



Margate
Civic
Society

SUMMER 2024 NEWSLETTER
ISSUE NO. 415

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

THE SOCIETY'S NEW PRESIDENT

Following the sad death of our late President, Ralph Handscomb, on 3rd August 2023, the committee of the Society has agreed unanimously to appoint Pamela Pople as his replacement as President.

The President of Margate Civic Society has a non-executive role but is important in representing the Society at public events as well as keeping a watchful eye on the committee and helping to make sure that the Society's objectives are met. The committee are confident that Pamela will be perfectly suited for the role. As a bonus, she has agreed to continue to serve as Chair of the Society.

Harry Scobie, Vice-Chair

CHAIR AND PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members

How are you all?

I hope that you are now all managing to stay well and safe and our best wishes go to anyone who is suffering from any health issues currently, caring for a loved one or has been recently bereaved. Sadly, due to poor health some more senior Members are now sometimes unable to attend our meetings, so I should like to give the following a special mention: -

Pam Piggott, Anthea and Harry Preston and James Brazier.

Chris Whittingham has also been in hospital, but is now back home, so it was good to see him and his wife, Gillian at the last meeting. We have missed you!

If you would also like a mention in the Autumn Edition, or would like another Member included, please do not hesitate to contact me. Margate Civic Society sends heartfelt condolences to all family and close friends who have been touched by sadness.

Presidency: I was very honoured and delighted to be nominated President by the Committee earlier this year, which was then duly proposed by our Vice-Chair, Harry Scobie at a meeting and unanimously agreed by Members. Ralph once told me that he was also Chair when elected President, so I know he would be incredibly pleased that I will continue his legacy and would trust me to continue being professional, approachable, proactive and apolitical.

Membership: A warm welcome to our five new Members: Mr and Mrs Peter Castle, Rosalind Morton and Christine and Stephen March. I am delighted you have joined, and we look forward to seeing you at future meetings and events.

I am grateful to those who have renewed their annual Membership this year and thank those Life Members who have already made donations, which is very gratifying. Of course, lapsed Members are still able to attend our lecture evenings but will have to pay a nominal fee per talk, so it is obviously far more viable to be a paid-up Member! By giving talks voluntarily, donating raffle prizes, purchasing raffle tickets, refreshments, and merchandise, this enables us to make a small profit. All help is most appreciated, especially in these increasingly challenging times!

As always, a big thank you to all members of the Committee and Auxiliary Committee for pulling together and for their ongoing commitment in striving to sustain the Society.

Lecture Evenings: As you are aware, I always endeavour to organise a diverse programme of lectures, with something hopefully appealing to all Members' tastes, without breaking the budget! Our venue continues to be a popular choice, with excellent facilities, enabling us to sell refreshments (including Diane's delicious home-made cakes) at reasonable prices which adds to the enjoyment of the evening. There is also greater parking provision, with well-lit user-friendly access and heating, which obviously will be extremely welcome during the colder months. We are also grateful for the added practical and assistance of the caretaker. It is our intention that these meetings will continue to be inclusive, welcoming, comfortable, and friendly, so I sincerely hope that more of you will wish to come along to meet your fellow Members, whilst also showing your support to the Committee and the guest speaker, making these evenings more financially viable.

Lecture Programme 2024: Our last meeting, held on 6 June, was exceptionally poignant and those who attended this **80th Anniversary D-Day Talk** by Steve Hookins, agreed that this was excellent. It was entitled "**A Short Talk on the Longest Day**" which took the form of a virtual battlefield tour, highlighting some of the events and individuals involved on this momentous day, based on the battlefield tours to the Normandy invasion beaches that our guest speaker wrote and led as part of the British Army's Phase I Training Programme.

Steve's knowledge is second-to-none and his approach was unique, empathetic, and thought-provoking, giving a sensitive performance, encouraging the audience to 'think' before judging, using real-life images of those who fought, some of whom had who lost their lives at a tragic early age. It ended with a wreath laying, dedicated to a headstone for an unknown individual and attendees standing for a minute's silence.

Steve's wife, Helen, was unfortunately, unable to accompany him due to her ongoing illness, which sadly is deteriorating, and it is unknown at this stage whether he will be able to continue giving talks next year. He has promised that he will if it is at all possible but obviously, he must consider his wife's health. I wrote to Steve afterwards saying how much we had enjoyed his lecture which appealed to all ages, attracting new Members and guests, adding that he was certainly one of our most popular, knowledgeable, and entertaining speakers. He replied as follows: -

"I am pleased they enjoyed the talk, and it was a great place to do it.

I am also pleased that in a very small way I was part of the commemorations & did my bit. Many thanks for the kind comments about myself as a speaker. I will most certainly keep in touch & do hope to see you next year. Best wishes & thanks to your group - Steve".



Steve Hookins' photo right

The evening had a very friendly atmosphere and Mike and Diane brought authenticity to the occasion, dressing up and decorating part of the room with bunting with others also dressing in patriotic colours. Prior to the raffle, there was a collection for Cancer Research UK which Steve supports at the end of every talk. We were short-handed' on the night, so my grateful thanks to everyone for being so flexible!



Mike Thompson with Diane Addison at the Homefront Tea Room – photograph courtesy of Iris Johnston and Iris Johnston (left) & Glenys Clements minding the Raffle Table – photograph courtesy of Richard Clements

You will see further on in your newsletter, that I have included the revised details of our two remaining meetings, both of which incorporate events.

Town Pride Awards: As I explained at the June meeting, this year has been incredibly challenging due to there being a noticeable lack of nominations for renovated and new-build properties, pertaining to our usual standard. In view of this, it was decided that this year's event would be more community-based, recognising projects of merit. **We have made the decision to cancel our July meeting, due to the General Election**, and have now decided to make September a 'bumper' event in two parts; focussing initially on Robin's fascinating talk, followed by an opportunity for any questions. After a short interval, the second part will focus on Town Pride with presentations, photographs, a complimentary glass of wine or juice or cup of tea or coffee (as is the usual tradition) with an opportunity for socialising before the raffle draw at the end of the evening.

Planning: Mike Thompson, our Planning and Conservation Representative, has been exceedingly diligent lately and continues to monitor and scrutinise planning applications, making representation when necessary. Should you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact him.

Projects: Blue Plaques: At long last the arduous work undertaken by the two Mikes (Wilton and Thompson) for over two years, together with Robin Colyer has borne fruition, culminating in a wonderful event held on Sunday, 2 June. Congratulations to you all for completing this first-class historic project and I am delighted that the day was such a monumental success which made all the stress and frustration worthwhile! You will see Mike Wilton's detailed article further on in your newsletter.

Margate Clock Tower Gate: See Mike Thompson's report concerning this project.

Newsletter: We hope you enjoy reading your bumper Summer Edition with Sally as Editor and the Editorial Team: Mike Wilton, Mike Thompson, and me working together. We have received a positive response from Members wishing to make contributions, for which I am incredibly grateful as feel it

is important that all Members' input is respected, which makes for interesting, varied reading. This edition includes an article and photographs from Joanna Brown, which I hope you will enjoy reading as much as I have. You will also see that Sally has written a quiz for you to enjoy. Should you wish to contribute to forthcoming editions by forwarding articles, photographs, postcards, life stories, news of events, book reviews, poems, and anything else of interest, please let me know. Your feedback is always welcome, especially if it is favourable!

Historical Walks: Vice-President, Robin Colyer has been continuing with his new programme of enjoyable and informative walks this year, the first of which took place on 13 April. My thanks to Robin for giving his time voluntarily and for his generosity in donating all proceeds to our Society. These walks are excellent value for money, lasting approximately 90 minutes. Please do not forget that Robin is also willing to organise private walks, so if you are interested, he would love to hear from you! Details of the remaining three are as follows:

Saturday 13th July "West of the Brooks" - a walk around Westbrook and Hartsdown Park. Meet at Margate Railway Station at 1400 hrs.

No walk in August

Saturday 7th September "Six Squares Walk"- a walk around the Georgian Town. Meet at the Droit House at 1400 hrs.

Saturday 12th October "Cliftonville Walk" - a walk around a Victorian seaside suburb. Meet at the Droit House at 1400 hrs.

Booking is recommended for all these walks, which you can do by telephoning or texting Robin Colyer on **07878 537448**. A donation of £5.00 per walk towards the work of the local heritage charity, Margate Civic Society.

Community News



The Margate School: Applications are now open for October 2024 start: 'European Fine Art Masters' (two years' full-time), 'Visual Communication Design' (one year part-time) and 'The Still and Moving Image' (one year part-time). Also, scheduled for this year are Exhibitions, Workshops, Guest Lectures and Building improvements (thanks to funding from the Community Ownership Fund). Should you wish to find out more, see www.themargateschool.com



Cliftonville Farmers' Market established in September 2001 by the

Cliftonville Residents Association. It is run entirely by volunteers who give their time freely and it is self-funded. It has won nine prestigious awards being voted 'Best in Kent' six times and three 'Pride in Thanet' awards.

A reminder that these successful markets are held on the **last Sunday of each month (excluding December) from 1000-1300 hrs**, on the Walpole Bay Lawns, behind the Walpole Bay Hotel, Fifth Avenue, Cliftonville, CT9 3HF. Admission is free and the dates for the next quarter are 28 July, 25

August and 29 September, so why not go along and give your support. For further details, contact cliftonvillefm@yahoo.com or ring 07568 37901.

Wilderness-to-Wonderland: This successful, commendable community project, under the Leadership of founder, Rory Waitt continues to demonstrate diversity, inclusion, civic pride, and positive mental health by building communities who look after gardens for residents and visitors to enjoy. Members carry out regular work parties in Westbrook at 1500 hrs on Fridays.

These volunteers have created a positive, energised, powerful spirit and made an enormous difference to the local area and are continuing to work with local schools and have regular fundraiser quiz nights which are well-supported.

Rory confirmed there is sponsorship from **Your Move Charterhouse**, **The Bike Shed** in Westbrook, **SEK (Social Enterprise Kent)** and through **Crowdfunding**, However, they still need two or three additional sponsors to donate large sums but are also grateful to **Goodwins** for their support as well as other organisations, including **Margate Town Team**. They hope that with further sponsorship they can maintain their current work and expand into further areas. Anyone interested in supporting or joining the group can contact Rory by email: Rorywaitt008@gmail.com or find them on [Facebook](#) and Instagram Wildernessstowonderland



Team of Volunteers above and the beautiful flowers they planted





Vibrant floral displays that touch the soul!

GRASS Cliftonville CIC - Oval Bandstand & Lawns:

To see the latest details of various events organised for this summer: outdoor cinema viewings, Oval Summer Sundays, Summer Spectacular, Sundays Support Live Music see their website: www.theovalbandstand.co.uk or email them at info@theovalbandstand.co.uk.

There are many events being held in the three Thanet towns and the villages over the summer, details of which you can find on www.visitthanet.co.uk - to give you a taster, I have mentioned two of the Margate events below:-

Margate Soul Festival: From Friday, 2nd to Sunday, 4 August, Margate's longest-running music event returns with a stellar line up of international and homegrown acts. See www.margatesoulfestival.co.uk for more details.

Margate Carnival: this popular annual event will take place on Sunday, 4 August starting at 1430 hrs from Palm Bay.

A Date for Your Diary: Thursday, 5 September, commencing 1930 hrs (attendees to take their seats by 1915 hrs please). Topic: "We Will Burn Yours Barns - Rural Unrest in East Kent in the 1830s" with Robin Colyer (local historian and Vice-President. As mentioned previously, this will be a longer evening, incorporating Town Pride. I hope you will join us for this special evening! Whether you decide to catch up with friends and family, have a staycation or a holiday abroad, I wish you all an enjoyable and relaxed summer.

With My Very Best wishes

Pamela

LECTURE PROGRAMME 2024

All meetings are held at Holy Trinity Margate Hall, Margate CT9 3TN. Refreshments, merchandise, and raffle tickets will be on sale every evening. Talks commence at 1930 hrs and attendees are requested to be seated by 1920 hrs.

4 July Please note that this meeting has now been cancelled due to the General Election. **TOWN PRIDE AWARDS** has been deferred to the second part of the September meeting.

August No meeting (summer recess)

5 September

Guests: £4.50 nominal fee

Topic: " We Will Burn Yours Barns - Rural Unrest in East Kent in the 1830s"

Speaker: **Robin Colyer** (Vice President, Margate Civic Society and Local Historian)

This will be a bumper meeting of two halves; the first focussing on Robin's fascinating talk, with an opportunity for any questions and the second will be a diluted version of **Town Pride**, with presentations made to those we consider have enhanced our community.

Following the awards, a complimentary glass of wine, juice, cup of tea or coffee will then be served, enabling an opportunity for Members and invited guests to mingle.

3 October (Renewal of Subs Due)

Guests: £3.50 nominal fee

Another evening of two halves; commencing with the official business, followed by an upbeat, entertaining presentation.

Topic: **Annual General Meeting, followed by a talk entitled: -**

"My Life in the Theatre and the World of Entertainment"

Speaker: **Gordon Clarkson** (Margate born, Thanet based, Theatrical Producer, Entertainer, Writer, and Public Speaker).

This will be followed by an opportunity for attendees to ask any questions, Members' Notices, culminating as always, with the Raffle Draw.

November No meeting

December No meeting

Should you have any suggestions for future talks, please feel welcome to contact the Margate Civic Society.

ALFRED DELLER PLAQUE UNVEILING CEREMONY

by Mike Wilton

In the last edition of the Newsletter, I described the Society's work to provide a plaque to the memory of the famous countertenor Alfred Deller in St John's Church, Margate. I'm pleased to report that the project came to a very successful conclusion at the unveiling ceremony, held at the church on the 2nd June 2024.

Alfred Deller was born in Margate in 1912 and, in his younger years, was a chorister at St John's. Provision of the plaque was proposed and funded by life member and noted local historian Dr John Whyman and his brother Colin, who has considerable expertise in music and has conducted research into the countertenor voice and its place in musical history. The Society was pleased to adopt the proposal; unfortunately, Covid and its ramifications held up progress for several years, but work started in earnest in early 2023. Robin Colyer conducted the negotiations with the church authorities, which led to their granting a faculty, or permission for the plaque to be installed, at the end of March 2024. Their one change was to request that the plaque be made of wood, rather than the traditional blue plaque.

Following very amicable and helpful discussions with the churchwarden of St John's, Society life member Ann Smith, and the priest, the Revd Denis Hartley, it was agreed that the plaque would be unveiled at an evensong service at 4pm on Sunday 2nd June. We had in the meantime invited Alfred Deller's son Mark to carry out the unveiling and were delighted when he agreed to do so.

We designed the plaque, which was ordered by Mike Thompson and handed to the church to install. We decided that it would be good to have a countertenor singing at the service, in addition to the church choir, and Mike tracked down David Wilcock, who is a lay clerk at Canterbury Cathedral and who agreed to come to the service along with organist Paul Stubbings.



David Wilcox counter tenor

We invited members of the Society to attend the service and sent out publicity, locally and to the specialised music magazines and to Civic Voice. All was set for the big day. Sunday 2nd June arrived and we were fortunate that the weather was kind to us. We were very pleased to welcome Mark Deller, his sister Jane and her husband, Mark's son Martin and Martin's son Rex Alfred, so we had three generations of Dellers. We were delighted that the Mayor of Margate, Cllr Jack Packman,

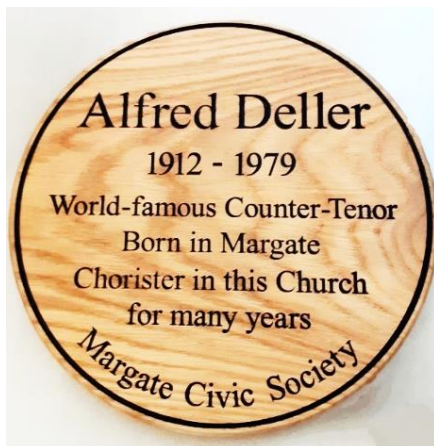
and the Mayoress, Cllr Karen Brinkman, were able to join us. Also attending were Derek Poole, representing John and Colin Whyman who were not able to attend, and David and Heather Nunn, also friends of John and Colin. David is an expert cameraman and video producer and kindly agreed to film the service for John and Colin Whyman and provide DVDs to the parties involved, including the church and the Society. As well as the church's regular congregation, we were pleased to see a good turnout from Society members – thank you to those who joined us.

During an inspiring service of hymns and prayers led by Fr Denis and including excellent music from the choir and the church's organist David Lammler, countertenor David Wilcock beautifully sang 'Yet can I hear that dulcet lay' by Handel and a piece by Purcell, accompanied by Paul Stubbings on organ.

Fr Denis invited the Deller family and members of Margate Civic Society to move to the rear of the church for the unveiling of the plaque. Mark Deller told us a little of his father Alfred's early days as a choirboy in St John's, which paved the way for his subsequent career and worldwide fame as a countertenor, all of which started in the very place we were standing.



The plaque revealed



Mark and his grandson Rex Alfred unveiled the plaque for all to see. After the service, the church kindly provided tea and cakes and the opportunity for all to view the plaque and chat to Mark and his family. A very special occasion and Margate Civic Society is pleased that another plaque has been added to the town's collection.



*(left) The Deller family with the Mayor and Mayoress and (right) Mark Deller and the Civic Society Group.
Below – the order of service*

The Parish Church of St John the Baptist



**Evensong to Celebrate the life and worship
here of Alfred Deller
31 May 1912 – 16 July 1979**

Thank you to Mark, Alfred's eldest son for the unveiling.

Jane, Alfred's daughter & Alfred's grandchildren Martin and Toby.

Dr John Whyman and his brother Colin for proposing & providing the plaque. Thank you Margate Civic Society for making it all possible.

And a big thank you to Countertenor David Wilcock & Paul Stubbings, our own David Lammler and tonight's choir.

ANYONE FOR TENNIS OR GOLF?

The Isle of Thanet had two sporting venues, close to Margate, which were well-known around the country, especially in the 1920s/1930s.

The Westgate-on-Sea Cricket and Lawn Tennis Club was founded in 1881 by Dr Arthur Flint and Robert Grant (a former JP) who lived at Fernleigh, a large house near where the Club was to be situated (see map opposite). At this time, sporting activities were gaining in popularity and sport such as archery, cricket, croquet, golf and tennis were established as a part of the great Victorian drive for healthy pursuits. In its heyday in the 1920s and 30s, the Thanet Championship, held at the Westgate-on-Sea Lawn Tennis Club, would have been considered one of the best tournaments in the country, the equivalent of Eastbourne today. Some of the very well-known tennis players of the time competed, including Betty Nuthall who played at Wimbledon and reached number 4 in the World ranking. The Club advertised a total of 22 playing courts.

A local Westgate historian, Bill Hambidge, in his memories of the town remembered the club in the 1920s and 30s - "The ground of the Westgate-on-Sea Lawn Tennis Club with a very high wall enclosing some 20 courts. The courts were arranged in two sections – on the north side there were courts for schools, beginners and others and the south side was only used for competitions especially the Isle of Thanet Championships, played during August in each year over two weeks. This annual event was a remarkable success and drew crowds of spectators. It was here that Betty Nuthall learnt her tennis and became the Isle of Thanet champion in the Ladies Singles".

The club continued to run successfully until the Second World War when it was closed for the duration. The Club opened after the war but was disbanded a few years later. Some of the grounds were then used by the Ursuline School for sports and the rest of the land was sold off to Kent County Council. The new Westgate-on-Sea Village Green is situated very close to where the Club would have been.

WESTGATE-ON-SEA LAWN TENNIS CLUB

Club Grounds:—CANTERBURY ROAD (left hand side just past Golf Club House in direction of Birchington) (see map).

Phone: WESTGATE 122

Buses from Margate and Birchington pass the Grounds. The Westgate Town Service (from Post Office) to Linkfield Road is within three minutes' of the Grounds.



The Newly-erected Club Pavilion.
Spacious covered verandah. Interior fitted with every modern convenience. Large tea room on first floor over-looking Championship Courts and Cricket Field.

TWENTY-TWO WELL-KEPT GRASS COURTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR PLAY.

For full particulars regarding Membership Subscriptions, Non-Members Tickets, American and Annual Tournaments, apply:—

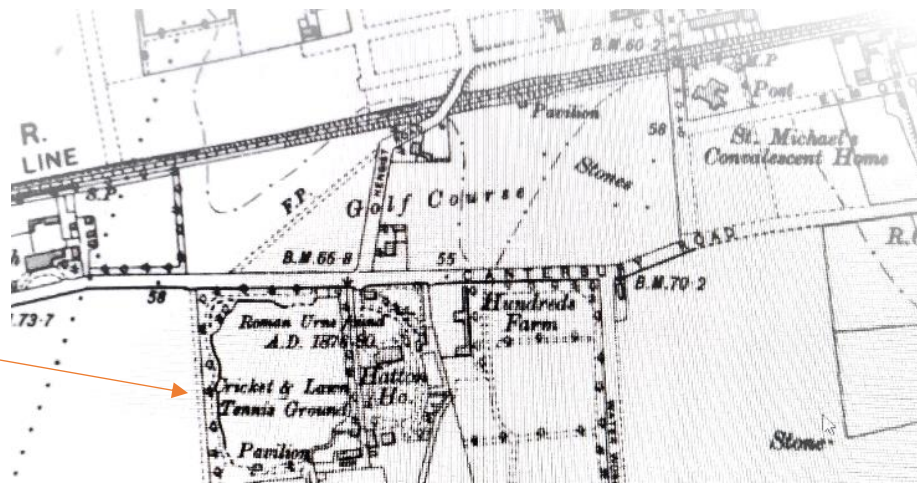
The SECRETARY, Westgate-on-Sea Lawn Tennis Club, The Estate Office (near Railway Station), Phone: WESTGATE 168.

Or from the Club Grounds between the hours of 10.30 a.m. & 8 p.m.

An advertisement for the tennis club



Betty Nuttall



Map showing where the tennis club was situated (near the Birchington border of Westgate-on-Sea). Fernleigh is shown to the left of the map (on the other side of the road) with the curved entrance drive.

A couple of miles away from Westgate-on-Sea was the Hengrove Golf Course – also known as the Thanet Golf Links. Founded in 1896/1897 when Colonel Roland Hill, J Couchman and others proposed that a golf course should be laid out at Hengrove, where around 200 acres together with a farmhouse (which could be used as a clubhouse) became available to lease. The land was undulating and had good drainage. In 1897 a golfing journal reported that ‘Margate possesses a golf course two miles from the town which has opened in December last. The course comprises 200 acres and is situated at Hengrove. It was laid out by Ramsay Hunter of the St George’s Golf Club, Sandwich. What is now the club house was one of the oldest and most historic farms in the Isle of Thanet. An ancient kitchen and an interesting subterranean passage, four miles in length, at a depth of 40 to 50 feet is shown to visitors as a relic of the smuggling life in this part of the world’.

In 1897 it was further reported that “The membership is well over a century, and steadily increasing. Earl Stanhope is the president, the vice presidents are Lord Harris, Lord Forester, and James Lowther MP, the chairman Professor Malcolm McHardy, the hon. treasurer Mr Hyde Bailey-King. A short drive of a mile and a half down the Quex Park and Minster Road brought us to the commodious clubhouse, where the wants of the golfer are ministered to in a well-appointed luncheon, tea, smoke, and dressing rooms, with stabling and bicycle accommodation attached”. *‘Golfing and Cycling Illustrated December 1897’*. One of the early professionals was Willie Smith from Carnoustie, he eventually moved to America and won the USA Open in 1899. In 1903 photographs of the course were published in the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* – see below.



The course had 15-holes in 1906 extending to 18 by 1914. The course had natural hazards including a chalk pit, hedges and trees. The club advertised that the stations at Margate and Westgate-on-Sea were both 1½ miles away. Special golf club tickets were available from London at 15/- return, electric trams ran to within a 10 minute walk of the course. The professional golfer from 1901 to World War One was Ashley Davey, a well-known golfer at the time.

In 1906 visitors were required to be members of recognised clubs, fees were 2/6 a day, 7/6 a week and 21/- a month.

The course was very popular right from the start. It was a good winter course that was never muddy because the subsoil was chalk. It had many natural hazards, including a chalk pit, hedges and trees. There were also artificial bunkers incorporated into the fairway.



The golf links, the chalk pit and the front view of the club house

The course was taken over by the War Office in 1939 for the use of troop training and for food production and, despite many representations to the local council after the war, the course was never opened again. Some of the trophies at the Westgate-on-Sea and Birchington Golf Course originated at the Hengrove Golf Club. Many of their members joined there after Hengrove closed. The club house still stands and is now a private home.

MEMORIES OF MARGATE

by Joanna Brown

Some Margate memories, of the pier and Dreamland in the '60s (whether pier or jetty in reality, my family always called it the pier, so I make no apologies for naming it as such here!).

Summer Sunday walks along the prom with my parents and brother, from our home in Cliftonville down past the Oval, the Lido and Winter Gardens to Margate. Through the creaking metal turnstile onto the pier, gaps in the sun-bleached planks showing tantalising glimpses of sparkling green water beneath. Those gaps were fascinating to me as a child, and even now, when I walk on a pier where one can't see the water properly because the planks are too close together, I always feel short-changed! It always seemed a very long walk for a small child's legs from the pier entrance to the lifeboat station. Up the wooden steps for a quick look at the lifeboat in its shed there, and then back again onto the pier, continuing to where the structure opened out into what seemed to me a huge area of mysterious buildings which we never entered - arcades, cafes, small shops, storage areas - and there were always plenty of fishermen around too.



Joanna on the pier (left) and gardens (right)

Looking back towards Margate itself, the town so small in the distance, with the Dreamland cinema building's distinctive shape to the right - no Arlington House yet in the very early 60s. Steps down to the lower levels of the pier where we were forbidden to go, mysterious and seaweed-covered, the barnacle-encrusted pillars dripping with water as the tide receded. Once or twice I was lucky enough to be taken on a short local boat trip on the Royal Sovereign. Another long walk back to the pier entrance, then it was a delight to be allowed to browse in the fancy-and-beach-goods shop there. I still have a toy donkey which my dad bought for me from that shop more than 60 years ago as a special treat, very battered now and with the straw stuffing showing here and there, but it immediately transports me right back to those carefree childhood days.

The stone pier by contrast was very much a working pier in those days, rather than a place for idly walking, but I do remember the little train which ran along the upper level for many years, giving rides to locals and tourists alike – there are still a few traces of its route remaining today – in later years it moved to the wooden pier.

Another excellent Sunday treat was a visit to the glittering, colourful and noisy penny arcades along Marine Terrace, Dad giving us each a small pile of his hard-earned pennies to spend on the machines as we wished. And then of course Dreamland, a real wonderland bombarding all the senses, even though as young children we weren't able to go on all the rides at that time. The excitement always built dramatically as we walked down the slope from the seafront and through to the noise, colour, tantalising smells and bustle of the fair. The hook-a-duck stall near the entrance was usually the first one we tried, my absolute favourite prize being one of those little black plastic

dolls with blinking eyes and a little skirt. Doubtless very politically incorrect indeed nowadays, but I loved them. The candy-floss stall, pink floss appearing as if by magic in the big metal drums, was in a passage under the Scenic Railway, with the Hall of Mirrors next to it. Coming out and up the slope into Dreamland itself were pony rides and small boats on a track to the left, the Scenic Railway with its long queues to the right, and the 'ship' side of the Queen Mary in clear view.

We always went on the children's roundabout near the Queen Mary and waved to our parents as we went round - I remember once Mum waving rather more frantically than usual, and had no idea why, but after the ride it transpired that my little brother had been trying to unscrew one of the live light bulbs which were conveniently situated near the top seat of the roundabout's 'bus' as we went round! The clatter of the Scenic Railway nearby, the jets hissing as they were 'steered' up and down and the screams of the folk from all the more energetic rides were a timeless backdrop. Once someone fell from the double wheel whilst we were there, and the ambulance ran over my dad's foot in its hurry to reach the scene. I do remember there being very few safety precautions on the rides in those days as regards harnesses, safety belts and so on - one had to hold on tightly!

The larger carousel, with its beautifully decorated horses - and I think ostriches or chickens in the middle row. Another firm favourite was the River Caves, always known as the Tubs to us - the round tubs moving slowly up the ramp and then splashing down into and through a wonderland of vividly colourful and magical tableaux. These types of rides tend to look garish and rather cheap to adult eyes, but to a young child it was simply wonderful. The Caterpillar was always good fun too, with its up-and-down movement, the wind blower, the anticipation as the hood started to come over and everything was bathed in a greenish light - and inevitably a slight sense of disappointment as the hood peeled back slowly and the ride came to an end.



Above The Winter Gardens in the 1960s

The mock-Tudor cottage, inside which one sat on long bench seats, and the whole shell of the house rotated around those benches - I can't remember what that ride was called, but I loved it! The little station with a miniature steam train which went along a track round the back of the park. The 'grown-up' rides seemed so glamorous and thrilling too - we could only gaze in awe, and long for the day when we'd be old enough to take our turn!

In 1964, when I was nine years old, Dad had promised to take my brother and myself to Dreamland on the Whitsun weekend. As we approached the clock tower along Marine Drive it became clear that there was some sort of major disturbance ahead, and Dad quite rightly decided that it wouldn't be possible or safe for us to go past. It turned out to be the major confrontation between Mods and Rockers which was widely reported in the newspapers afterwards.

But I was very upset indeed to hear that we wouldn't be going to Dreamland after all - it was always such an eagerly-awaited treat. So while Dad was in the phone box near the clock tower, phoning home to say that we'd be returning, I ran off in a fit of pique - not towards Dreamland (I didn't have any money anyway!), but making my own way home. It was only years later that I really appreciated how thoughtless I had been and how truly frightening that situation must have been for Dad, with a vanished child and an escalating fight on the seafront - I feel heartily ashamed to have put him through that now. In the event I got back home before he did, to the consternation of my mum when she let me in, and I promptly locked myself in the bathroom in a vain attempt to avoid the inevitable wrath that followed.

I was forgiven in the end, and I'm pleased to say that we did have many more wonderful childhood trips to Dreamland, later followed by teenage trips with friends, which naturally had quite a different ambience. In the decades that have passed since then I'm so glad that I have been able to take my children and grandchildren there too, but for me nothing can beat that magic feeling of going to the 'old' Dreamland as young child.

Joanna Brown

The Birchington Heritage Trust

On Thursday 25th July, Rod LeGear will be talking about Thanet's fascinating underground history. The talk starts at 7.30 pm and will be held at The Centre, Alpha Road, Birchington.

This event is free to members of the Trust but all are welcome (non-members are asked to make a donation to the Trust). Membership of the Trust is open to everyone.

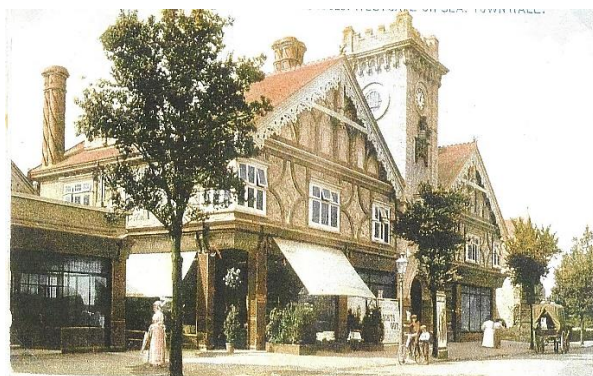


For details of future talks, please visit www.birchingtonheritagetrust.org.uk

The Westgate-on-Sea Heritage Centre

On Saturday 6th July, as part of his "Film Stars and Flea Pits" talks, Ian Carter-Chapman will be talking about the history of the Carlton Cinema in Westgate and will also mention the 'quirky' Birchington cinema too. At one time they were run by the same operator and, at different times in their history, both managed to outrage their local vicars!

The events will be at Christ Church URC, Westgate Bay Avenue, Westgate-on-Sea. Doors open at 10 am and the talk starts at 10.30 am. Non-members are welcome and pay just £2 on the door.



Visit www.westgateheritagecentre.org.uk for more information

CLOCK TOWER GATE PROJECT – UPDATE



Above – left the Clock Tower entrance and right the proposed gate to protect the door

Members may well be wondering what progress has been made on the above project. You will recall we announced the project towards the end of 2022 and spent 2023 seeking the required funding and obtaining the necessary Listed Building consent under the planning regulations.

We are currently labouring intently on finalising the required funding and once this has been achieved, I will provide a more detailed report on the exhaustive and torturous measures, likened to wading through treacle and banging your head against a brick wall, we have had to endure.

In the meantime, fingers crossed, we are almost there.

Mike Thompson

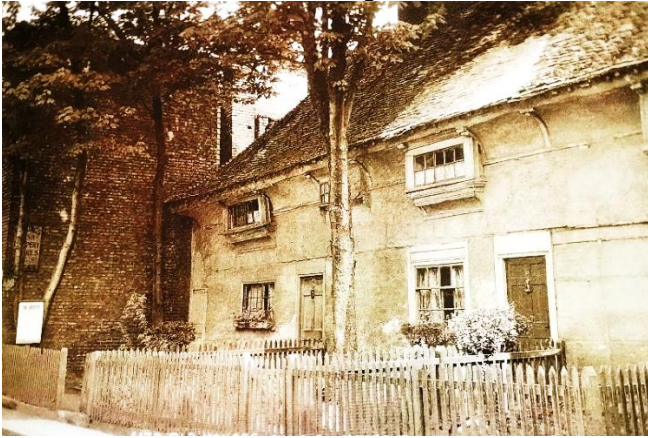


A wonderful photograph of the clock tower in the 1920s

A SHORT PHOTO QUIZ FOR OUR 'BUMPER' SUMMER EDITION



Four old images of the local area – can you guess where they are/were?



Below - two images from modern times. Do you know when Concorde first flew at Manston Airport and when the hovercraft trips to France began from Margate sands?



What would you be doing at this building?

Answers in next quarter's newsletter

SOME POSTCARDS SENT FROM THE LOCAL AREA



This postcard of the sun deck from the 1970s says that 'Larry Grayson doesn't start til next Tuesday, so we're going to see Leslie Crowther or John Hanson'!



Rather dispondantly, this card of West Bay, Westgate-on-Sea, simply reads 'Summer 1925'



An unposted postcard from circa 1910 showing the bandstand at Westbrook



This colourized card, posted in 1909 to Tottenham, says 'The weather is lovely here, the town is packed with people'.



This very early postcard only has a small space to write a message (to the right of the photo) but a large space on the back for the address. In 1904 the Post Office gave into popular demand and allowed a split back, so a message and address could be written on the reverse.



An unusual card, from around 1908, not only shows a very crowded Margate beach but also appears to have either some sort of double exposure or the photographer's finger tips in the left hand corner!



Founded in 1968, the Margate Civic Society is a registered charity (No.257884) and a founder member of Civic Voice. 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.

Committee for 2023/2024:

President:

Chair: Mrs Pamela Pople, Hurston Cottage, Sloe Lane, Westwood, Margate CT9 4DX

Tel: 01843 221689 e-mail: chair@margatecivicsociety.org.uk

Vice-Chair: Mr Harry Scobie

Secretary: Vacancy e-mail: secretary@margatecivicsociety.org.uk

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Tel: 01843 832834 e-mail: planning@margatecivicsociety.org.uk

Minutes Secretary: Ms Kate Wilson

All committee members are Trustees of the Society.

Please contact the Society by email at enquiries@margatecivicsociety.org.uk



Enrolment/Renewal Form

I enclose the sum of £..... (Cheques should be made payable to Margate Civic Society)

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Tel:..... Email.....

Subscription rates for 2023/24

| | Individual | Joint | Junior (under 18) | Corporate |
|-------------------|------------|-------|-------------------|-----------|
| Paper Newsletter* | £20 | £25 | £6 | |
| Email Newsletter# | £15 | £21 | £3 | £30 |

Please send this form with your payment to the Treasurer, Mike Wilton, 30 Barrington Crescent, Birchington CT7 9DF. Please see our website for alternative methods of payment.

* A paper Newsletter means that a black-and-white printed copy will be delivered to you.

An Email Newsletter means that a full-colour copy will be emailed to you.