



Margate Civic Society

SPRING 2022 NEWSLETTER
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***Margate Civic Society is a Founder
Member of Civic Voice***

CHAIR'S REPORT

Dear Members

How are you all?

Now that we are back in the swing of organising meetings, I was hoping that things would settle down and we could start looking to happier days but as I write, there is more sadness and uncertainty.

The horrendous stories of conflict in the Ukraine are so difficult to fathom and although we are powerless to prevent these atrocities, can empathise with those who have lost their homes, family members and their safety. Distinguished Honorary Member, Arnold Schwartzman has written his poignant memories of war, provoked by recent events.

In spite of the recent cold weather, I hope that most of you are now all managing to stay well and safe and our best wishes go to anyone who is suffering from any ill health issues at this time, caring for a loved one or has been recently bereaved.

In Memoriam: Sadly we have lost 2 Members:-

I was very sorry to hear the sad news that one of our members: Keith Lewis, sadly passed away at 76, shortly after our last meeting on 12 February, following a battle with cancer. Keith was born in Margate, a life-long fan of Margate Football Club and a likeable, friendly man, who will be sadly missed. Remembering happier times: you will see below (left) a photograph taken by Mike Wilton on our trip to Boulogne in 2019. From the back: Carolyn and Keith Lewis, Middle: Gay and Peter Schofield and front: Margaret and Keith Godden. Sending our sincere condolences to you all at this difficult time. I am saddened to have to include my darling Mother, Marian O'Leary, who unexpectedly passed away on Saturday, 12 March. Her photograph is below (right).



At the age of 92 and a half, she was one of our older Members who had enjoyed attending meetings up to 2019. Two of Mum's favourite talks, that she absolutely loved were '**Time to Thank Them**' by John Drewry (Patron of the Nursing Memorial Appeal) and "**A Schoolgirl's War**" by Mary Smith (ex-Headmistress of Maidstone Grammar for Girls), with which she could resonate. Always a strong, loving, compassionate woman, never complaining about her health, making the best of life. She enjoyed seeing my Committee friends, buying raffle tickets (often winning the chocolates or plant!) and also talking with Iris, Pat, Tony, Vera, Glenys, Richard and Ralph. My sister, Diana and I cared for Mum since Dad passed away nearly 9 years ago, especially over the past 3 years and feel absolutely devastated, as she was a huge part of our lives.

Lecture Evenings: As you are aware, I endeavour to organise a diverse programme of lectures, with something hopefully appealing to all Members' tastes.

It was good to see some of our Members at our recent 'Italian-themed' meeting, with our speaker, Hugh Raggett (a retired, professional Emmy-award film-maker) who has worked on The World of War, Channel 4 documentaries and so much more. His wonderful documentary about the Hanbury Garden at La Mortola in Italy (which is one of the finest examples of a Botanical Garden on the Italian Riviera), was inspiring, with wonderful scenery, the history of its origins and the amazing life of Victorian Quaker and philanthropist, Sir Thomas Hanbury and Wisley. This talk was so popular that I have invited Hugh to visit us again next year, when he will show the second part of his film and also give us an overview of his life in films. I hope that Members who did not come along in March, will make an effort to attend Hugh's second talk next summer.

You will on page 7 that I have now completed the 2023 Programme with some of the venues yet to be confirmed, due to spiralling costs of room hire.

Membership: A warm welcome to our two new Members: June Chadband and her friend, Maureen Pratt. June and her late husband Keith were members years ago, so it is good to have her back in 'The MCS family'.

Projects: Since we resumed meetings, the Committee agreed that we would endeavour to continue with our Blue Plaque Scheme and the sub-group consisting of Mike Thompson, Mike Wilton and myself (with support from Geoff Orton) have been working on this, celebrating 3 artists who had a connection with Margate in the past: Louis Wain, Walter Sickert and local artist Christopher Alexander. We will update you once these have been finalised.

Newsletter: It is hard to believe that this is the seventh quarterly newsletter edition for which Sally has been Editor with the Editorial Team: Mike Wilton, Mike Thompson and myself. We would, therefore, request that you please continue to give your support and remember that you are most welcome to contribute to forthcoming editions by forwarding articles, photographs, postcards, life stories, news of events, book reviews, poems, etc. I hope that you will enjoy reading your Spring Issue and would welcome your feedback.

Historical Walks: Vice-President, Robin Colyer has now confirmed his programme of walks scheduled for this year, as follows:-

Sat 23 April: Cliftonville Walk - The development of a Victorian Seaside Suburb

Sat 21 May: Maritime Margate Walk - The Harbour and Seafront

Sat 18 June: Cliftonville Walk - The development of a Victorian Seaside Suburb

Sat 23 July: Six Squares Walk - The Georgian Town

Sat 27 August: West of the Brooks Walk - The development of the Westbrook and Hartsdown Park areas (including All Saints Church).

Sat 17 September: (Heritage Open Days).

Sat 22 October: Cliftonville Walk - The development of a Victorian Seaside Suburb

Future booking will be essential via text or call to Robin's Mobile: **7878 537 448**. He will collect donations for our Society. These talks will be promoted by social media and various online tourism sites in addition via our newsletter and website.

Town Pride Awards 2022: Save the date - **Thursday, 12 May**. (Please note this is the 2nd Thursday). We received a total of 12 diverse nominations this year (details of which are included in this edition), which this year's judges Mike Wilton, Mike Thompson, Sally Whitworth and myself, have spent a few hours judging and discussing. These have now been short-listed and the results will be revealed on the night. After the awards' presentations, as is our tradition, attendees will be given complimentary liquid refreshment. Guests are most welcome to attend for a £4.50 nominal fee. This, of course, will be the first event we have been able to hold for 2 years, so we do hope you will be able to come along to the Walpole Bay Hotel and support us. Merchandise will be on sale during the evening, together with raffle tickets, with the draw taking place at the end of the evening.

Local Events: Festival of Cats 2022 will be hosting a series of exhibitions, workshops and events throughout Thanet during March. This started as a celebration of T S Eliot's book of poetry - 'Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats' and much like the book, the festival celebrates the psychology, sociology and whimsy of cats. This is supported by KCC and the Charter Trustees of Margate.

One of the venues involved is the Margate School, 31-33 High Street, Margate (former Woolworth's building) from 1000 hrs on Friday, 25 March until 1600 hours on Sunday, 27 March - featuring artworks from over 100 local and national artists. The first hour of each day will be a relaxed session with lower visitor numbers, for people preferring quieter surroundings. If interested, see their website to book on line - www.themargateschool.com

Cliftonville Farmers' Market: Please note the next event will be held on Sunday, 27 March, from 1000-1300 hrs, on the Walpole Green, Palm Bay Avenue, Cliftonville (which is located behind the Walpole Bay Hotel). These popular markets are always held on the last Sunday of each month. Markets are organised by the Manager, June Chadband and the Cliftonville Residents' Association.

Acknowledgements: As always, my thanks to Committee Members: Harry Scobie, Mike Wilton, Mike Thompson, Sally Whitworth, Kate Wilson and Andrew Chard, in addition to the Auxiliary Committee: Anny Squire, Heather Wilton, Diane Addison, Ray Pople, Glenys and Richard Clements and new member Aileen Christodoulou, for their ongoing support.

Please note the next meeting will be held on 7 April at The Walpole Bay Hotel when the speaker will be our Newsletter Editor, Sally Whitworth with the topic: 'The Early Days of Westgate-on-Sea' which I am sure you will enjoy.

With my very best wishes.

Pamela

TOWN PRIDE AWARDS 2022

This year's nominations for the Margate Civic Society's Town Pride Award are



1. 106 Norfolk Road, Cliftonville



2. 20 Palm Bay Avenue, Cliftonville



3. Westcliff House, Sea Road, Westgate-on-Sea 4. 115A Canterbury Road, Margate



5. 7 Union Crescent, Margate



6. 64A Edgar Road, Cliftonville



7. Quality Court footpath, Margate



8. Wilderness to Wonderland Project, Westbrook



9. Gallery in New Street, Margate



10. Springfield, Hengist Road, Westgate-on-Sea

The annual Town Pride Awards are judged by the following criteria:

- enhancing the built environment;
- using quality materials;
- aesthetically pleasing to the eye;
- restoring pride to the local community;
- contributing to the community amenity.

This year, members nominated twelve properties. Two were deferred to next year as they were not yet completed. The remaining ten properties will be judged by members of the Society's committee and the result will be announced at our meeting on Thursday 12th May. There will be one winner of a prestigious Blue Plaque; other properties may be awarded a Highly Commended certificate.

LECTURE PROGRAMME APRIL 2022 TO OCTOBER 2023 (Subject to COVID-19 Guidelines)

7 April

Guests: £3.00 nominal fee

Topic: “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”. **Speaker:** Sally Whitworth (MCS Newsletter Editor and Westgate-on-Sea Heritage Centre Newsletter Editor and local historian) **Venue:** The Walpole Bay Hotel. **Start time** 1930 hrs (to be seated by 1915 hrs)

12 May

Guests: £4.50 nominal fee

Topic: TOWN PRIDE AWARDS (followed by refreshments and raffle). **Venue/Time:** Walpole Bay Hotel. **Start time** 1930 hrs (to be seated by 1915 hrs)

No evening meetings from June to September inclusive

6 October

Guests £4.50 nominal fee

Topic: Annual General Meeting (Renewal of Subs due) and “Battle Royale 1066” (to help commemorate the 954th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings and possibly the most famous date in English history. Meet the main characters involved and the series of events that brought them together, whilst Steve Hookings tries to make sense of a battle that everyone has heard of but one that so little is known about. Let Steve talk about what he thinks happened, why, where, when and who was involved. Featuring an all-star cast, it's a story of Medieval power, politics and pushy parents. **Speaker:** Steve Hookings (After-dinner speaker, historical presentations). **Venue:** The Walpole Bay Hotel. **Start Time:** 1930 hrs (to be seated by 1915hrs)

3 November

Guests £3.00 nominal fee

Topic: “Margate, a Cornishman and a Bi-Plane” **Speaker:** Bob Varnham (MCS Member and local historian) **Venue:** Walpole Bay Hotel **Start Time:** 1930 hrs (to be seated by 1915 hrs)

8 December Christmas Soiree

Guests £6.50 nominal fee

Topic: “The Goose is Getting Fat! The History of Christmas Traditions” followed by music, refreshments and raffle. **Speaker:** Imogen Corrigan (Lecturer on Anglo Saxon and Medieval History of Art). **Venue:** Holy Trinity Church Hall, Cliftonville **Start Time:** 1945 hrs (to be seated 1935 hrs)

January No Meeting 2023

February No Meeting

2 March

Guests: £3.50 nominal fee

Topic: “Local News Media Today and the Growth of Independent Publishers”. **Speaker:** Kathy Bailes (The Isle of Thanet News) Kent Press and Broadcast Awards - Kent Commitment to the community 2020, Kent news website of the year 2018 and Kent Digital Journalist of the year 2017. **Venue/time:** tbc

6 April

Guests: £3.50 nominal fee

Topic: “Riding The Wall of Death” - The Wall of Death was a major fairground attraction of the 1930's. What was it and where did it come from? How did a Margate lad get to travel in Europe?

Explore a little known facet of life! **Speaker:** Felicity Stafford (VP, MCS & Margate Museum Trustee). **Venue/time:** tbc

11 May

Guests: £4.50 nominal fee

Topic: TOWN PRIDE AWARDS (followed by refreshments and raffle). **Venue:** The Walpole Bay Hotel. **Time:** 1930 hrs (to be seated by 1915 hrs)

8 June

Guests: £4.50 nominal fee

Topic: “The Hanbury Gardens on the Italian Riviera Part II - 1908 to today” a film and a talk. Hugh continues with his film telling the story of Sir Thomas Hanbury’s renowned garden near Menton and what happens to a famous garden after its creator has died. Miraculously the garden is still open today, thanks partly to the intervention of the RHS in the 1980’s, and the story covers the history of the Hanbury family and the garden over 100 turbulent years. **Speaker:** Hugh Raggett (a retired, professional Emmy-award film-maker). **Venue/time:** tbc

6 July

Guests: £3.50 nominal fee

Topic: “The Changing Fortunes of the Cinque Ports”. **Speaker:** James Dickinson (Historian). **Venue/time** tbc

August

No meeting

7 September

Guests: £3.50 nominal fee

Topic: “Suffragettes and Suffragists”. **Speaker:** Melanie Gibson-Barton. **Venue/time:** tbc

5 October Annual General Meeting

Guests: £4.50 nominal fee

(Renewal of Subs due)

Topic: ‘Waterloo, The Bits Abba Got Wrong - looking at the Battle of Waterloo’. Please note prior to refreshments and our raffle, there will be a collection for Cancer Research UK. **Speaker:** Steve Hookins (After-dinner speaker, historical presentations). **Venue:** The Walpole Bay Hotel. **Time:** 1930 hrs (to be seated by 1915 hrs)

November

No meeting

December

No meeting

Any suggestions for future topics, please feel welcome to get in touch.

UPDATE FROM THE MARGATE MUSEUM TRUST BY FELICITY STAFFORD

ARTEFACT OF THE MONTH 2022

Margate Museum is featuring an Artefact of the Month which highlights one of the many exhibits housed in the Museum. The 2022 Artefacts of the Month will be:-

February	The Sunbeam Donkeys
March	Flint
April	Coal
May	The Margate Bellman
June	The Royal Sea Bathing Hospital Dolls
July/August	The Mayoral Roll of Honour Board commemorating the Incorporation of the town as a Borough
September	World War II Air Raid Siren
October	"Cecil", the Iron Age skeleton

EXHIBITIONS IN 2022

These include:

A major exhibition titled Royal Engagements: This will be a major exhibition planned to open for the Whit Bank Holiday which explores royal connections to Margate over the last three centuries.

Smaller pop-up exhibitions:

March - Revisiting the 365th anniversary of the Battle of Margate in 1387 (23 March 1387)

July - Celebrating the Incorporation of the Town of Margate as a Borough (29 July 1857)

Opening Times and Prices:

Margate Museum and Tudor House – Saturday/Sunday/Bank Holidays from 11 am to 3 pm. Last entry 2.15 pm.

Adults £2. Concession - £1.50. Accompanied (up to 16) children free. Joint ticket with Tudor House £3



Margate Museum at Market Place, Margate. CT9 1EN

MARGATE MUSEUM - ARTEFACT OF THE MONTH IN FEBRUARY 2022 “SUNBEAM” THE DONKEY

“Sunbeam” the Donkey was one of “the greatest money-spinners on the Prom”! Beach photographers could be relied on to produce far more reliable results than an amateur family cameraman. “The Sunbeam Photograph Ltd”, a famous Thanet firm of photographers - headed by John Milton Worsell - opened in Margate around 1919.



Thousands of images of holidaymakers were taken in a day. Not only could you have your photo taken sitting on a life-sized stuffed donkey, you could also sit on a dog, a tiger, a teddy bear or a cow. The photographic films were regularly collected by car from the Promenade and transported to the labs for processing. The finished prints were then taken to a Sunbeam kiosk, where you could view the results and buy them to take home. The thinking was - the more pictures that were taken, the more would be sold.

The Sunbeam Collection of photographs currently resides with SEAS - The South East Archive of Seaside Photography.

HOW SUSANNA WAS SAVED!

The Museum is lucky. It has two Sunbeam donkeys. Susanna, the Museum's second Sunbeam donkey, has a fascinating story.

An unnamed Sunbeam donkey was found, abandoned and looking pathetic, in the cellars of the Tudor House in Margate. Once a proud and popular photographic model for Sunbeam, she had been ignored and neglected for many years.

Her grey fur was in tatters. Her stuffing had vanished. Her ears were missing. Her saddle and bridle had disappeared.

This poor tattered donkey was rehabilitated by the Community Pharmacy Gallery in The Old Town with tender and loving care. The hardworking team that restored her even gave her a name.

“SUSANNA”

Susanna returned, triumphantly, to the Museum in July 2015. There was a big party to celebrate her arrival at the Museum. She now lives in the Seaside Room at The Museum and is usually available for hugs and pats.



Above: Susanna before and below Susanna today



Felicity Stafford

THIS LITTLE PIGGY WENT TO MARGATE - Arnold Schwartzman OBE RDI

I was four years old on that fateful first day of the London Blitz, September 7, 1940. It was a warm autumn evening when my mother had just set three salads onto our kitchen table. Out of the window I saw on the next door roof top our neighbour stripped to the waist washing in an enamel bowl. On spotting me he waved, I waved back as an air-raid siren began to wail. At this point my parents ran into the kitchen, my father picked me up as we hurried down the several flight of stairs to the ground floor. No sooner had we reached the downstairs hallway when there was an enormous explosion as the building was hit by an incendiary bomb. Thankfully the three of us were unhurt as we attempted to find our way out to the street through the rubble.

As the dust began to settle we made our way to the front door, and finding it blocked, we climbed through the adjoining building's collapsed wall into the back yard. My father lifted me through a window to the next door building which was the street's general provisions store. I still remember the shop's large wooden counter on which sat a row of sweet jars of liquorice allsorts, wine gums etc. Some of the jars amazingly were still intact, I wished that I could have taken a few samples!

Rescue workers soon assisted us into the street where there were hundreds of people scrambling about, plus items of furniture strewn over the street. We spent that night in a standing-room only street bomb shelter. The non-stop constant loud thud of explosions continued, until a bomb dropped close by our shelter causing us to be transferred into the basement of a nearby home.

The following night we were accommodated in a local school, where they had designated separate classrooms for the men, and for women and children. My mother slept on the camp bed to my left, the woman in the bed to my right hysterically kept screaming, "I've swallowed a bomb, I've swallowed a bomb".

The next morning the refugees were put on buses, our destination being the safety of the English countryside. My parents decided to alight at Egham, Surrey, just twenty-odd miles from

London. There we finally found refuge thanks to the hospitality of the home of an elderly Scottish couple, the Milnes.

I recall that first evening seeing my mother in tears as we looked east towards London where the night's sky glowed bright red, it was London burning. We stayed with the Milnes' for the next couple of years before my parents obtained a house in the village.

At war's end my parents who had spent their honeymoon in Margate decided that we should move to the town where until their retirement they ran a successful small hotel on Lewis Crescent Cliftonville.

Today, whenever I hear the sound of an air-raid siren, it still sends a shudder down my spine. I never thought that I would live to witness a repeat of those terrible times.

The free world must stand up for the Ukrainian people.

Below: Arnold on the beach at Margate



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

by Mike Wilton

Firstly, as Pamela writes in her welcome, we were saddened to hear of the deaths of two members recently. Keith Lewis passed away on 12th February. Keith and his wife Carolyn were stalwart members of the Society, always supporting us at meetings and on our coach trips, and always with their very close friends Gay and Peter Schofield. We send our condolences to Carolyn, her family and her friends.

Marian O'Leary, Pamela's beloved mother, died suddenly on 12th March. Marian had not been to our meetings recently, due to her age and increasing infirmity, but members will remember her for her calm and friendly demeanour. She loved coming to meetings and meeting people – and often winning a raffle prize. She will be very much missed and we send our condolences to Pamela and Ray and their family.

We have completed our survey of life members and are happy that details are up to date. We did discover that one or two are regrettably no longer with us and that a few others had changed address. We are requesting that life members who receive paper copies of the Newsletter donate at least £5 a year to help cover production and delivery costs, and I am pleased to report that many have done so and have given generously. We are most grateful for this support which, amongst other things, enables us to continue to arrange evening meetings with high-quality guest speakers.

Speaking of evening meetings, following our consultation about holding meetings in the summer months rather than winter, as now, everyone who responded was in favour of the change. The committee has therefore decided that, from 2023, meetings will be held from March to October inclusive, except August. So, this year, 2022, meetings will be held in February, March, April and May, then October, November and December. In 2023, meetings will be in March, April, May, June, July, September and October, with the same pattern in 2024 and subsequent years. Our Annual General Meeting will be held in October in accordance with our constitution. We hope that all meetings in 2023 will be held at the Walpole Bay Hotel, and we're checking their availability with them.

A loose sheet with the last edition of the Newsletter outlined various way for annual members to pay their subscription. We've summarised this in this edition, on the back page, but further details can be seen on our website and we'll give more information in the autumn edition, prior to the renewal date of 1st October.

Our coach trips were very popular, particularly our Continental ones which included Bruges, Arras, Boulogne, Dunkirk and Ypres. For obvious reasons, we haven't been able to arrange any trips since our last one to Chatham Dockyard in September 2019, but we're looking to start them again, perhaps with one to a UK destination in Autumn this year and then, depending on the state of the world at the time, perhaps to Ostend in May 2023. We'll see how things go – as I write this, Russia has just invaded Ukraine – but we would very much like to start the trips again.

On behalf of the committee, thank you all for your continuing support, which is very much appreciated.

Kind regards,

Mike Wilton
Membership Secretary

PLANNING MATTERS

by Mike Thompson

Members will be disappointed to hear that the residential development planned for land at Shottendane Road and Hartsdown Road, Margate, has received the go ahead from the Planning Inspectorate. The application to construct houses on this tract of Grade 1 agricultural land had been refused twice by Thanet District Council (but only for the lack of affordable housing provision, rather than any desire to protect the status of the land), the percentage proposed by the developer being considerably less than that required by the Local Plan. Despite a proposed minimal increase in affordable housing provided in the second application, this was again refused by TDC.

The applicant then appealed the decision to the Planning Inspectorate and the appeal was upheld.

Your Society continues to fight against the loss of prime agricultural land for the purposes of residential development, more especially now as world events teach us that self-sufficiency in so many commodities is vitally important and the need to remove the dependance on others for this provision is of paramount importance be it oil, gas or grain. However, the current allocation of such land for residential development within the Local Plan regrettably gives the green light for this loss.

As you may recall, Margate Civic Society is a member of Civic Voice - the National charity for the Civic Movement in England. 'We make places more attractive, enjoyable and distinctive. We promote Civic Pride'. Civic Voice is currently working to increase the role of Civic Societies within the Planning System in an effort to increase democratic participation within the Planning process. 'Statements for Community Involvement' could be developed and incorporated within a Local Authorities Local Plan in an effort to provide a more meaningful way of engagement within the Planning system.

Anyway, we await a copy of the Civic Voice Draft Strategy and I will report on this as soon as it is to hand.

You may recall that in an earlier newsletter, I reported on a previous Planning White Paper in which it was suggested that the opportunity to respond to individual planning applications would be lost for most developments submitted within zones already designated for development within the Local Plan. For the time being, these proposals seem to have been dropped by Central Government so watch this space!

We continue to monitor local planning applications published on the Planning Weekly List and to make representations where we think appropriate but if any member has any particular issue they would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Wishing you all the best until the next time.

Mike Thompson
Planning

In the last instalment of our President, Ralph Handscomb's, autobiography, we left Ralph working for the DTC (The Diamond Trading Company) and flying off in a plane to Kenema. The story continues

I was under the wing of John Saville who checked every stone I bought. After a couple of months, he sent me out to the diggings at Panguma about 30 miles from Kenema. There was an old Government Rest house surrounded with trees where I set up camp. During the 1890's there had been a Mende (this is the local tribe) uprising and the monks who at that time occupied the rest house were attacked and eventually slaughtered. They had built a stockade by cutting down some of the trees and planting the branches to form a barricade. A number of these had rooted and now surrounded the place. There was a Lebanese dealer in the village, whose name was Geblowie, and I bought quite a lot of diamonds from him. Every weekend I returned to Kenema with the diamonds I had bought and on Monday went out with another ten thousand pounds in one-pound notes. There was talk in the village that the rest-house was haunted. The layout of the building was strange, with rooms but no doors. It was a one floor building of wood on concrete pillars. Cattle used to chew the cud in the shade underneath the building. My camp bed was against a wall which had a large cupboard on one side and a closed unused door on my side. One night the door was banged and rattled from the other side where the cupboard was. Quite spooky. I always had my shotgun at hand, but only had to use it to shoot snakes.

We had a new contingent arrive from South Africa: Mike Harris, Scotch Ready, Kipper Haddock and a couple from England. One of these, Henderson, was sent home in disgrace when he showed one of the Directors a photo of himself with his foot on an overturned Land Rover which he had written off. Teddy Dawe was not amused! Bill Bower was the other, he had to return to England after a short tour as he was not a well man.

At weekends we would have huge curry parties with the other Europeans, the local vet, a couple of lads who worked for Kenema Sawmills, PWD, and others. And on some occasions, we would drive down to Sulimar travelling through the Gola Forest and on to the border with Liberia where there was a large lagoon and a long sand spit between the Atlantic Ocean and the Moa River. This was a great spot for fishing and swimming. The village was unspoilt. The local natives wore shorts and the females, sarongs. We were swimming in the breakers rolling in from the Atlantic, and most of us were quite exhausted having been pounded onto the beach, when Roy appeared to be having a bit of trouble getting out of the water. We ran to pull him up the beach. Just as we did this, two very large fins travelled along the crest of the breakers! We hadn't even thought about sharks! So, we decided it was not safe to swim on that side so moved to the lagoon. I was fishing the lagoon with some fairly heavy tackle and pulled out a fifty pound plus Barracuda. After that we kept to the shallows.



Above (left to right) the 50 lb Barracuda, Jaiama, on the road to Jaiama

On one of these trips, I had to be left behind because I had caught yellow jaundice and was confined to bed. It was the rainy season. When the gang came back from Sulimar, I was in a coma. They sent down to Freetown for the company plane to come and take me to hospital. It took some days before it could fly up to us, but I knew nothing of this. Just as well. I woke up in hospital in Freetown

and was facing the open door to the balcony. On the rail were two vultures hopefully eyeing me. I really thought I had reached the end! I recovered so it was hard luck on the vultures. No alcohol, butter, or grease of any kind for six months. Although I broke the rules on many occasions, I am still here.

As there were only three bungalows at Kenema, it was decided to send me to Yengema where we were opening another office. Bill Everett our pilot had never flown there before. He was an ex. Spotter pilot for the Royal Artillery and only used to low flying and following railway lines etc. On this occasion he decided to follow the Sewa River. We were flying at treetop height, came round a bend and in front of us was a bridge. On the bridge were some Africans. They looked very wide-eyed as we nearly took off their heads. A while later and a few more bends, we were suddenly confronted with a waterfall! A hundred-foot waterfall! Bill pulled back on the stick and we almost stood on our tail. We then circled round so that I could take some photos. Eventually we arrived at Yengema. Before we could land on the landing strip the area had to be cleared of cattle. That was a very exciting journey.

At Yengema we had two bungalows and an office of corrugated iron and breeze block with two huge safes. In charge was my old boss Milos Viner. We each had a bungalow. We were just outside the compound of the Mining complex Sierra Leone Selection Trust (SLST) who were mining diamonds. The main 'pipe' was here. We were allowed to make use of their facilities, the club, tennis courts, swimming pool, golf course (9 hole) and made many friends.

Every day I was sent out to buy in the villages near the river where the locals had permits to dig. I built a rondaval in Jaiama Nimmiyema, and put up a radio mast to keep in touch with Freetown and Yengema. The Paramount Chief was Bokari Toto. We nick-named him Tottery Boko. He had over a hundred wives. His wives had lovers and they were his private army. I used to take him a case of Drambuie every week and in return he told the diggers in his area to sell their diamonds to me. He also gave me a couple of scrawny chickens and some eggs and a very nice Ivory walking stick with a carved elephants head. Later, when I took Daphne there, some bolts of local woven and dyed cloth.



Above (left to right) Ralph and Daphne's wedding 5th September 1959 and the couple in Sierra Leone

The Directors of DCSL came out to visit fairly often. They seemed to like to suddenly appear and make sure we were 'on the ball' One week when they were staying with us, I took them and Phillip Oppenheimer (the Managing Director from London Office, The Diamond Trading Coy.) to meet the Paramount Chief. We also put up a Buying Office at Jaiama Nimi Koro, another village. It was here that the Lebanese traders came to sell. We did a lot of business with them.

At Christmas 1958, all the buyers closed shop and headed for Freetown where we stayed with various members of the Freetown staff. Hampers had been sent out from Fortnum and Mason and we had a fantastic dinner at the newly built Paramount Hotel on Lumley beach. It was strange swimming in a warm sea on Christmas day. After the festivities we returned to our buying offices and life reverted to normal.

A WESTGATE-ON-SEA LANDMARK GONE FOREVER by Sally Whitworth



On the 18th February 2022, one of Westgate-on-Sea's well known landmarks came tumbling down. The large chimney on the corner of Cuthbert Road and St Mildred's Road (at 1 Cuthbert Road) was damaged in the very high winds and fell with a loud 'whoomph', according to a local shopkeeper, taking out a lamp post on the way and spraying bricks right across St Mildred's Road and into Station Road. Very luckily, no one was injured.

The chimney originally belonged to the Setterfield Dairy and advertised MILK in large white letters, long after the dairy had closed in the mid 1960's. While the rubble of the chimney was being cleared, the writer was able to look at one of the white bricks, which had broken in the fall. The inside of the brick had the letters Farnl, the centre piece was missing but the third section showed the words 'Iron Co'. A little investigation showed that the bricks were made by the Farnley Iron Company from Farnley, near Leeds, a company who specialised in making glazed bricks. The building dates from around 1893 and the dairy did not open until 1900, so possibly the chimney was either altered or built specifically for the dairy and the word MILK was included.



From left to right – the glaze on the bricks, the Farnley logo and an advertisement from Farnley Iron Company

The dairy was originally run by the Osbourn family who lived at Hundred Farm, Canterbury Road. In 1881 William Osbourn was farming 40 acres employing 3 men and 2 boys, with his wife, Ann, and 12 children. William died, relatively young, in 1889 and Ann took over from him. Her oldest son, Alfred, became the main dairyman and another six of the children worked on the farm. On the 8th November 1900, Isabel, Ann's third oldest daughter, married Thomas Smith Setterfield (a dairyman) at St Saviour's Church. Isabel and Thomas expanded the dairy business and opened Setterfield's Dairy in Cuthbert Road. Isabel and Thomas continued to run the dairy for many years and the 1921 census shows that their oldest daughter, Marjorie, was also working in the family business as a shop assistant. Thomas Setterfield became very well known in Westgate-on-Sea and held a number of important positions in the town, including that of Chief Fire Officer. Thomas Setterfield died in 1931 and the running of the dairy was taken over by his son Thomas Valentine Setterfield. The business was eventually sold and the building became a launderette in the 1960s.

Margate Civic Society

www.margatecivicsociety.org.uk



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.

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