

**FOLKESTONE & DISTRICT
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**
www.folkestonehistory.org

NEWSLETTER No. 44 -Autumn 2010

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT by Alan F. Taylor

At the June meeting we welcomed guest speaker Reg Coleman who gave us his talk on 'May 10th 1940 – A Turning Point.' Reg told us he took his high school certificate in 1943 and until 1952 when he retired he taught history. On May 10th 1940 Reg was 15 years of age, King George VI was on the throne, the Germans swept through France, Brussels, Norway and Finland, we took control of Iceland and showed an interest in the Dutch East Indies. He said 'Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill was born at Blenheim Palace on 30th November 1874.' His father, Lord Randolph Churchill, was a younger son of the Duke of Marlborough. Although Winston's school reports showed he was performing particularly badly, seventy years later he won the Noble Prize for Literature. There was little evidence to suggest that Winston's academic performance improved on his arrival at Harrow. In 1895 he graduated from Sandhurst. He travelled to the United States and Cuba, saw action on the North West frontier of India in 1897, and the following year he joined Kitchener's expeditionary force to the Sudan, and participated in the cavalry charge at the battle of Omdurman. In 1899 he sailed to South Africa as a correspondent of the Morning Post to cover the Boer War. He was captured and spent his twenty-fifth birthday as a prisoner of war, he managed to escape and crossed the enemy lines to Durban. Churchill was first elected to parliament in 1900. He took his seat in the House of Commons as a Conservative member for Oldham. Four years later he crossed the floor and joined the Liberals. As President of the Board of Trade he helped lay the foundations of the Welfare State, while his brief tenure as Home Secretary is still remembered for the Tonypandy Riot and the Siege of Sidney Street. In 1908 Churchill married Clementine Hozier. By the time war broke out in 1914 he was First Lord of the Admiralty. Reg went on to tell us about where Churchill served during the war. By 1922 election support for the Labour party had grown. Appendicitis kept Churchill from campaigning, he was left without a seat or party. Between 1922 and 1924 he left the Liberal party and rejoined the Conservatives. He was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer in Stanley Baldwin's government. During the 1930's Churchill fell out with Baldwin, his dire warnings about the rise of Hitler fell on deaf ears. Churchill's role in WWII needs no introduction, throughout the summer of 1940, when Britain stood alone, his speeches proved an inspiration. He toured the country inspecting the bomb-damage. He worked tirelessly on diplomatic and military initiatives to regain the offensive. In August 1941 he met with President Roosevelt. As the threat of German invasion receded, the tide of war began to turn, Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union brought Churchill an ally, Joseph Stalin. It also precipitated the United States into the war. While he tried to project a fit and active public image, the strain took a toll on his health. Churchill did not allow his shock defeat in 1945 General Election to silence him for very long. He used his status to speak about the new threats posed by the Cold War and the need for reconciliation in Western Europe. In October 1951 the Conservative Party achieved a narrow victory in the polls and Churchill became Prime Minister once again. Failing health forced him

to resign in April 1955, but he remained an MP until 1964. Churchill died on 24th January 1965 – seventy years to the day after his father's death.

Seventy people attended the meeting, six of whom were visitors.

At the July meeting we welcomed guest speaker Roy Ingleton who gave us his illustrated talk entitled 'Heart Beat Years.' Roy said the talk was about the police force in the 1950's and 1960's. He went on to say that at the start of WWII (1939) policemen were not called up for the armed forces, they couldn't leave the force and people couldn't join. Roy went on to say what they did when training to be a policeman it consisted of marching, physical training, life saving and first aid. He said their uniforms originally had stiff upright collars, but in the 1950's collar necked tunics were brought in with shirts and ties. One attraction to join the police was that you were provided with a house. In 1960, 101 standard police houses were built in Kent, but they were eventually sold off because they found it difficult to get on the housing ladder or get a council house. He said most police stations were built in the 1880's and that most of them have been replaced with modern buildings. Apart from their normal duties policemen also had to deal with diseased animals. Roy spoke about the Velocette motor bikes being introduced to the police force, the 1953 floods, the teddy boys in the 1950's, the peak year for the mods and rockers, (1964) and his experiences in Hastings with them. On evening duties they had to check shop doors and windows to make sure they were locked and when you went away on holiday you could request that your house was checked daily. Before the advent of motorways, during the summer months when people went to the seaside for the day they would all leave to return home about the same time in the late afternoon. This caused long tail-backs, so to speed up the traffic, traffic lights were switched off and all roundabouts were manned by policemen. When cars were introduced to the police force they didn't stick to one make and model they had many different ones. Before the advent of mobile phones most towns and villages had police boxes for communication. When women were introduced into the police force they only got 90% of a men's wage and they mainly dealt with women and children. When Panda cars were introduced to the police force, policemen walking the beat were reduced. Traffic wardens were first employed by the police before being taken over by the councils. Roy left us to conclude our own thoughts with the TV series, Z-Cars, Avengers and Dixon of Dock Green.

Fifty-seven people attended the meeting two of whom were visitors.

Annual Outing 17th July: This year 48 members and friends went by coach to Broadstairs where we had two hours free time before moving on the Walpole Bay Hotel at Cliftonville. Here we sat down to a three course lunch being entertained by a first class pianist. After lunch we browsed round the building, which is a glorious 1914 structure with a lot of character and full of artefacts from the past, in fact a living museum. We then boarded the coach and made our way home arriving at 6 pm. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Don and Shirley Gregory for making all the arrangements for a splendid outing.

A photographic exhibition on the First World War in Folkestone was set-up in the Victoria restaurant at the Grand Burstin Hotel on Sunday 1st August. It was for the Step-Short group who marched from the Grand Hotel along the Leas and down the Road of Remembrance to the harbour station. It was in memory of the millions of First World War soldiers who marched down the Road of Remembrance to embark on troop ships to the front line many of whom never returned. The march is part of the campaign by heritage project Step-Short to have the part Folkestone played in the Great War recognised for the centenary of the outbreak in 2014.

At the August meeting we welcomed guest speaker David Godden who gave us his talk entitled 'Life In Folkestone 1930's to 1947.' David said from 1937 to 1940 he was a choir boy at Holy Trinity Church, the curate was Mr Wagstaffe and the church was one of the first in the country to have Carillon. His fondest memories of church were weddings and funerals, weddings he was paid two shillings and six pence and funerals two shillings. He said they lived in Plain Road where there were a row of six cottages and a row of three which were all occupied by Folkestone Estate workers. His father was the beach inspector, they lived in the row of three cottages where there was no electricity just gas until 1937. Also in Plain Road there was Daniel Baker (Builder), the Folkestone Estate West End Garage with mews and living accommodation over the top. He said the area wasn't built up in those days and Coolinge Lane

was just beach. He went to Sandgate school and he said there were many different ways to walk to and from school. He spoke about the town and all the department stores, Bobby's, Uptons, Lewis & Hylands, Plummer Roddis to name just a few. Then David spoke about the war. He said because some schools were shut they only went to school for half a day because there wasn't enough places to go round. He spoke about rationing, air raid warnings, shelling, the doodle bugs and barbed wire along the sea front. David finished up by saying, at the end of the war he was working with the Royal Observer Corps.

Eighty people attended the meeting, eight of whom were visitors.

We would like to welcome new members: Bernard Sargeant from Australia, Frank Johnson & Lynn Heywood.

Dates for your diary:

There will be a coffee morning at the Langhorne Hotel Wednesday 8th September at 11 am.

Anniversary Dinner Friday 15th October. For details contact Shirley Gregory – tel: 01303 246682

As you know the Folkestone & District local History Society is a very successful and forward looking, Society, both with its monthly meetings, talks social events.

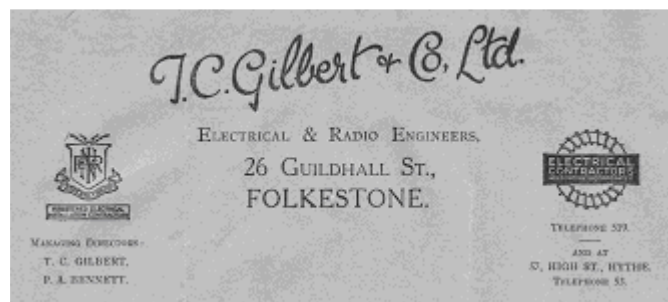
However, in order to continue in this vein we would like to take this opportunity to invite more members to participate in the management of the society by becoming committee members/officers. The involvement required would be attendance at six committee meetings through the year and occasional assistance at monthly meetings. I know of your continued interest and support, therefore I hope you will consider the above.

The A.G.M. is on October 6th at 8pm at the Holy Trinity Church Hall. I look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Kind regards,
Alan F. Taylor.

John Logie Baird the Pioneer of Television 1888 – 1946

John Logie Baird was born on 14 August 1888 in Helensburgh on the west coast of Scotland, the son of a clergyman. Dogged by ill health for most of his life, he nonetheless showed early signs of ingenuity, rigging up a telephone exchange to connect his bedroom to those of his friends across the street. His studies at Glasgow University were interrupted by the outbreak of World War One. Rejected as unfit for the forces, he served as superintendent engineer of the Clyde Valley Electrical Power Company. When the war ended he set himself up in business, with mixed results. He moved to Folkestone in 1924 where he did his early experimental work at 26 Guildhall Street, where he managed to transmit a flickering image across a few feet.



T.C. Gilbert & Co. Ltd., electrical & radio engineers occupied the shop at the time. (See headed notepaper) where he did his experimental work in the basement.

My late father, Fred Taylor was an apprentice electrician at Gilbert's at the time and he remembered Logie Baird doing his experimental work there. A plaque was unveiled by his wife to commemorate his

work on the premises. The shop is now occupied by Shadow Artworks where the plaque is displayed on one of their walls inside.



While working in Folkestone Logie Baird stayed at Mrs Gilbert's Boarding House, 'Flordon House', 10 West Terrace. Mrs Gilbert was the wife of F. Gilbert (brother of T.C. Gilbert) he was a writer and designer. He conducted his business at 78 The Bayle, Folkestone. (See photo below).



Embossed in the bricks on the end wall of the shop can be seen to this day the following inscription:
Gilbert Kullasigns Ltd.
Commercial Art Studio
Established 1908.



Hastings claims that John Logie Baird started his experimental work there. I think the evidence above disputes that claim.

Alan F. Taylor

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