

# Margate Civic Society

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

**WINTER 2020 NEWSLETTER  
ISSUE NO. 401**

## Message from our President:

James: Thank you for the last fifteen years as editor of the brilliant newsletter - always full of interesting articles and useful information, enjoyed by so many members. I am sure you will be missed by all - thank you again.

Sally: I hope you realise that you have a very difficult act to follow. Thank you for taking up the challenge and we will all help you in any way we are able.

Wishing all our members a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

## **Ralph Handscomb**

Thank you Ralph for your kind words and also everyone who has wished me luck with editorship of this newsletter. I know James is the hardest act to follow and we all will try our best to live up to his exacting standards.

I would like to thank everyone who sent in their memories of Christmases and winters in this area, especially recollections of some of the coldest times in 1947 and 1963. They were fascinating to read.

Who would have thought that when we gathered at the Walpole Hotel in February 2020, we would not meet again for the rest of the year. I really hope that 2021 will see Covid-19 on the retreat and bring opportunities for us all to meet again.

With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Sally Whitworth - Editor

## **Margate's New Blue Plaque**

Elsewhere in this edition of the Newsletter is a typically informative and comprehensive article by James Brazier about the Revd David Railton MA MC, originator of the idea of the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior. It may interest members to hear about the Society's work in installing a Blue Plaque at 42 Gordon Road, Cliftonville, to mark the childhood home of the Revd Railton.

Society Vice-President Robin Colyer suggested to the committee, at the end of December last year, that it would be good to install a Blue Plaque at 42 Gordon Road, as 2020 would be the centenary year of the interment of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey. At our committee meeting in February, we agreed that we should proceed with this. Unfortunately, we were overtaken by events and lockdown started before we were able to make any progress, other than an initial design of a Blue Plaque by James Brazier. Our meetings and other planned activities had to be cancelled and work on the Railton Blue Plaque project had to be postponed.

In early October, when life was apparently becoming normal again, we decided to pick up the Blue Plaque project and see if there was any chance of having the Blue Plaque installed by Armistice Day, 11<sup>th</sup> November, the actual date 100 years on of the interment in Westminster Abbey. As there was quite a lot to do, it seemed a bit of a long shot but well worth going for. As a start, Mike Thompson called at 42 Gordon Road to see the occupant. This turned out very well for us, as the occupant was the owner, Lisa Ebsworth, which made life much simpler and, even better, Lisa was immediately enthused and supportive of the project.

The next step was to agree the design of the Blue Plaque, based on James Brazier's design which he made earlier in the year. Following one or two minor changes,



*Above – the blue plaque in place*



*Above – Lisa Ebsworth with the blue plaque before installation*

this was agreed and sent off to the manufacturers, Croft Castings, of Sneatonthorpe just outside Whitby in North Yorkshire. Philip and Andrea Shardlow, who own and run Croft Castings, have made our Town Pride plaques for the last few years and are always helpful. We commissioned Philip to make the plaque on 20<sup>th</sup> October and said that we would really like it before 11<sup>th</sup> November; Philip, to his credit, agreed to this and put us at the head of the queue and, as good as his word, the plaque was delivered to Mike Thompson on 3<sup>rd</sup> November.

We were at that stage planning a formal unveiling ceremony on 11<sup>th</sup> November. Pamela had tracked down Revd David Railton's grandson, also David Railton, a QC in London and he has also been interested and supportive of what we were doing. We hoped that he would be available to unveil the plaque, along with the Mayor of Margate. Unfortunately, of course, a second lockdown started on 5<sup>th</sup> November so Plan B was called for, where we simply had the plaque installed, told the local press, and plan for a formal unveiling when we are able, possibly in Spring 2021. We had been talking to Paul Holebrook, Facilities Manager at Thanet District Council, on another matter and we mentioned having the plaque installed. Paul immediately arranged for two of his workmen to install the plaque and this was done on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November – so we made the 11<sup>th</sup> November deadline after all.

We in the Society are pleased to be able to add a Blue Plaque to Margate's collection and to bring a greater knowledge of Revd Railton and his ideas and achievements to the community. Many were involved in this project, but special thanks are due to Robin Colyer, Lisa Ebsworth, James Brazier, Philip and Andrea Shardlow of Croft Castings and Paul Holebrook of TDC, all of whom played key roles.

**Mike Wilton**

## REPAIRS TO MARGATE JUBILEE CLOCK TOWER



Members may have noticed that the Clock Tower was encased in scaffolding for a couple of weeks in October. As the Clock Tower is close to the Society's heart and we had some enquiries about it, Mike Thompson, our Heritage and Planning man, contacted Thanet District Council to find out what was happening. Mike was put in touch with Paul Holebrook, who is TDC's Facilities Manager, and he, along with MCS Treasurer Mike Wilton, was invited to visit Paul to have a chat with him.



Paul told us that he has been with TDC about five years, previously having worked for private companies. He was born and bred in Margate and is very enthusiastic about the town, and, indeed, the whole of Thanet. Part of his job is to look after the council's heritage properties, difficult when there are so many demands on the available funds and, of course, Thanet is well-blessed with heritage.

Regarding the Clock Tower, Paul explained that the reason for the scaffolding was the repair of the clock. It had not been working for some considerable time, and Smith of Derby, the clock company who look after TDC's clocks, completely dismantled, cleaned, and reinstated the face and hands.



The actual clock movement was working satisfactorily; the problem was that the hands of the clock had jammed. Paul has sent us some photographs, taken by the Smith of Derby technicians, showing the repair work being done.

Mike Thompson has for some years expressed concern about the condition of the Clock Tower. When we were working on the reinstatement of the Time Ball, back in 2014, Mike had a look inside the tower and was very worried about the condition, particularly the huge wooden support on which the cast-iron cupola is mounted. Over the years since then, he has brought it to the attention of various TDC councillors and even Sir Roger Gale MP, but nothing much has happened until now. In particular, the lean of the mast appears to be getting greater. Paul Holebrook is aware of these problems and, subject always to his budget restrictions, is very keen to address them. We, as the Society, will do all we can to support him.



The Time Ball has been something of a disappointment to us. In the two years up to 2014, the Time Ball committee, very ably led by Lynda Smith, managed to raise almost £20,000 to restore the Time Ball to working order; it had not worked for at least a hundred years. Time Balls are rare, with only around six in England, and so the Margate one was – and is – well worth restoring.

*The four photographs above show the work being undertaken*



We commissioned the Cumbria Clock Company to restore the Time Ball and all seemed well at first, but after a very short time it was apparent that the mechanism was not keeping good time and the Time Ball was dropping before or after the correct time of 1pm. Later, it stopped functioning altogether and, regrettably, the Cumbria Clock Company was not willing or able to offer support so, for the last few years, the Time Ball has not functioned. While the technicians from Smith of Derby were mending the clock mechanism – which is quite separate from the Time Ball – they had a look at the Time Ball and reported that the cables which operate the ball had snapped. However, before they can be replaced, it is necessary to try and correct the lean on the mast, as this may have caused the wires to fail.

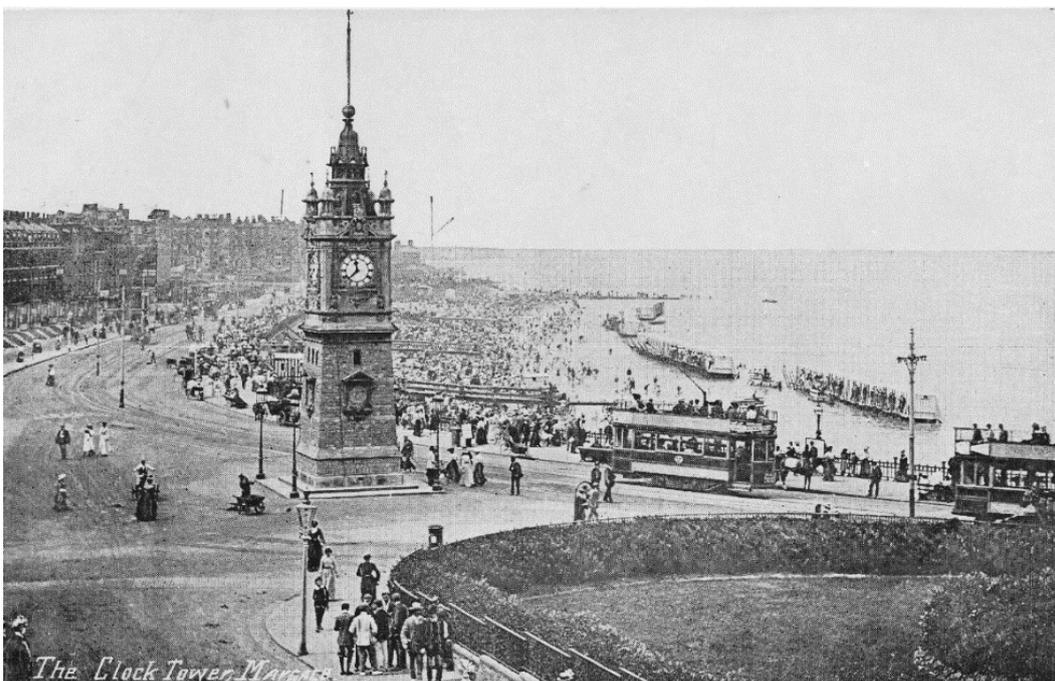


If the mast can be straightened, the Time Ball cables can be replaced and the Time Ball brought back into commission. A possible date to aim for, bearing in mind that the Clock Tower was built to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, will be the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, to be marked from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2022.



Again, we must stress that this is all subject to TDC's budgetary limitations, but we know that Paul Holebrook of TDC is enthusiastic, and we will do all we can to support him. Watch this space for updates as time goes by.

*Above - The completed work*

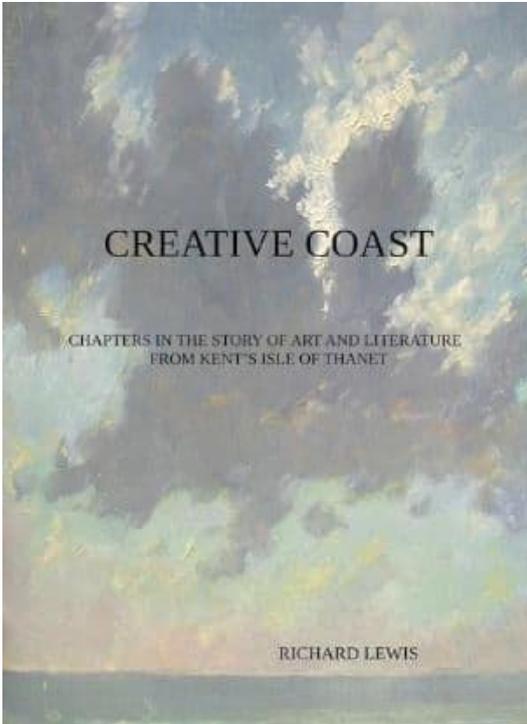


*The Clock Tower in 1913*

## **CREATIVE COAST** by Richard Lewis

*Chapters in the story of Art and Literature  
from Kent's Isle of Thanet*

### **A review by Geoff Orton**



Many members will recall Richard's compendious cultural tour at our Walpole Bay Hotel evening the other year. He has now assembled and expanded his trove in a handsomely presented, illustrated and lively written large-format paperback containing 9 chapters on Art and 9 chapters on Literature. A veritable plum pudding of a present for those who like plum puddings and a very enjoyable and informative read.

Of especial interest to Margate Civic Society is the local dominance of the Art section - with good background information on the famous, including of course Turner and Christopher Alexander (the influence of Renoir upon his painting noted) and there are others, important, but not so well known perhaps. George Morland 'a wayward genius' from Albert Terrace, or Hazardous Row as it was originally known, and later Love Lane (a Blue Plaque commemorates) who drew to pay off his tabs in the local hostelries and succumbed to the Demon in his early forties. As Richard reflects, it is intriguing to think that Morland's path could easily have crossed with that of a young Turner.

Birchington claims Solomon J Solomon of whom I had not heard but it transpires he was a Royal Academician inhabiting one of those original bungalows ('White Cliffs') and visited by his grand subjects, such was his stature. And straightaway I find that, on reading the autobiography of the publisher Frederic Warburg ('An Occupation for Gentlemen') recently, Solomon had painted the portrait of Frederic's mother.

Of course, there is also a chapter on the better-known Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Walter Sickert (whom some would have as Jack the Ripper) who taught at the infant Thanet School of Art in Hawley Square. And, naturally, the Cat Man, Louis Wain, represents Westgate-on-Sea. I see that Willesden Underground are sporting Louis Wain mosaics (his family hailed from thereabouts) – just maybe one day West Bay shelter will sport similar and add to its genteel visitor appeal.

And as for the scribbling fraternity, apart from TS Eliot and a photograph of the Albemarle, there is Dennis Wheatley of 33 Dalby Square – the property showing virtually no change over the last century. The gunmaker James Purdy was the original occupant before it became DW's prep school.

All in all, a welcome and timely embellishment of Thanet's 'Creative Cluster' and to be found at, among other places, The Margate School and the Margate Bookshop (a cosy establishment next to the Bull's Head in Market Square.) the York Street Gallery, and of course it is also available online from Amazon and Waterstones. It retails at £14.99.

**GEOFF ORTON**

## A LOOK AT WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING AT THE SUNKEN GARDENS IN WESTBROOK DURING 2020

2020 has proved a challenging year for most of us, not least small voluntary groups who have had to adapt to the new regulations and restrictions. Sunken Garden Society, in partnership with the Bumblebee Conservation Trust has continued to pull the community together during these difficult times to maintain the Sunken Gardens and provide a welcoming green space for everyone to relax and recharge in. "I finally managed to walk to the Sunken Garden yesterday for the first time since before lock down. It was so lovely to sit in the sunshine and relax" said one of our Facebook members.

Guided by Peter Hasted and the SGS committee, dedicated volunteers answered the call out for help and have done an amazing job keeping the gardens well stocked with cosmos, sunflowers, snapdragons, hollyhocks and many more all raised from seed at their own homes in greenhouses, conservatories and on windowsills.

Echium pininana provided garden visitors with a touch of the exotic and plenty of nectar rich food for the bees. The arrival of a Monkey Puzzle tree in the gardens heralded the second phase of tree planting with the Isle of Thanet Tree and Woods Initiative. ITTWI donated 6 coastal tolerant trees to the gardens in March which were battered by some unexpected late gales just as they were coming into leaf, but they are now recovering well.

As the gardens increased in popularity so did the litter, which required a rethink on garden signage to reinforce the 'take it home with you' message. Volunteer Andrew Miller produced some impactful sunflower signs and designed the new Sunken Garden sign inserts Undeterred by some challenging rubbish, local heroes from Westgate and Westbrook undertook regular litter picks. Thanet Council increased their waste collections and have promised a new larger, more appropriate, size bin for the gardens.

Bex Cartwright, Conservation Officer for the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, continues to advise and support us as part of the 'Making a Buzz for the coast' project. BBCT has supplied us with bumblebee friendly planting and donated 100 Catmint and Russian Sage plants for when our task days - socially distanced - resumed in September. 1000 crocus bulbs were acquired which all had to be planted during the 2nd lockdown - again socially distanced. Bex gave us all a real buzz with the installation of the Gardens' first interpretation board informing visitors about bumblebee-friendly gardening. Bex also nominated us for a Bee's Needs Champion award from Defra. RHS awards received this year are 'Inspiring Others', a Certificate of Recognition and a RHS in Bloom 'Outstanding' for a second year. All made possible by an incredible amount of dedication, enthusiasm and volunteer hours.

Moving in to 2021, our monthly task days will continue and although the 'Making a Buzz for the Coast' comes to an end in March we intend to seek support from RHS, Thanet District Council and other community groups so we can all carry on Sunken Gardening.

**SUE FINCH, SUNKEN GARDEN SOCIETY**



*Summer wild flowers in the garden*



*Above – left the sign created by volunteer Andrew Miller and right the new Bee Board sign*



*Above – a new look for the entrance to the Sunken Gardens*

# The Revd David Railton MA, MC - originator of the idea of the Unknown Warrior *by James Brazier*



42 Gordon Road, Cliftonville - the Railton family home. The road was probably named after General Gordon who was killed at Khartoum in 1885. The new Blue Plaque is clearly visible



The Blue Plaque which Margate Civic Society has put up at 42 Gordon Road, Cliftonville



The Revd David Railton as a Chaplain to the Forces during the Great War. His brother, Nathaniel, also served as a Chaplain to the Forces and, later was Archdeacon of Lindsey (1941-1948). Members of the Railton family are shown living at 42 Gordon Road in both the 1901 and 1911 censuses. The Revd David Railton served as Vicar of Margate from 1920 to 1925 and lived with his wife and family at the Vicarage (since demolished) on St Peter's Road, close to its junction with College Road



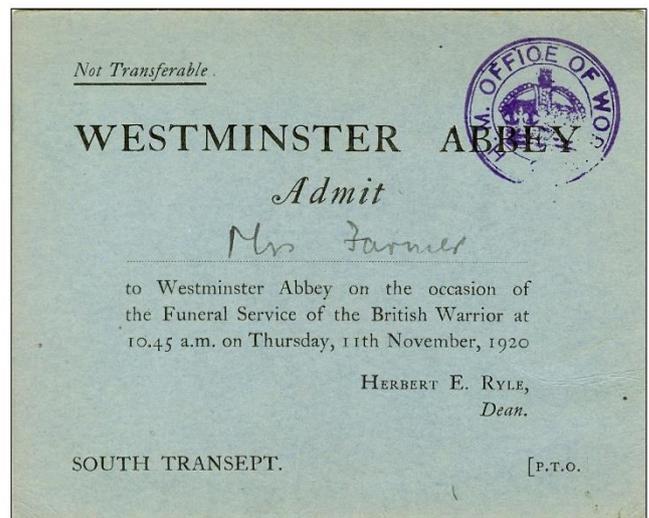
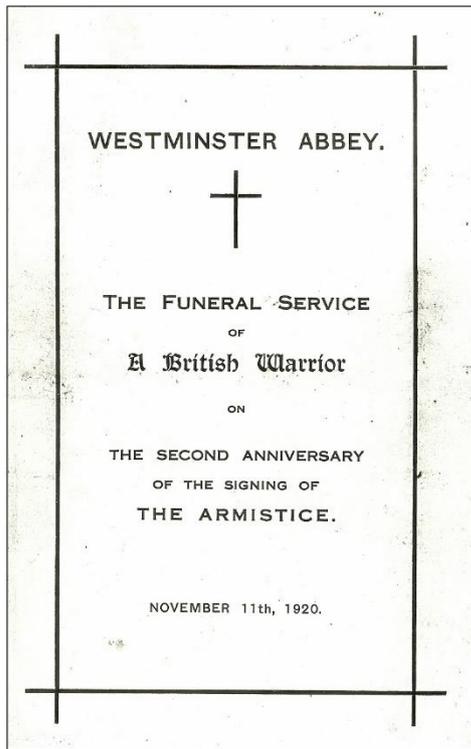
This family photograph shows the Railton family - George Scott Railton (1849-1913) and his wife Marianne (1850-1928) together with their two sons David (1884-1955) and Nathaniel (1886-1948) and their daughter Esther (1887-1971). George Scott Railton was the First Commissioner of the Salvation Army and second in command to its founder General William Booth



Stanley House School where David Railton was educated before going to Keble College, Oxford. The school was in Clarendon Road, Cliftonville. It is believed that this fine building was demolished in the 1930s or destroyed by enemy action in the Second World War

This article was written by Margate Civic Society Vice-President James Brazier for inclusion in the Westgate-on-Sea Heritage Centre's Newsletter, in response to a request by Dr Dawn Crouch. Dr Crouch was the founder of Westgate-on-Sea Heritage Centre and a noted local historian. In 2016, she was awarded the Freedom of Westgate-on-Sea in honour of her work on behalf of the town and local community. Sadly, Dr Crouch died on 7<sup>th</sup> November, and this article is dedicated to her memory.

To appreciate the hugely important role David Railton played one hundred years ago, we need first to provide some background to the story. The 11th November 1920 was not only the second anniversary of the Armistice but it was the planned date for the unveiling of the permanent Cenotaph in Whitehall. A temporary lathe-and-plaster Cenotaph had been erected in Whitehall as a saluting-point during the Peace Celebrations held on 19th July 1919. Originally, it had been intended that the temporary Cenotaph would be removed shortly after the Peace Celebrations but such was the outpouring of grief by



*This admission card to Westminster Abbey was almost certainly issued to a mother of a serviceman who had lost his life in the war. It is believed that this admission card was issued by ballot such would have been the demand from members of the public to attend the ceremony.*

*David Railton was invited to attend the service which he duly did. At the time of the service, he was Vicar of Margate (St John the Baptist Church).*

*It would have been a great honour for him to be present at the service and to see his idea come to fruition*

← *The front of the Order of Service for the Funeral Service of the Unknown Warrior*

members of the public, expressed by filing past the Cenotaph and laying wreaths and flowers at its base, that the Government decided to replace the temporary structure with a permanent Cenotaph made from Portland stone. The Cenotaph became, effectively, the National War Memorial and has remained so ever since. It was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens who also designed numerous other war memorials in both this country and overseas as well as countless other buildings: indeed, he is regarded by many as Britain's greatest architect of the 20th century.

The role David Railton played in this hugely important occasion was that it was he who is credited with the idea of burying an Unknown Warrior as a representative of all those who had died in service during the Great War and whose names are inscribed on the many Memorials to the Missing but for whom there are no known graves for their relatives to visit and pay their respects.

It was during the Great War when David Railton, serving as an Army Chaplain, saw a grave near Armentières in northern France bearing a pencilled inscription *An Unknown Soldier of the Black Watch*. It gave him an idea that later was to become a national memorial. It was not until 1920, the year when the permanent Cenotaph was to be unveiled, that he was able to put forward his plan. In the summer of 1920, he approached the Dean of Westminster, the Rt Revd Bishop Herbert Ryle, and suggested that an unknown soldier be brought back from the battlefields of France and Flanders and be buried among the nation's illustrious dead in Westminster Abbey. The Dean successfully persuaded the government to accept that suggestion. It was further suggested that the burial should take place on Armistice Day and that King George V should be asked if he would follow the gun carriage bearing the body to Westminster



*This drawing by Fortunino Matania shows the lowering of the coffin containing the body of the Unknown Warrior to the ground at the beginning of the Funeral Service held at Westminster Abbey on 11th November 1920*



*A sepia image of the oil-painting by Frank O. Salisbury showing the burial of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey on 11th November 1920. This large painting hangs in a Committee Room within the Houses of Parliament*

Abbey immediately after the permanent Cenotaph had been unveiled which the King agreed to do.

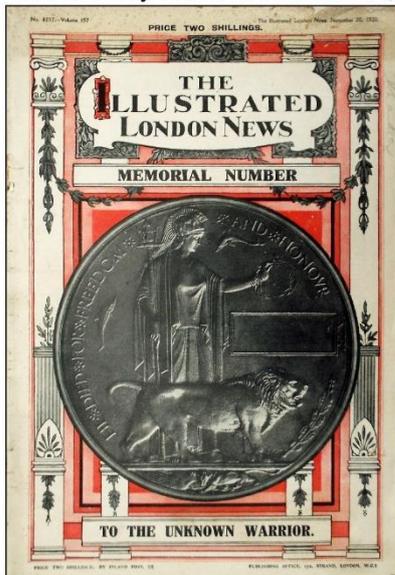
Instructions were given that a body of a British soldier whom it would be impossible to identify should be brought back from each of four identified battle areas - the Aisne, the Somme, Arras and Ypres. The four bodies were taken to St Pol and one was selected at midnight on 7th November by Brigadier-General L. J. Wyatt DSO to be conveyed to England. It is believed that the remaining three bodies were re-interred in St Pol Military Cemetery. No-one knew from which area the selected body had come from - nor will anyone ever know as very little information was given by the British authorities regarding the selection of the Unknown Warrior. It was not until 1939 that Brigadier-General Wyatt, in a letter to *The Daily Telegraph*, gave the facts about the matter.

Although reference has been made above to a British 'soldier', it is quite possible that the body selected was that of an unidentified sailor serving with the Royal Naval Division or even an airman. However, the probability is that the body is that of a soldier but, for that reason, he is

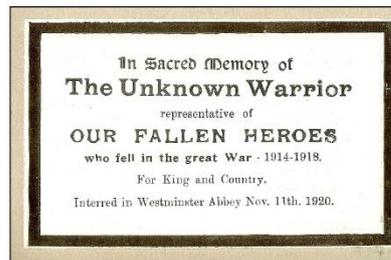
always referred to as the Unknown Warrior rather than as the Unknown Soldier.

There was a suggestion that the Unknown Warrior should be buried beneath the Cenotaph rather than in Westminster Abbey but that idea came to nothing. There was also a suggestion that an Unknown Sailor should be buried alongside the Unknown Warrior but the word 'warrior' was deemed to comprise all services.

It is difficult today to fully appreciate the significance of the unveiling of the Cenotaph and the burial of the Unknown Warrior on the second anniversary of the Armistice and the public's reaction to those momentous events. The French buried their Unknown Soldier beneath the Arc de Triomphe on the very same day but it would appear that it was coincidental. Since that date, virtually every country in the world has adopted the idea first put forward by David Railton. His war record was exemplary with him being awarded the Military Cross in 1916 and being Mentioned in Despatches. His name has deservedly gone down in the history of the Unknown Warrior and deserves to be remembered in this anniversary year.

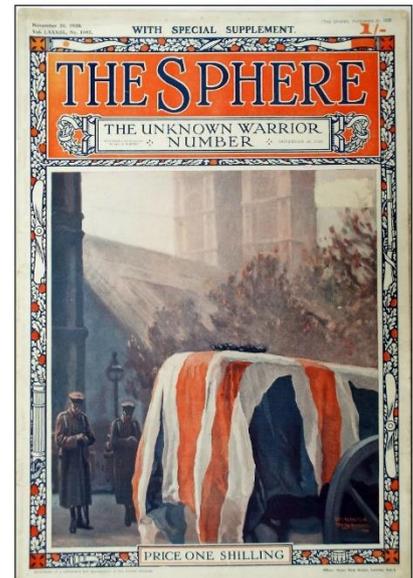


*The front cover of The Illustrated London News dated 20th November 1920. The Illustrated London News was owned by Sir William Ingram who had a home at Westgate-on-Sea*

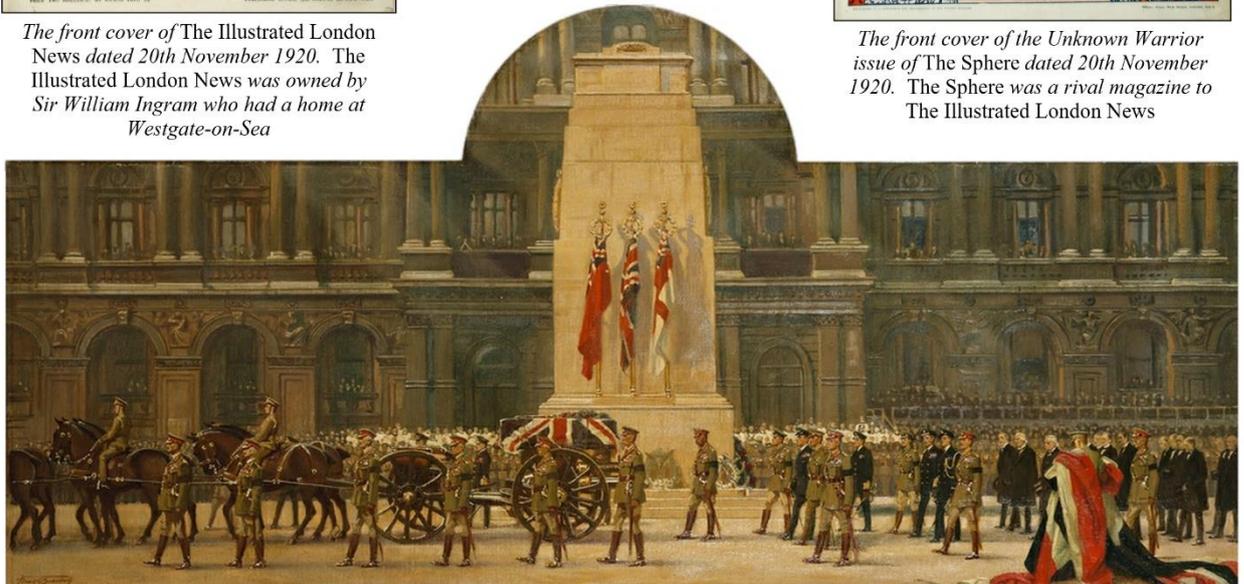


*One of the many designs for 'In Memoriam' cards that were produced by numerous printers at the time as souvenirs of the Unknown Warrior*

*The Cenotaph and the Unknown Warrior are inextricably linked - as depicted in the painting below*



*The front cover of the Unknown Warrior issue of The Sphere dated 20th November 1920. The Sphere was a rival magazine to The Illustrated London News*



*This magnificent oil-painting by Frank O. Salisbury shows the gun-carriage carrying the coffin of the Unknown Warrior leaving the Cenotaph on its final stage of its journey to Westminster Abbey. The painting is in the Royal Collection*

The reports reproduced below were published in *The Thanet Advertiser and Echo* dated 20th November 1920. It is believed that David Railton personally provided the reports to the Editor of that newspaper. The reports dispel the story that it was not known for several years who it was that had the original idea of the Unknown Warrior. Clearly, David Railton wanted his parishioners, at least, to know that it was him. Margate is still proud of him. □

**Men and Affairs.**  
A CAUSERIE OF COMMENTS.

Not only was the Rev. David Railton, M.C., Vicar of Margate, responsible for the idea which has fired the imagination of the whole nation but the Union Jack that covered the coffin of the Unknown Warrior was also the one brought back by Mr. Railton from France where he served as a chaplain attached to one of the London Territorial Divisions. The flag has a great history. It was used at Vimy Ridge, Bully Grenay, Hill 60, in the Ypres salient, on the Somme, at Messines Ridge, at Cambrai, Bethune, and on the French front before Epernay. In the comparative quiet of rest billets behind the lines it was used for religious ceremonial and social events; at Church parades it took the place of an altar cloth at celebrations of Communion, before and after battle; and in the dead of night or early dawn it enshrined the bodies of the gallant dead, providing for them a hallowed shroud.

Both officers and men revered the flag in a remarkable way, as often, in the absence of blanket or other covering, it lay immediately next to the khaki-clad figure on the stretcher, and it is tinged with the blood of the men of London, of every part of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, and of every branch of the Service. The Vicar told me that he once had a fright concerning the flag. For six weeks not a trace of it could be found. It had last been placed in the bottom of a kit bag bearing the Vicar's name on the bottom and was left in the waggon. It transpired that the flag had been thrown out by mistake and left down the line. It was subsequently returned to Mr. Railton by an officer who had heard about its fame. The flag will now hang over the grave of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey.

*James Brazier has recently stepped down from being Margate Civic Society's Newsletter Editor - a post he held continuously from 2005. Previously, he served as The Western Front Association's Bulletin Editor for eight years*

*A pair of Ivorex souvenirs of the Unknown Warrior and the Cenotaph:*



### The Cavell Van at Tenterden Station

The original railway van that was used to convey the body of the Unknown Warrior from Dover to London Victoria Station on 10th November 1920 was restored in 2010 and is now on display at the Kent and East Sussex Railway Station at Tenterden. The van contains a replica of the oak coffin as well as replicas of the wooden casks that were used to transport earth from the Ypres Salient in which the coffin was buried in Westminster Abbey. The Cavell Van was also used, on separate occasions, to transport the coffins containing the bodies of Nurse Edith Cavell and Captain Fryatt of *SS Brussels* on their return to England. Both were executed by the Germans during the Great War.



*The historic Cavell Van on display at Tenterden Station. It is well worth a visit. Check the K&ESR website for times, etc*

## MEMORIES OF WINTER DAYS AND CHRISTMASSES BACK IN THE 1940s. 50s AND 60s

I would like to thank all those members who responded to my request for memories of Christmases in the local area in years gone by. One of the most popular memories from almost everyone who responded was going to see Father Christmas at Thornton Bobby's in Margate as a special Christmas treat. A number of members remember being very excited about it, especially as they were always given a gift from his sack. The other memory that stuck out in everyone's mind as children, seems to be the "whizzy thing that went to accounts and returned with change" in Thornton Bobby's. "The store was very upmarket" people said. The "whizzy thing" was the Lamson Pneumatic tube system which many department stores installed to take money from the shop floor to their accounts office.

Another member remembers being taken to what she called a Christmas wonderland shop in Margate, which seemed to have almost every toy she wanted, back in the 1970's. She thinks it was run by Mr and Mrs Homer and was one of the shops on the Parade. Others enjoyed shopping for presents and gifts in Woolworths.

*Below the Lamson containers in which the money was placed*



*Right an example of the Lamson system being operated in an unknown shop.*



*Woolworths, Margate*

Joe H remembered when he was a very small child in the 1940's, Christmas celebrations started with a new radiogram that, to him, suddenly seem to turn up on Christmas Eve. He was sure it was bought from Henrys, probably the store in the High Street, Margate. The radio gram was a floor-standing one and his father's pride and joy. A couple of years later, this time on Christmas Day, Joe remembered his brother putting his heel through the front grill when they were larking about, and his dad went mad. It still worked without any problems and the grill was never properly mended.



*The floor standing radiogram like the one Joe remembers and below an advert from the late 1950's.*



*Above – Thornton Bobby's on the corner of the High Street, Margate*

**HENRY'S FOR TELEVISION!**

SEE OUR FINE RANGE OF 1959 MODELS BY LEADING MAKERS FOR AERIAL OR RELAY

14" SCREEN from 55 GNS  
17" ... from 65 GNS  
OR WITH VHF RADIO  
14" 59 GNS - 17" 74 GNS

Other Gifts that will give years of pleasure:

- RADIOS - - from 11 GNS
- RECORD PLAYERS - from 10 GNS
- TAPE RECORDERS - from 29 GNS
- RADIOGRAMS - - from 46½ GNS
- WASHING MACHINES - REFRIGERATORS - CLEANERS - SPIN DRI
- FIRES - HAIR DRIERS - TOASTERS - FOOD MIXERS - SHAVERS - BLANK

EASIER THAN EVER H.P. TERMS

**HENRY'S** 40 Station Rd., Birchington TN41 4JH  
54 HIGH STREET, MARGATE TN21 2JH  
145 Northdown Rd. TN21 2JH

Linda Williams lived in Birchington when she was six years old and remembered the really cold winter of 1947. Although she had no specific memories of Christmas Day itself, she remembered buses could not get through the snow and where she lived was cut off for a time until a path could be dug through the drifts. A power cut too meant they had to eat sandwiches rather than cooked food and she thinks this might have been on Christmas Day because she remembers her mother being very annoyed about a spoilt meal. (Although the real 'Winter of 1947' did not really start until the 23<sup>rd</sup> January when heavy snow began to fall, there were also two very cold periods in December 1946). Linda also remembered that "coal was in short supply and what there was of very poor quality, 'nutty slack' was the phrase. People really had to struggle without washing machines or immersion heaters for running hot water, water was usually heated by a solid fuel boiler or once a week wash with the copper if you couldn't afford laundry. Clothing was still very much rationed too". The photograph of the right shows Brooksend Hill, Birchington, when snow fell in the late 1960's and caused chaos there.



*Brooksend Hill in the late 1960's*

Another member remembered that the snow started to fall on Boxing Day in 1963 and how excited she was to be able to get her sledge out. She also vividly remembers snow being piled up against the doorway of shops in Northdown Road shortly after Christmas '63, some drifts even higher than she was, and she was 'a tall nine year old at the time'. Three months later, everyone was thoroughly fed up with the freezing cold and snow and longed for the sun. Anne especially remembers the sea being frozen and the biting cold. The winter of 1963 was one of the coldest on record and in January the sea froze for one mile out from Herne Bay and along the North Kent coast.



*Above and below - frozen sea in Margate in 1963*



*Below - The frozen harbour*





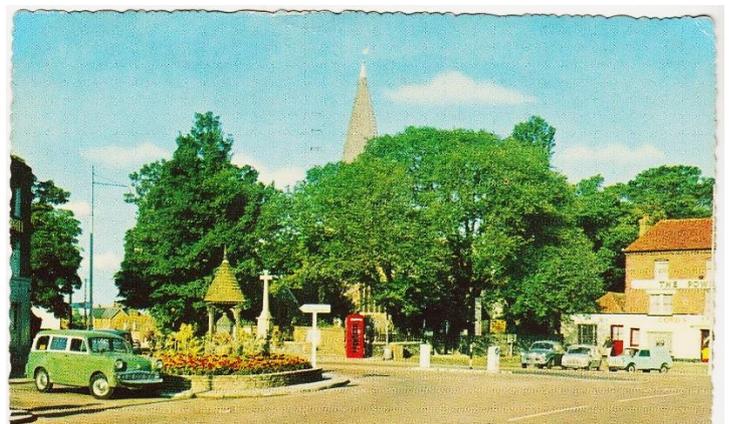
*The long walk to work through the snow in Ramsgate Road, Margate, in the 1960's*

In the 1940's and 1950's, the potential Westgate-on-Sea Christmas shopper had plenty of stores to choose from. There was the International Store, now the Co-op, and Greggs run by Miss Tree. You can still see the Gregg sign on the floor as you walk into what is now the Budget Bazaar. Christine A and Colin O both remember Greggs in the 1960's. Christine remembers it as quite an old-fashioned store, with brown counters either side of the door and that payment was taken by Miss Tree at a desk at the back of the shop. Colin remembers "one year when I was about 10 years old in 1963, my father gave me half a crown at 4 o'clock on Christmas Eve. I was to go to Greggs in Westgate and ask the lady at the counter 'if anything was going cheap'. she took my bag and filled it up with about 8 large pork pies. They were heavy, but when I got home my Mum & Dad were very happy with the result".



*Looking down Station Road, Westgate-on-Sea In the 1950s.*

Angela D also remembers Greig's in the 1950 and 60's – a food shop with individual counters for different produce. "Being little I remember the ornate tile work below the counters that ran down each side of the shop. There was a cashier at the back of the shop who took the money and put it onto a spike. Vye's, another grocers shop, seemed friendlier here. Although it had counters for some goods it was more supermarket style".



*Above – a sunny day in Birchington circa 1966.*

Colin also remembers The Westgate Butchers next to Boots - The display of turkeys hanging from the window in the early 1960's all plucked and ready for the oven. "Not a sight you see today and if we had a chicken, that was a real treat. We never had a chicken at any other time of the year because they were expensive to buy. No fridge freezers or Bernard Matthews mass production then but they certainly were tasty and a real treat".

**Sally Whitworth**

We thought members might enjoy looking at these festive post boxes in Birchington this year, decorated by the Birchington Festive Toppers



## CHAIR'S REPORT

Dear Members

How are you? It is amazingly nine months since we last met.

Since last writing to you three months ago, life has continued to be challenging, which has impacted on the quality of our lives in various ways. Most of you will have known of someone who has been affected by Covid-19 or indeed may have contracted this themselves but I hope that you are now all managing to stay well and safe. Our best wishes to anyone who is suffering from any ill health at this time.

**In Memoriam:** Sadly, two of our local community 'heritage heavyweights' have recently passed away: Dr Dawn Crouch (Consultant Historian of the Westgate-on-Sea Heritage Centre) and Ian Dickie (Director and Trustee of the Margate Museum Trust). Both are a huge loss to our area.

The Committee have endeavoured to keep the Society's flag flying and we have maintained contact, albeit mainly virtually with the exception of a few smaller socially-distanced meetings. The last time was when Mike Wilton, Mike Thompson and myself met with James Brazier and his wife Sue in their front garden, presenting him with a 'thank you' gift for all the dedicated work he had undertaken over the past 15 years during his Newsletter Editorship.

*Photograph right – the socially distanced committee meeting in August 2020*



**Newsletter:** This is the first quarterly newsletter edition for which Sally has been Editor, so please remember that you are most welcome to contribute to forthcoming editions by forwarding articles, photographs, postcards, life stories, news of events, etc.

**Town Pride Awards 2020:** Obviously this has been extremely difficult to organise this year but I am pleased to confirm that I have now contacted the 2 winners of this year's Awards, both of whom were absolutely delighted. Sadly, in view of the ongoing lockdown and restrictions, efforts to meet with them proved impossible and their plaques have yet to be presented but it is hoped that this can be organised in the New Year when the respective photographs can be taken. I wrote a Press Release, which was sent to the local media announcing the two winners, at the time of which the recipients of the five Highly Commended certificates had not been notified. Since then, I have contacted all but one and hand-delivered three of the certificates. All were amazed and the news and their positive response really brightened their day and mine! Hopefully the two winners can be invited to next year's Awards Evening to enable them to showcase their projects, of which they are understandably extremely proud.

We are delighted to reveal that there are two worthy winners this year, who will be receiving a **Town Pride Plaque and Framed Certificate, namely:-**

- **The Margate Caves Visitor Centre, 1 Northdown Road, Cliftonville (see photo below left)**  
(In recognition of innovative and sensitive design, making a major contribution to the regeneration of an important community amenity and to the local area)



- **'Westbrook House', 145 Canterbury Road, Westbrook, Margate (see photo below right)**  
(In recognition of innovative, sensitive and eye-catching design, making a major historical contribution to Westbrook)

### Recipients of Town Pride 'Highly Commended' Framed Certificates are:-

- **44 Royal Esplanade, Westbrook, Margate**  
(In recognition of innovative and eye-catching design, making a major contribution to the regeneration of Westbrook seafront)
- **The Margate School, 33 High Street, Margate**  
(In recognition of its contribution to restoration of pride in the community and to the community amenity)
- **21 Sweyn Road, Cliftonville**  
(In recognition of innovative and sensitive design, making a major contribution to the regeneration of Cliftonville)
- **64 Edgar Road, Cliftonville**  
(In recognition of innovative and sensitive design, making a major contribution to the regeneration of Cliftonville)
- **Rendezvous Margate 16 Ethelbert Crescent, Cliftonville**  
(In recognition of good and sensitive design which contributes to the enhancement of our area)

Each of these reflect the exceptional high standard of new projects that have been undertaken in the areas of Cliftonville, Margate and Westbrook and these projects contribute greatly in raising the ethos and a sense of pride in our community.

Our thanks to Croft Cast Signs who were again commissioned by Mike Thompson to create the bespoke durable blue plaques depicting the Margate Clock Tower, which has become a symbol of our Society.

**Blue Plaque Project:** As you will see from Mike Wilton's detailed Report, a blue plaque was installed in Gordon Road in commemoration of the Revd David Railton in time for the Armistice Day Centenary. This was an amazing feat and although a team effort, was due to the tenacity and determination of both Mike Wilton and Mike Thomson who were determined to ensure this was in situ prior to 11 November. Hopefully we can organise a small, more formal event next year involving an official unveiling of the plaque by David Railton QC (the Revd David Railton's grandson) who I have contacted and was honoured at this tribute to his grandfather.

### Lecture Programme 2021 (Subject to COVID-19 Guidelines): Some dates for your new Calendar!

January **No Meeting**

4 February **Left in abeyance for interim**

4 March **Left in abeyance for interim**

1 April **Guests: £3.00 nominal fee**

**"The Early Days of Westgate-on-Sea"** (the area before the town was built and the people who helped create what was to become an upmarket Victorian watering-hole)

Please note prior to the raffle, there will be a request for donations towards a WW2 bench.

**Speaker:** Sally Whitworth, (MCS Membership Secretary/Newsletter Editor and Westgate-on-Sea Heritage Centre Newsletter Editor)

13 May

**Topic:** TOWN PRIDE AWARDS (followed by raffle and refreshments) **Guests: £4.50 nominal fee**

7 October **Annual General Meeting** (followed by refreshments and raffle) **Guests: £4.50 nominal fee**

**"Bits That Don't Fit!"** (Stand-up History! Weird and wonderful historical square pegs)

Please note prior to the raffle, there will be a collection for Cancer Research UK.

**Speaker:** Steve Hookins (After Dinner Speaker, historical presentations)

5 November

Guests: £3.00 Nominal fee

'The Life and Times of Edith Cavell' (the story of the British heroine who died in Brussels in 1915. The Life and Times of Edith Cavell talk tells her story supported by photographs of existing artefacts of her life). This will be followed by the raffle.

Speaker: Melanie Gibson-Barton

9 December **Christmas Soiree Quiz, short film (or alternative), music, refreshments and raffle.**

Guests: £6.50 nominal fee

**Acknowledgements:** Our grateful thanks to Members who have renewed their membership and also for the generous donations and good wishes.

I should also like to thank the Committee for their ongoing support, friendship and resilience.

Christmas is a special time for many, particularly children and this year it is more important than ever. The following letter written by an eight year old to the Prime Minister, says it all:-

'If we leave some sanitizer by the cookies, can Santa still come?'

I am sure Santa will not let anyone down and the Committee and I should like to wish you all a Merry Christmas.

Let us raise a glass of your favourite tippie on New Year's Eve with a toast: **'to a Safer, Brighter, Hopeful and Happier 2021.'**



In the interim, take care of each other and I look forward to seeing you next year when it is safe to do so.

With my very best wishes

Pamela



*Cliftonville circa 1910. Hopefully we all will be able to meet up at the Walpole Hotel in April 2021*

## PLANNING MATTERS

### Mike Thompson

Members will recall that in the last edition of the Newsletter, reference was made to the Government's proposals to update the Planning process and I thought it might be an idea to update you all with a brief explanation of just what the Planning White Paper aims to achieve.

Margate Civic Society is a member of Civic Voice, the national body for Civic Society's like ours and will be making representations to the Government during the consultation period on behalf of its members.

The stated aim is as follows, and I quote;-

'To move democracy forward in the planning process and to give neighbourhoods and communities an earlier and more meaningful voice in their future'.

To achieve this, they are promoting more engagement at the Local Plan stage and want Councils to 'radically and profoundly re-invent ambition, and the depth and breadth with which they engage with communities as they consult on Local Plans'.

The reforms are intended to democratise the planning process by putting a new emphasis on engagement at the Plan making stage.

They are asking 'How should communities be involved at the Plan making stage? Should or could, for example, Civic Societies be statutory consultees at the Local Plan stage?'

The key points are as follows;-

There should be a new role for Local Plans

They will - identify land for both development and protection from development. They will identify three different types of land only.

i) Growth Areas - suitable for substantial development and receive automatic outline consent on adoption of the Local Plan.

ii) Renewal Areas - areas suitable for development which carry a statutory presumption in favour of development for uses specified in the Local Plan where smaller scale developments are appropriate so they would not be 'Growth' or 'Protected' areas.

iii) Protected Areas - will be sites and areas that justify more stringent development controls - eg Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Conservation Areas, Local Wildlife Sites, areas of significant flood risk and important areas of green space.

For development proposals that accord with these criteria there will be a streamlined route to gaining planning permission.

In Growth Areas, consent would automatically be given as 'outline' and detailed consent would be secured by the submission of a 'reserved matters' application.

In Renewal Areas, planning permission would be secured via a new route giving automatic consent if the scheme meets design and/or prior approval requirements.

In Protected Areas, a standard planning application would be required.

The White Paper hints at a reduced role for Planning Committees as there will be instances under Growth Areas and Renewal Areas where development is pre-presumed, therefore, delegation of decisions to planning officers should be the preferred route.

Local Authorities will have 30 months to produce a new style Local Plan.

Stage 1 - 6 months with public engagement to identify the three categories.

Stage 2 - 12 months - Local Authority prepares plan.

Stage 3 - 6 weeks - plan submitted for examination and consultation.

Stage 4 - 9 months - Planning Inspector examines plan with a 'right to be heard' for proposed alterations.

Stage 5 - 6 weeks - Local Plan finally adopted.

It has to be said that the current process is far from perfect and can be frustrating and time consuming but any major changes such as those proposed within this White Paper must end up 'getting it right' so that we end up with a system that is fit for purpose delivering the right amount of quality development in a timely fashion and located where we want it. We shall see! I will update members through this Newsletter as matters progress.



*Looking across the fields from Garlinge*



*Above and right - looking towards Westgate-on-Sea*



More on the sites currently under threat of development (including those above) in the next Newsletter.

**MIKE THOMPSON**

# Margate Civic Society

[www.margatecivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.margatecivicsociety.org.uk)



Founded in 1968, the Margate Civic Society is a registered charity and a founder member of Civic Voice. It was also both an affiliated member of the Kent Federation of Amenity Societies and a member of the Kent History Federation but, sadly, both those organisations have recently been wound up.

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 digitally illustrated, are interesting and of local interest; they are also varied in their appeal. A Newsletter is published four times a year.

## Committee for 2020/21:

**President:** Mr Ralph Handscomb, 14 Eastern Esplanade, Cliftonville, Margate CT9 3AB (Tel: 01843 293169)  
(e-mail: [handscomb@talktalk.net](mailto:handscomb@talktalk.net))

**Chairman:** Mrs Pamela Pople, Hurston Cottage, Sloe Lane, Westwood, Margate CT9 4DX (Tel: 01843 221689)  
(e-mail: [pamela@hurstoncottage.co.uk](mailto:pamela@hurstoncottage.co.uk))

**Vice-Chairman:** Mr Harry Scobie, 59 Gloucester Avenue, Cliftonville, Margate CT9 3NP (Tel: 078 6227 6466)  
(e-mail: [harryscobie@hotmail.com](mailto:harryscobie@hotmail.com))

**Secretary:** Mr Geoff Orton, 25 Norman Road, Westgate-on-Sea CT8 8RR (Tel: 01843 835085)  
(e-mail: [ortong14@gmail.com](mailto:ortong14@gmail.com))

**Treasurer:** Mr Mike Wilton, 30 Barrington Crescent, Birchington CT7 9DF (Tel: 01843 844717)  
(e-mail: [wilton@btinternet.com](mailto:wilton@btinternet.com))

**Membership Secretary:** Ms Sally Whitworth, C/o 25 Norman Road, Westgate-on-Sea CT8 8RR (Tel: 07949 835777)  
(e-mail: [whitworthandbird@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:whitworthandbird@hotmail.co.uk))

**Newsletter Editor:** Ms Sally Whitworth, C/o 25 Norman Road, Westgate-on-Sea CT8 8RR (Tel: 07949 835777)  
(e-mail: [whitworthandbird@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:whitworthandbird@hotmail.co.uk))

**Planning and Conservation issues:** Mr Mike Thompson, 7 Seymour Avenue, Westbrook, Margate CT9 5HT  
(Tel: 01843 832834) (e-mail: [mike.thompson6565@btinternet.com](mailto: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 £ ..... (Cheques should be made payable to **Margate Civic Society**)

**Name:** .....

**Address:** .....

**Tel:** ..... **e-mail:** .....

## Subscription rates for 2020/21:

	Individual	Joint	Junior (under 18)	Corporate
	£	£	£	£
Annual (Paper Newsletter*)	13	17	5	—
Annual (Electronic Newsletter#)	10	14	2	20

*Please note that Life Membership subscription is no longer available*

and send it to the Treasurer, Margate Civic Society, Mike Wilton, 30 Barrington Crescent, Birchington CT7 9DF

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