

Margate Civic Society

(Founded 1968)
Registered Charity No. 257884

Spring 2006
Newsletter

Issue No. 342

"The love of our town leads us"

President: Mr Ralph Handscomb

Chairman: Mr Steve Villette

Welcome to the third of our new-look newsletters. From comments received, it seems that members like it – which makes all the effort into its production well worth while.

This issue of the newsletter contains articles from Bob Bradley (Curator of Margate Museum) on Dr Arthur Rowe and from Jim Porter on Arlington House; it also contains a book review from Catriona Blaker and two letters. My thanks go to each of these contributors. If you wish to submit contributions for inclusion in future issues of the newsletter, please send them to me in hard-copy form together with any photographs/graphics which will be scanned in and returned immediately.



Arlington House

Jim Porter's article on Arlington House appears on page 2. Do you share his views on this 1960s building which dominates Margate's sea-front and casts a shadow over part of the main sands? Do you think it is an icon or do you consider it to be an eyesore? Send me your views which will be featured in the next issue of our newsletter.

Since our last issue, the decision of KCC not to proceed with the previously-selected Turner Contemporary gallery has been taken. It is very unfortunate that the decision was not taken earlier (at a saving of millions of pounds) but let us all hope that a building of equal attraction will take its place – on *terra firma* - and that the longed-for regeneration of the town will not be further postponed for too long. The town is desperately in need of revitalisation and its regeneration simply must not be put off indefinitely. □

James Brazier
Newsletter Editor



*Queen Victoria Golden Jubilee (1887) Clock Tower
– from postcard circa 1900*

Grant received from TDC

The Society is most grateful to Thanet District Council, via Cliftonville West Ward, for a recent grant to fund the purchase of a much-needed copier.

Welcome to new members

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

Arthur & Mercia Beach
Cllr Iris Johnston
Mike & Heather Wilton
Mr K. E. Guilder

Thanet Coast Project

Members who attended our meeting in February enjoyed a most interesting talk from Dr Alisdair Bruce on the erosion of Thanet's coast. The Thanet Coast Project have now announced their forthcoming events (which are all free!). Amongst those events are:

Seashore Scavenger Hunt! (two hours)
11am Sunday, 4th June – West Bay, Westgate

Rock Doc Walks (two hours) – start at 11am
Minnis Bay (Tidal Pool) Sunday, 9th April
Pegwell Bay Sunday, 13th May
Dumpton Gap Thursday, 1st June (start 10am)
Kingsgate Bay Sunday, 16th July
Pegwell Bay Sunday, 19th August

Why not go along and discover the ancient wonders of the chalk cliffs, flint, fossils and sands

For the Rock Doc Walks, booking via the
Ramsgate Visitor Centre is essential
– call 0870 2646111

Arlington House

Eyesore or Icon ?

Stop anyone in the street and ask them: “What do you think of Arlington House?” and the reply would be: “Pull it down”. Ask the same people if they have ever been inside the building and the reply would be: “No”. Ask them **why** it should be pulled down and the answers would vary: “It is ugly”; “It is overwhelming”; “It is dirty”; and “It is full of drug addicts, asylum seekers, DSS drop-outs, etc”.

Only one of these is true – it **is** dirty! Outside, yes. Inside it is like the Old Cherry Blossom boot-polish advert – “It’s well worn but it’s worn well”. Thanks to the staff, the inside is kept immaculately clean and polished – no vomit or graffiti in the lifts, no discarded condoms or needles in the corridors. From inside the purpose-built flats, the views are probably the most stunning in Thanet – in some cases almost 180° from Station Green to the harbour. Flats in the same type of tower-block in west London cost in excess of £250,000.

When St Paul’s Cathedral and other buildings of architectural and historic interest in London became dirty, did they pull them down? No! They cleaned them. Thanet District Council (TDC) are currently having talks with the owners, Freshwater, to update the image of the block.

In the 1960s, when Arlington House was built, it was an iconic state-of-the-art building. Even today, if you purchase a postcard depicting Marine Gardens, you will see Arlington House in all its former glory.

The surrounding area is much more of a problem – a neglected car-park with graffiti-covered walls and strewn with holiday-makers’ discarded rubbish, Arlington Square with shuttered and empty shops infested with pigeons, rats and mice, and vandals from sea-front pubs smashing windows.

Last year, Margate Civic Society made Civic Pride Awards to TDC’s Invicta House and a Town Shame Award to Arlington House – both tower blocks.

In the Government inspector’s report on the Margate Master Plan, English Heritage supports proposals for leisure tourism but states: “Arlington House residential tower-block has a major detrimental impact”. However, they do not say the same about the recently-restored Queen’s Court in Brighton or the proposal to build a new super tower-block on the sea-front or a six-storey hotel by the station.

If Margate is not to become derelict or an unsustainable housing sprawl, the restoration of Arlington House is a major consideration which should be addressed by TDC, Freshwater and English Heritage. □

J. F. Porter
(Arlington House resident)

Did you know... ?

It has been suggested that the newsletter should contain a regular feature on the origin of some of our road names. The writer makes no apology for starting with a number of the roads in Westbrook where much of the land was formerly owned by the Governors of the Bridewell and Bethlem Hospitals in London.

Audley Avenue: Sir James Audley was Warden of Bethlem Hospital, 1362

Barnes Avenue: Sir George Barnes, Haberdasher, was Lord Mayor of London, 1552-1553 and received the Charter from Edward VI

Boleyn Avenue: George Boleyn was Master of Bethlem Hospital, 1529-1536

Bowes Avenue: Robert Bowes was Master of the Rolls to Edward VI

Edmanson Avenue: John Edmanson devised the property to Bethlem Hospital in 1695

Fitzmary Avenue: Simon Fitzmary was Founder of Bethlem Hospital, 1247

Garrard Avenue: Sir William Garrard, Haberdasher, was Lord Mayor of London, 1555-1556

Gresham Avenue: – Sir Thomas Gresham, Founder of the Royal Exchange, petitioned Henry VIII for grant of Bethlem to the City of London in 1538

Maynard Avenue: John Maynard, Mercer, was Sheriff of London, 1553

Pembroke Avenue: William Herbert (Earl of Pembroke) was the Lord Chamberlain in 1553 and an influential courtier to Edward VI

Tyson Avenue: Edward Tyson was Physician to Bethlem Hospital, 1684-1708.

Wentworth Avenue: Henry Wentworth was Surgeon to Bethlem Hospital, 1661-1708

(The assistance of Dr Dawn Crouch in compiling the above list is acknowledged)

And the origin of the names of two connecting roads in Cliftonville ...

Alfred Avenue (formerly Alfred Road): Derived from Cyril Alfred Gordon Coles

Wellesley Road: Derived from Eric Edward Wellesley Cole

The two men were partners in the former firm of Cole & Hardie (auctioneers, valuers and estate agents) who acted as the agents for that development.

If you can provide the origin of any other road names in Margate (including Westgate and Birchington), please contact the Newsletter Editor for inclusion in this feature in the future. □

Nominations for Town Pride and Town Shame Awards 2006

Among the nominations for Margate Civic Society's Town Pride Awards for 2006 are...



Beano Café, junction of Dane Hill and King Street, Margate



Fairfield Mansions, Fifth Avenue, Cliftonville



3 Duke Street, Old Town



4-5 Lombard Street and 25 Hawley Street



Walpole Heights, Eastern Esplanade

...and among the nominations for Town Shame are...



Corner of Cliff Terrace, Cliftonville



Former Illano factory (including litter-strewn forecourt), King Street



5 Market Place, Old Town



Fort Road Hotel, Fort Hill

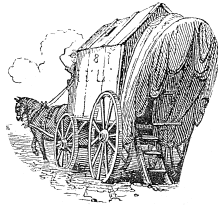


77 Eastern Esplanade (corner of Surrey Road)

At our meeting on 11th May 2006, the results will be announced and presentations of the Town Pride Awards made to the winners. Immediately following the presentation of the awards, we are very fortunate in having Nick Dermott (Thanet District Council's Conservation Architect) give us a talk on Margate's heritage buildings. No doubt he will have comments to make on a number of the above buildings! □

Margate Museum Corner

(Another contribution from Bob)



Dr Arthur Rowe

Margate's Unsung Hero: Arthur Walton Rowe Doctor, Surgeon, Physician, Palaeontologist and Archaeologist

Arthur Walton Rowe was born in Margate in September 1858. His father, Thomas Rowe, was a doctor in the town and young Arthur was to follow in his father's footsteps. Arthur Rowe studied medicine at St Mary's Hospital, London and at the University of Durham. In 1884, he graduated as a Master of Surgery and Bachelor of Medicine with First Class Honours.

Dr Arthur Rowe declined a position at St Mary's Hospital in order to return to Margate to work alongside his father. In addition to working as a general practitioner, Arthur Rowe also worked as a surgeon at both the Royal Sea Bathing Hospital at Westbrook and the Cottage Hospital in Victoria Road, Margate.

In 1887, Arthur Rowe married Miss Emily Barton and they had two children: a daughter, Daphne and a son, Arthur Sherborn Rowe. Mrs Rowe was a very wealthy woman who inherited a large fortune which allowed Arthur Rowe to retire in 1910 at the early age of 51.

Arthur Rowe's national claim to fame is as a palaeontologist. Indeed, he is still considered as the greatest chalk-fossil expert to this day. His most noted work was on the evolution of the micraster (a heart-shaped sea urchin). He concluded that, by correct fossil identification, it was possible to identify each zone within the chalk strata. His zonal papers were published in the early 1900s and I recall seeing a number of his finds on

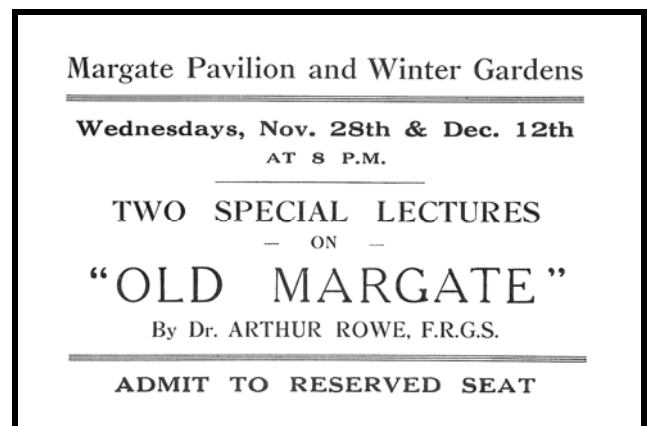
display at the Natural History Museum at Kensington on a visit to that museum about ten years ago.

In 1901, the Royal Society awarded him the Woollaston Prize for his outstanding work on the micraster species. Ten years later, the Royal Society awarded him the Lydell Medal for his work on the zonal papers.



A micraster some 80 million years old found locally and measuring approximately 5cm across

On his retirement, Dr Rowe had an Arts and Crafts country house built 'Shottendane' (now Shottendane Nursing Home but for many years previously the Railway Convalescent Home) where he was able to spend time on his fossil collection (which he kept in the attic) and on his other interests – local history and archaeology. During his retirement, he gave many talks and lectures on his hobbies.



An original admission ticket to talks on Old Margate by Dr Rowe in 1923 (courtesy of Margate Museum)

Arthur Rowe died on 17th September 1926, aged 68. He had suffered from an infected tooth, but refused medical attention. His ashes were laid to rest in Margate Cemetery.

He generously bequeathed his collection of Margate literature and archaeological remains to the town. That bequest was the source of the Local Collection which for many years was housed in the Reference Library which constituted part of the town's former public library which was housed in the former Cottage Hospital building in Victoria Road until 1974.



Dr Arthur Rowe's Celtic cross grave in Margate Cemetery. The tall Celtic cross behind his grave marks the large plot of the Taddy Friend family who lived at Northdown



Close-up of Dr Arthur Rowe's inscription

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
ARTHUR WALTON ROWE
 M.S. M.B. M.R.C.S. F.G.S.
 OF SHOTTENDANE – MARGATE
 GEOLOGIST, ARCHEOLOGIST AND ANTIQUARY
 STUDENT OF THE HISTORY OF THIS HIS NATIVE TOWN
 WHERE HE PRACTISED MEDICINE FOR MANY YEARS
 RENOWNED IN SCIENCE AS THE FIRST GEOLOGIST
 TO ZONE THE WHITE CHALK OF ENGLAND
 BORN SEPTEMBER 27TH 1858 DIED SEPTEMBER 17TH 1926

Copy of Dr Arthur Rowe's inscription

Today, Arthur Rowe is remembered not only as a distinguished fossil hunter but as someone who took an abiding interest in the town's history. During his time as a general practitioner, he was very highly regarded by the people of Margate for he had a reputation of always being ready to help. Of course, there was no National Health Service in his days but he treated both rich and poor alike and he is reported to have been particularly generous to needy patients who were genuinely unable to pay his fees. It is hardly surprising that he was so popular with his patients – many who affectionately referred to him as 'Dr Arthur'.

If anyone would like to know more about Arthur Rowe, there is a file in Margate Museum which contains lots more information on his life and work which can be referred to on request. The Museum also houses a small collection of fossils found locally but, sadly, none found by Arthur Rowe. □



Editor's Note:

Arthur Rowe's father was also a local doctor and surgeon and his remains are contained in the same grave plot.



Close-up of Dr Thomas Smith Rowe's inscription

ALSO OF
THOMAS SMITH ROWE
 M.D. J.P.
 FOR MANY YEARS VISITING SURGEON
 TO THE ROYAL SEA BATHING HOSPITAL
 AND FOUNDER OF THE MARGATE CRECHE
 WHO DIED NOVEMBER 28TH 1907
 AGED 82 YEARS

Copy of Dr Thomas Smith Rowe's inscription

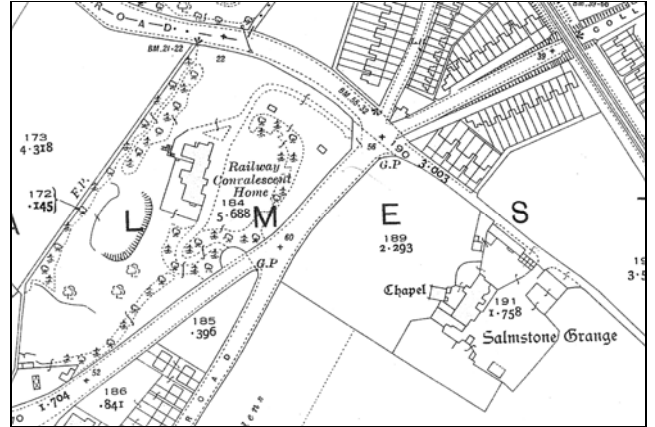
Dr Thomas Smith Rowe lived for many years at 1 Union Crescent. His son Arthur lived in the adjoining house at 1 Cecil Street for more than 20 years up to the date of his father's death in 1907. *Kelly's Directories* then show that Arthur Rowe and his family moved to 2 Price's Avenue, Cliftonville (now Thornton Bobby's shop on the corner of Northdown Road) where he lived until his retirement in 1910 when he moved to his new home 'Shottendane'.

Almost a complete run of copies of *Kelly's Directories for the Isle of Thanet* is held on the shelves of the Local Studies Collection at Margate Library. *Kelly's Directories* are a most useful source of information when researching both individuals and properties from the 1880s to 1974 (when publication, sadly, ceased) and they may be accessed on both Tuesday afternoons and Friday afternoons and all day on the first Saturday of each month. Old *Kelly's Directories* are highly recommended for local research purposes. The Museum also holds a few copies of old *Kelly's* which are available for research purposes. □

Dr Arthur Rowe's former home 'Shottendane'



Front entrance to 'Shottendane'



Part of a map (1936) showing the location of the Railway Convalescent Home (formerly 'Shottendane') relative to Salmestone Grange and Coffin House Corner ('Coffin House' itself was demolished around 30 years ago but the name remains) at the southern end of Hartsdown Road



Dr Rowe's beautiful house 'Shottendane' as seen from the landscaped gardens. The house was designed by Hugh Thackeray Turner FSA, FRIBA (1853-1937), one of the nation's most highly regarded architects of the Arts and Crafts country houses built between 1890 and 1910. It is believed that 'Shottendane' was built in 1910. Today, the house is Grade II listed. Both the gates to the property and its high wall fronting Hartsdown Road and Shottendane Road are also separately listed as Grade II buildings. 'Shottendane' is regarded by some as one of Margate's architectural gems. By a twist of fate, Thackeray Turner's own country house – which he also designed – at Godalming, Surrey was named 'Westbrook'.



The substantial and impressive perimeter wall of 'Shottendane' as seen from Hartsdown Road when approaching the traffic lights at Coffin House Corner

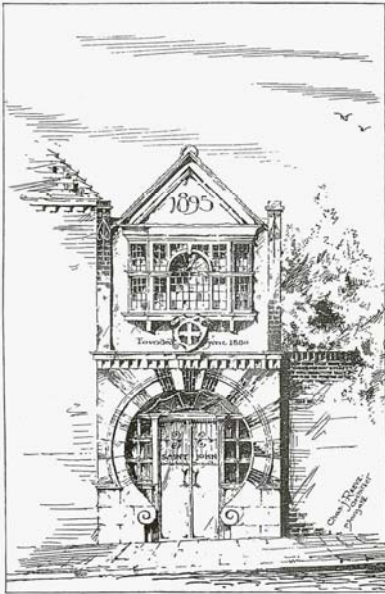
Note: Both of the above photographs of 'Shottendane' are reproduced from early photographs of the Railway Convalescent Home.



The magnificent main gates to 'Shottendane'

Following the death of Dr Rowe in 1926, 'Shottendane' was sold at auction and bought by the Railway Convalescent Homes in 1927 as a place of convalescence for railway workers and their families. The building continued to be used as a Railway Convalescent Home some 60 years until it was sold in the late 1980s; part of the garden of 'Shottendane' being subsequently developed for housing (Knold Park). 'Shottendane' is now used by Shottendane Nursing Home. When the property was taken over by the Railway Convalescent Homes, it was acknowledged that everything inside and out had been finished to the minute detail of a connoisseur: it is understood that most of the original fixtures and fittings still remain. □

Former Margate Ambulance Corps station to be Listed?



Sketch drawn by Charles Reeve, Margate Architect (Courtesy of Margate Museum)



Building works in progress – note the date in the left-hand photograph and the vertical ladder on the inside back wall in the right-hand photograph – February 2006

Application has recently been made by the Society to English Heritage for one of Margate's most attractive Victorian buildings to be listed. Tony Snow had noticed, whilst walking through the Old Town in February, that building work on and around the former ambulance-station in Fort Road was underway. Indeed, the property next door to the ambulance-station had been demolished as had the side wall of the ambulance-station leaving the flank exposed. On enquiry, it was discovered that Thanet District Council had given planning consent for a block of flats to be erected on the site. Although the planning consent retained the façade of the ambulance-station, the remainder of the building would be effectively destroyed.

The former ambulance-station is perhaps the smallest two-storey building in the town. The ground-floor room is approximately nine feet square and the first floor room is the same size. Access between the floors was by a vertical ladder which is still in place and can be seen in the accompanying photograph.

The building is undoubtedly of both historic and architectural interest. The building is dated 1896 (although the architect's sketch shows the date 1895). The fancy brickwork and the 'Queen Anne' revival-style first-floor oriel window present a most pleasing elegant frontage to the building which should be rejuvenated once it has been cleaned. For many years, the building has had a much-neglected look about it. As can be seen from the accompanying architect's sketch, the oriel window originally featured leaded-windows and it is hoped that this elegant window will be restored to the architect's original design.

The Margate Ambulance Corps was inaugurated in 1880: it held the distinction of being the first civilian town ambulance brigade in the country. It also had the first hand litter-and-carriage invented by a Mr Dunton of Margate. The ambulance brigade and the litter-and-carriage served as models for other towns to follow. That same original litter-and-carriage still exists and is on display in Margate Museum. □



The Charles Reeve family grave in Margate Cemetery: Charles Reeve was in architectural practice (as Reeve & Reeve) with Mr R. Dalby Reeve, the architect of Margate War Memorial in Trinity Gardens. Their office for many years was in Cecil Square

Correspondence

Dear Sir

Hedges at West Bay

On Friday, 12th August 2005 at 12.30pm, 95 people and three dogs attended a meeting on the grassland opposite *The Swan* at West Bay. They had learnt that it was the intention of Thanet District Council's Parks Department to grub the historic hedges to save maintenance costs. The meeting, set up by Cllr Ann Chater, was attended by Cllr Cohen and Paul Verrall of the Parks Department.

They listened to the passionate feelings of the residents – the case for the hedges was that they were part of an historic planned garden; they gave shelter from the prevailing winds and the heat of the summer to visitors; and they provided important habitat for wild birds.

On the following Monday, we heard that the hedges were repleved. Since then, they have been trimmed well and today the green looks better than it has for many years. Councils rarely receive thanks – and I, myself, am a vociferous critic of some things that have happened in Westgate – but on this occasion, I should like to congratulate them for listening to the people.

Yours faithfully

Dr Dawn Crouch

The following letter was recently received by our Treasurer (Mrs Phil Johnson) from Miss Mary Russell, a Life Member of our Society. The letter is reproduced with kind permission of Miss Russell:

Dear Mrs Johnson

Life Membership fees

I noticed the subscription reminder on the front page of issue No 341. Although I am a Life Member, at the time I paid £25 which is £15 short of the current amount. As the Margate Civic Society is a registered Charity, I feel it would be appropriate to make up the 'shortfall' and therefore enclose a cheque to bring me into line.

Although I do not attend meetings, my membership has given me a lot of pleasure through the newsletter. I must say its new layout is very smart.

Yours sincerely

(Miss) M. Russell

Members who attended our last Annual General Meeting will recall that our former Treasurer, Jack Pilcher, spoke to the membership on the reasons why the Life Membership fees had – after very many years – been increased considerably with effect from last October. As the Society's total membership is currently around 275 and nearly 30% of our members are Life Members, Miss Russell's generosity is most welcomed by the Executive Committee.

Perhaps other long-time Life Members might wish to consider following Miss Russell's fine example! □



Death of Modernist Architect

The Times newspaper for 2nd March 2006 contained an obituary of Frank Risdon who died on 19th December 2005, aged 92. He had qualified as an architect in 1936 and had practised as an architect in the Modernist style for some 60 years. But what was particularly interesting about his obituary was that it reported that, on gaining chartered status, Frank Risdon had designed two private houses: one at Minnis Bay and the other at Beckenham – both with Modernist features.

It is believed that the house at Minnis Bay is "Fort Grenham" which is next to "Bay House" (another Modernist house and formerly known as "Guesend") facing the sea at Grenham Bay. Although neither of these houses is currently a listed building, "Fort Grenham" still is, externally, in its original form including – most importantly – its original 1930s Crittall windows.

Kelly's Directory of the Isle of Thanet for 1939 shows Harry Vivien Ward living at "Fort Grenham". He served as a councillor and later as an alderman on the former Margate Corporation for many years. He was Mayor in both 1953 and 1954 and attended the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II as a Baronet of the Cinque Ports. A portrait of Alderman Harry Ward wearing his Baronet's robes is hanging in Margate Museum.

There is a growing interest in Modernist houses and we are fortunate that there are still a number of them in the Margate area. They were built in the 1930s and all have a very distinctive appearance although, sadly, many have had their windows replaced unsympathetically with the result that the character of those buildings has been changed. Perhaps, one day, those that now have different style windows will be restored to their former design. But what a shame that "Ray House" at Westgate was demolished some thirty years ago. Those who remember that superb Modernist house, which stood on land adjacent to the golf course on Sea Road, still mourn its sad loss. □

Margate in Mozart's Time

A note for your diary:

This year (2006) is the 250th anniversary of Mozart's birth and in commemoration of that anniversary, Margate Civic Society in association with Margate Town Partnership and Margate Old Town Traders' Association have arranged for **FREE** clarinet concerts to be held in a number of venues in the Old Town including Margate Museum, The Old Town Gallery and Market Place Tea Rooms on Saturday, 27th May during the day.

In addition, an evening concert will be given at 7.00pm in the Market Place Tea Rooms that same day.

Phone (01843) 846427 for further details.

Margate Civic Society Town Walks 2006



Do you know where this building is?



Was there a king or Margate?



Where are there more shells than on the beach?



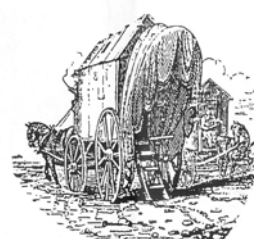
Why were so many pleased to see this place of taxation?



Where is the Flemish connection?



Who was inspired by the views?



Why would you want to go to sea in this?

The answers to all the above questions can be easily learned by coming on our walks around the Old Town and to the Shell Grotto, guided by Colin Bridge and Tony Snow. The Old Town Walk includes a visit to a site not often open to the public – Margate Tudor House – and usually a short visit to Margate Museum. Those on the Grotto Walk benefit from a special tour of the Shell Grotto and, if time permits, a peek inside the Tudor House.

Neither walk could be considered a route march. The Old Town Walk takes about two hours, the pace being leisurely with frequent stops for descriptions of the historic buildings and stories about the personalities who contributed to the life of Margate.

The Grotto Walk takes at least two hours and is at a moderate pace with some continuous walking but with regular stops for the guides to help you explore the stories behind the buildings and to enjoy the special panoramas which inspired the great artist J. M. W. Turner. There is also time for a break and refreshment at the Shell Grotto.

All walks begin at 2.30pm outside the Visitor Information Centre on The Parade opposite Margate Harbour.

OLD TOWN WALKS

Saturday, 13th May

Saturday, 22nd July

Saturday, 9th September

Donations welcomed (£1 suggested)

GROTTO WALKS

Saturday, 1st July

Saturday, 19th August

£2.50 per person (includes entry to the Grotto)

We would be delighted to have you join us on the walks and while booking is not strictly necessary, a telephone call would be much appreciated in order to assess the likely number of participants on each of the walks.

The guided walks are also available for groups at other times by prior arrangement.

For further information or booking, please contact Tony Snow on 01843 221838. □

Margate Civic Society Tour of Margate Cemetery

This year is the 150th anniversary of the dedication of Margate Cemetery and arrangements have been made for James Brazier to take members of the Society on a tour of Margate Cemetery on Sunday, 14th May 2006 when visits will be made to many of the graves featured in his talk to the Society last November. We will meet at the Chapel near the main entrance to the cemetery in Manston Road at 2.30pm and stout footwear is recommended. The tour will take around two hours and a donation to Society funds of £1 is suggested. Please contact James Brazier on 01843 298038 for further details.



Book Reviews

The Realm of Shells by Sonia Overall
Fourth Estate
326pp hb ISBN 0-0-718410-7 £17.99

We are all doing our best for the Shell Grotto in Margate. Owner Sarah Vickery works hard and successfully on its behalf, and architectural historian and writer Timothy Brittain-Catlin gave it good coverage in *The World of Interiors* a while back. And now we have Sonia Overall's novel, which has already received good reviews from national newspapers. Overall was herself inspired by a visit to the Grotto and, as a result, has produced an original and gripping novel.

The story of the discovery of the Grotto in 1835, with its accompanying enigmas, which can never fail to stir the imagination, is told here through the eyes of eight-year-old Fanny Newlove, daughter of the Mr Newlove, in the grounds of whose school the Grotto lies concealed. Narrated in a sharply perceptive, somewhat stream-of-consciousness manner, *The Realm of Shells* deals with Fanny's early awareness of a sense of treachery and greed expressed in the form, mainly, of lascivious and unscrupulous neighbour Captain Easter. This gentleman has for some time suspected that something of undue interest lies concealed on Newlove's territory, and the way in which he manipulates and humiliates the once happy Newlove family makes for a disturbing but compelling tale.

The novel is full of local colour – accounts of the harbour, the details of the family's arrival by sea, Bettison's Library, even a suggestion that someone who is perhaps Turner has been spotted out painting. Social mores, class issues, aspects of religious belief, education, the politics of post-Reform Britain are all hinted at from time to time. All this, although far from laboured, show evidence of careful research, supported by the acknowledgements at the beginning. Above all though, the beauty and mystery of the Grotto itself are described with moments of real lyricism and its vulnerability, and that of its owners, in the hands of the uncaring and greedy are, for this reviewer, highlighted particularly effectively.

Despite the fact that, for some, a novel with a child-narrator may possibly be slightly more difficult to come to terms with, this book with its unforgettable and haunting subject, its well-controlled development of events, its tragic climax (softened somewhat by a much later letter from the now elderly Fanny) and its sense from the start of impending disaster, is a fine read, particularly for us of Thanet, fittingly celebrating a unique structure. □

Catriona Blaker

The following three books have recently been published by Michael's Bookshop, 72 King Street, Ramsgate:

A New & Complete History of the Isle of Thanet from the Earliest Records to the Present Time by W. H. Ireland (originally published 1828)

124pp sb £6.99

This book is another recent reprint from Michael's Bookshop at Ramsgate and contains numerous copies of delightful engravings of local scenes originally painted by George Shepherd and H. Castineau which will be familiar to many readers. Three of the pictures contained in the reprint are reproduced in colour and the remainder in monochrome. The book should appeal to all local-historian aficionados whose appetite for information on old Margate can never be fully satisfied. The book contains a wealth of information and we are lucky that Michael's Bookshop is reprinting such fine old books at such reasonable prices. The reviewer is particularly pleased that this book should be reprinted in its original form (rather than as some of the other reprints have been with each page containing two pages of the original book). At £6.99, this book is very good value and recommended.

Margate and Ramsgate – All About and Round About Them – A Gossiping Guide to Some Pleasant Places in the Isle of Thanet by Chas. H. Ross (originally published 1882)

116pp sb ISBN 1-905477-29-5 £5.99

And yet another reprint from Michael's Bookshop. However, this is a most unusual guidebook and, as its title suggests, is quite different from any other guide book seen by the reviewer. The book was originally published by the same Victorian satirical publishing house that produced *Judy* magazine which, we are told, was a possible rival to the better-known *Punch* magazine. *Judy* magazine started in 1867 and seems to have finished by 1900. This book takes a most humorous approach to local life around 1880 and its many line drawings both of local characters and of local views are a real delight. The book provides more than a glimpse into life in Thanet around that time and does so in a most humorous way which is most appealing. At £5.99, this book is highly recommended.

Thanet from the Air by Simon Moores with Bon Shilling
40pp sb ISBN 1-905477-24-4 £5.99

Unlike the two books reviewed above, this book is not a reprint: it contains some 80 aerial photographs of parts of Thanet taken by Simon Moores during 2005. All the photographs are reproduced in full colour and are sufficiently captioned to enable immediate recognition. From the air, many parts of Thanet look most appealing – but maybe that is because the ubiquitous graffiti and litter which pervade the area simply can't be seen! On the other hand, Arlington House looks no better from the air than it does from the ground! It is the publisher's intention to publish further books of aerial photographs of each of the Thanet towns in the future but, in the meantime, this book will appeal to readers wanting a different perspective of parts of Thanet at a reasonable price. □

What's on

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

Thursday, 6 th April 2006	"Safety in the Home: How not to get conned and Fire Prevention" by Terry McCormick
Thursday, 11 th May 2006	2006 Town Pride Awards and "Heritage Houses in Margate" by Nick Dermott
<i>Note: Meetings will resume in October 2006: details of meetings from October will be published in the next newsletter</i>	

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.

25 th April 2006	"St Ives School" by Chris Stevens, Curator, Tate Britain
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Isle of Thanet Historical Society (talks all start at 7.30pm at the Roman Catholic Church Hall, Minnis Road, Birchington):

24th April 2006 "Old Ramsgate" by Brian Fagg, followed by light refreshments

Note: Meetings will resume in September

Kent Family History Society [Thanet Branch](talks all start at 8.00pm at Birchington Village Centre):

19th April 2006 "Comedy of Errors" by Richard Ratcliffe

17th May 2006 AGM

21st June 2006 "Mad Jack Fuller – The Squire of Brightling" by Geoff Hutchinson

19th July 2006 "Education and where to find records" by Dr Ian Coulson

Birchington Heritage Trust (meetings start at 7.30pm at Birchington Village Centre, Alpha Road) unless otherwise stated:

10th May 2006 Evening guided walk around Mill Lane and Mill Row area led by Mrs Pat Orpwood – meet at 6.30pm at corner of Essex Gardens and Canterbury Road – charge £1 (includes booklet)

26th May 2006 AGM followed by quiz and social

Isle of Thanet Geographical Association (meetings start at 7.30pm at Park Hall, Pierremont Gardens, Broadstairs)

10th April 2006 "Modern European History" by Dr James Ellison

8th May 2006 "Wildlife in Southern Japan" by Paul Hale

12th June 2006 "Sri Lanka" by Mrs Ivy F. Clarke

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 Cemetery Trust	230274	Vera Jenkins
Margate Lifeboat Fund-Raising Committee	832846	Laurie Walton, Treasurer
Friends of Quex	842040	Edna Elvin, 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	Museum closed during winter months
The Shell Grotto, Grotto Hill, Margate	220008	Sarah Vickery
Manston Spitfire & Hurricane Museum	821940	Museum closed during winter months
RAF Manston History Museum	825224	-
Cliftonville Residents' Association	226033	Keith Chadband, Chairman
Westgate & Westbrook Residents' Association	295326	Sylvie Nicholls, Treasurer



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 2005/06 – as elected at the Society's Annual General Meeting held on 6th October 2005:

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 (Tel: 292089)

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 2005/06:

	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