephone 223144.

Sue Waller

The Parish Church of St John the Baptist is a Grade B listed building and the oldest part of the present building dates from about 1124. The teak pews (some of which have been removed as part of the recent reordering of the church) were installed in 1875.

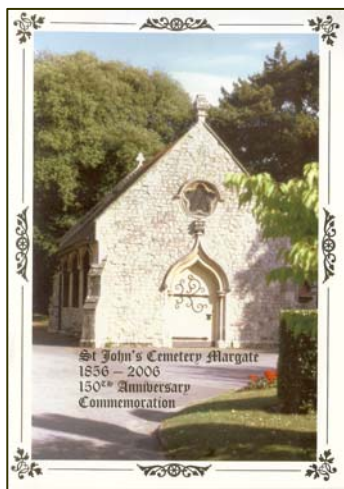


Book Reviews

St John's Cemetery Margate 1856-2006 150th Anniversary Commemoration

56pp A5 booklet produced 2006 by The Friends of Margate Cemetery at £4.00 (copies are available by post at £4.00 from Mick Twyman, 27 Addiscombe Road, Margate CT9 2SE – cheques should be made payable to Margate Historical Society)

This is a most interesting, well illustrated and well produced publication produced by The Friends of Margate Cemetery to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the opening of St John's Cemetery in Manston Road. The booklet contains fascinating biographical information on 26 graves in the cemetery and, very helpfully, contains a plan of the cemetery on which all 26 plots are marked thus enabling the visitor to locate any of the graves without major difficulty. The booklet also contains much useful information on the fauna and flora to be found in the cemetery. The Friends of Margate Cemetery are a group of volunteers who clear many of the overgrown areas in the cemetery and who maintain the planting of a number of graves for families that are unable to carry out such maintenance themselves. The organisation has been in operation for more than six years and is to be



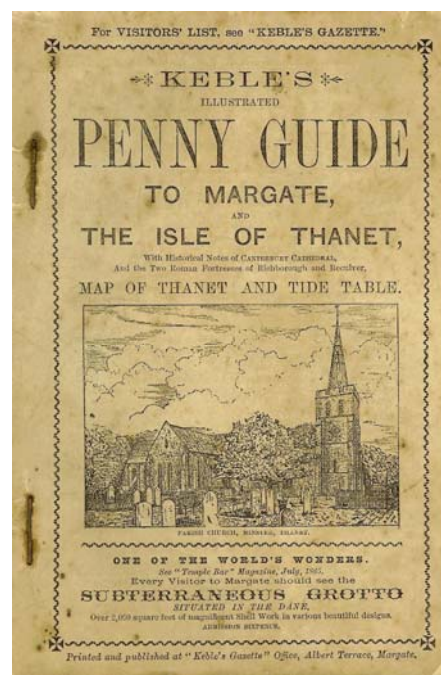
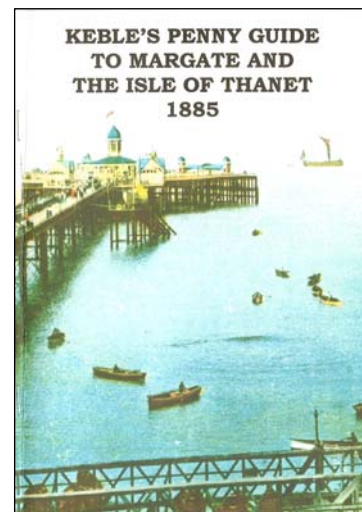
congratulated on the production of this super little booklet. It is unclear as to how the 26 graves were selected for inclusion in the booklet and, inevitably, the graves of some of Margate's notables are not included (such as Dr Arthur Rowe). Perhaps they will be included in any follow-up publication. There are also a few surprising errors which can irritate the

reader. The one which your reviewer found most irritating was the description of the magnificent imposing white marble Mazeppa horse as marking the grave of 'Lord' John Sanger. Yes, that particular John Sanger was the brother of 'Lord' George Sanger but 'Lord' John Sanger, who was also a circus proprietor (like his father), was actually the nephew of 'Lord' George Sanger. It is believed that 'Lord' John Sanger had decided to use the title of 'Lord' in competition with his uncle's more successful circus business. Whilst many members of the Sanger family are indeed buried in Margate Cemetery, 'Lord' John Sanger is not amongst them. Despite that, the booklet is a very good introduction to the cemetery and is highly recommended.

Keble's Penny Guide to Margate and the Isle of Thanet 1885 96pp sb A5 £5.99

Reprint published 2006 by Michael's Bookshop (copies are available from Margate Museum; from Michael's Bookshop, 72 King Street, Ramsgate; and from Albion Bookshop branches in Northdown Road and at Broadstairs)

Members who are familiar with the original copies of *Keble's Illustrated Penny Guides* will know just how frail such originals are after some 120 years or more and how carefully they now have to be handled. The major benefit of this reprint is that it can be used without fear of pages falling out or of bits falling off! The book contains not just information for visitors to the area but also a range of most interesting display advertisements for many businesses in the town – including of what today seems to be a huge number of colleges and boarding schools. The book is essential reading for anyone interested in the history of the town. It was first published before photographic images were reproduced in books but it contains a good number of most interesting and unusual engravings of local scenes. The photograph of Margate Jetty used on the cover of the reprint is, of course, from an Edwardian postcard. The front cover of the original Penny Guide for 1885 would be similar to that shown below which is the front cover of the 1887 Penny Guide. At £5.99, this book is highly recommended.



The front cover of Keble's Penny Guide for 1887

What's on

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

- 1st February 'Magistrates in the Community' by Samantha Collier
1st March 'Archæology in Thanet – an update' by Emma Boast
5th April 'All the Rage: Fashion of the 1920s and 1930s' by Mrs Lee Ault
Note: there is no meeting in January

Other organisations:

Turner Contemporary (talks all start at 6.00pm at the Margate Media Centre, King Street). These talks, which are open to everyone and admission is free, are recommended. Places are limited, so please book early (Tel: 280261) to avoid disappointment.

- 30th January 'Brunel: Building Coastal Communities' by Mark Horton
27th February 'Seaside Architecture and the Inter-War Cult of the Sun' by Fred Gray
20th March 'Natural Forms and Seaside Architecture' by Hugh Aldersey-Williams
24th April 'Peculiarities of Building by the Coast' by Hanif Kara, Adams Kara Taylor

Isle of Thanet Historical Society (talks all start at 7.30pm at the Roman Catholic Church Hall, Minnis Road, Birchington)

- 15th January 'The First Bungalows of Britain – Spencer Road, Birchington' by Jennie Burgess
19th February 'Dreamland and the Lido 1900-1925' by Nick Evans
19th March AGM (at 7.00pm) followed by 'The Story of Samphire Hoe' by Paul Holt
16th April 'War Memorials in Kent and East Sussex' by Peter Ewart

Thanet Branch of the Kent Family History Society (meetings start at 7.30pm for 8.00pm at Birchington Village Centre)

- 17th January 'Traditional Kent and East Sussex Trades, Crafts and Industries' by Richard Filmer
21st February 'History of the Victoria Cross and its many anomalies' by Lt-Col Mike Martin
21st March 'Was she a murderess? The story of a cousin who faced trial at Warwick Assizes in 1898' by Richard Ratcliffe

Friends of Quex (meetings start at 7.30pm in The Powell-Cotton Museum, Quex Park, Birchington)

- 18th January 'Crashing through the Canopy' by Scott Legge
15th March AGM followed by a first viewing of a special exhibition celebrating 'A life of Service: Christopher Powell-Cotton – a tribute'

Useful telephone numbers:

Organisation	Phone No.	Contact name/Notes
Margate Museum, The Old Town Hall, Market Place	231213	Bob Bradley, Curator
Margate Public Library – Local Studies Collection	223626	Tuesdays 2.00pm to 6.00pm, Fridays 2.00pm to 6.00pm and the first Saturday each month
Birchington Heritage Trust Museum, Birchington Library	846502	Monday mornings only, 9.30 to 12. 00
Birchington Parish Archivist	842988	Jennie Burgess
Margate Historical Society	227574	Mick Twyman, Secretary
Isle of Thanet Historical Society	835587	Barry Hopper, Chairman
Isle of Thanet Archaeological Society	07906 360725	Val Robbins, Secretary
Isle of Thanet Geographical Association	863110	-
Kent Family History Society (Thanet Branch)	842933	Cliff Cole
Draper's Windmill Trust	226227	David Keep, Chairman
Margate Lifeboat Fund-Raising Committee	832846	Laurie Walton, Treasurer
Friends of Margate Cemetery Trust	230274	Vera Jenkins
Friends of Quex	842040	Edna Elven, Membership Secretary
Friends of the Theatre Royal Margate	293397	David Rankin, Secretary
Friends of Westgate Pavilion	226542	Mike Emery, Secretary
Turner Contemporary	280261	Victoria Pomery, Director
The Powell-Cotton Museum, Quex House, Birchington	842168	-
The Shell Grotto, Grotto Hill, Margate	220008	Sarah Vickery
Manston Spitfire & Hurricane Museum	821940	-
RAF Manston History Museum	825224	-
Cliftonville Residents' Association	226033	Keith Chadband, Chairman
Westgate & Westbrook Residents' Association	831474	Norman Smith, Treasurer
Birchington Residents' Association	843594	Roger D. Walford



Founded in 1968, the Margate Civic Society is a registered charity and is registered with the Civic Trust. It is also 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 2006/07:

- President:** Mr Ralph Handscomb
14 Eastern Esplanade, Cliftonville, Margate CT9 3AB (Tel: 293169)
- Chairman:** Mr Steve Villette
29 The Ridgeway, Cliftonville, Margate CT9 2TL (Tel: 221250)
- Vice-Chairman:** Mr Harry Scobie
45 Cornwall Gardens, Cliftonville, Margate CT9 2JG (Tel:291298)
- Secretary:** Mr Tony Snow
34 Royal Esplanade, Westbrook, Margate CT9 5EG (Tel: 221838)
- Treasurer:** Mrs Phil Johnson MBE
14 Sherwood Court, Dent-de-Lion Road, Westgate-on-Sea CT8 8NU (Tel: 831469)
- Membership Secretary:** Mrs Pat Snow
34 Royal Esplanade, Westbrook, Margate CT9 5EG (Tel: 221838)
- Newsletter Editor:** Mr James Brazier
"The Moorings", 25 Barnes Avenue, Westbrook, Margate CT9 5EQ (Tel: 298038)
- Other Committee Members:**
Mr Jack Pilcher, 7 Queen Bertha's Avenue, Birchington CT7 9BH (Tel: 833767)
Mr Garry Cowans, Flat 3, 21 Gordon Road, Cliftonville, Margate (Tel: 221938)
Mrs Margaret Main, 32 Gordon Road, Cliftonville, Margate CT9 2DN
Mrs Daphne Rowley, "Spring Cottage", 11 Pembroke Avenue, Westbrook, Margate
Mr Peter Blore, 29 Yoakley Square, Margate CT9 4BA (Tel: 291778)

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

Enrolment Form

I enclose the sum of £

Name:
Address:
Tel:

Subscription rates for 2006/07:

	Individual	Joint	Junior (under 18)	Corporate
Annual	£5.00	£8.00	50p	£10.00
Life Membership	£40.00	£60.00	-	-

and send it to the Membership Secretary (Mrs Pat Snow), 34 Royal Esplanade, Westbrook, Margate CT9 5EG