

Number 12 – Spring 2015



# CHATHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Medway Chronicle

*'Keeping Medway's History Alive'*



CHATHAM, THE VOLUNTEER DRILL HALL ZZZ04749 (Author's Collection)

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**Arethusa • Paddock Restaurant • Winget Life**

**CHATHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY** meets at the Lampard Centre, Sally Port, Brompton, ME7 5BU on the second Thursday of each month except January and August. The Centre opens at 7:15pm and the meeting starts at 7:30pm.

News and information about Chatham Historical Society is available on the website:  
[www.chathamhistoricalsoc.btck.co.uk](http://www.chathamhistoricalsoc.btck.co.uk)

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Front cover: Chatham Drill Hall (1906 – 1933). The Drill Hall was located at the junction of Fort Pitt Hill and Boundary Road.

# **The story of the Shaftesbury Homes and ‘Arethusa’**

by Sheila Erwin

In 1843, a young solicitor's clerk called William Williams, badly crippled in his youth, was travelling to the West Country by train from Paddington. In the next compartment he heard a commotion and, on looking into it, he saw a dozen or so boys in rags handcuffed together. They were, he learned, to be shipped from Weymouth to a convict settlement in Australia.

Williams was so appalled by this judicial treatment that he formed a committee of friends to found a Ragged School in an old hay loft in the notorious Seven Dials District of Holborn, known in those Days as The Rookery. There the committee held a A Sunday School and gave destitute children their only square meal of the week.

It was not long before Mr Williams' Ragged School project attracted the patronage of the great Victorian reformer, the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Shaftesbury who, in 1866 at a St. Valentine's Day dinner, given by the Committee for Destitute Children, conceived the idea of adding a training ship in the Thames to the organisation which had become known as The National Refuges for Homeless and Destitute Children. The acquisition of a second ship, H.M.S 'Arethusa' in 1874, led to the Society becoming known as The Shaftesbury Homes and 'Arethusa' Training Ship.

Nearly a hundred years later, in 1970, with a change of emphasis from purely pre-sea training to a more broadly based secondary education in the successor of the same name to the original 'Arethusa' in the words 'Training Ship' were dropped from the Society's title. In 1975 the second 'Arethusa', a 'Flying P' barque, bought from Germany in 1932, having become uneconomical to repair and maintain, was sold to the South Street Seaport Museum of New York, where she Was restored to her 1911 built condition, reverting to her launched name 'Peking'.

She was replaced by a new offshore cruising ketch, The third vessel in the Society's ownership to bear the famous name 'Arethusa' . The success of the offshore venture was such that it was decided to replace the first ketch with a purpose built vessel, embodying features which would increase performance and versatility.

This 'Arethusa' was named by the The Countess Mountbatten of Burma C.D., J.F. D.L, in July 1982 and forthwith began a highly successful career.

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## **DONALD MAXWELL, F.R.S.A.1877 – 1936.**

Painter, Illustrator and Writer.

by Sheila Erwin

Visitors to the Steam, Steel and Submarine Museum in Chatham Dockyard will know the large painting of the "Vindictive at Zeebrugge" by Donald Maxwell. What they might not know is that the artist's younger brother Gordon Maxwell, Lt R.N. was the Commander of one of the small Motor Patrol boats which were given the job of making smoke to protect the Vindictive, and the ships sent to block the Mole at Zeebrugge and to pick up men from sinking ships. The action took place on St .Georges Day 1918.

The full story is told in Gordon's book 'The Motor Launch Patrol' Published in 1920, and illustrated with 20 monochrome drawings by Donald.

The two brothers produced many books which in narrative and illustration

have preserved much of Kent's history, and opened the readers' eyes to the beauty of some little known areas of the world.

In 1920 Donald and his family came to live at The Beacon in Borstal. His attachment to the village was later shown in his STORY OF THE SEVEN LAMPS OF BORSTAL\*\*, told in his book 'Unknown Kent'.

Donald became the 'Admiralty Official Artist' and accompanied the Prince of Wales on his Eastern Tour 1921/22 sailing on H.M.S. Renown. The journey is recorded in detail, with both photographs by a member of Central News staff and beautiful paintings and drawings by Donald.

His output of books was remarkable, not only for the travel and research required but for the beautiful sketches and paintings which were numerous. It was not unusual for over 200 illustrations to be included in one book. He painted Altar pieces for the Garrison Church at Chatham and for other churches, and illustrated books for Belloc, Hardy and Kipling.

He died, soon after moving to Goddington House, Harrietsham, on 25<sup>th</sup> July 1936. and is buried in East Farleigh churchyard. The Kent Messenger Newspaper reported that "he was held in esteem and affection in Kent and in Maidstone particularly".

\*\* The story of the Seven lamps of Borstal will be told in the next Medway Chronicle.

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# **The Paddock Restaurant, Chatham**

by Brian Joyce

Many readers will remember this council-run cafe, which traded in Military Road for more than thirty years.

It began as a so-called “British Restaurant”. These were created by the government in 1940 to provide cheap meals, initially for those who were homeless as a result of bombing. By 1943, there were more than 2000, administered by local authorities or charities.

The pictures below show (left) a signboard for the Paddock Restaurant, and (right) the restaurant building partially obscured by a bus.



After the war, councils could take over ownership if they wished. Chatham Borough Council named theirs the Chatham Civic Restaurant, later changed to The Paddock Restaurant after its location in Military

Road. Although it was generally welcomed, some criticised it as a waste of ratepayers' money. After it reopened as a council-owned facility in 1947, Alan Crisfield, Secretary of the Medway Towns Fish Fryers' Association asserted that: "We consider it monstrous that a trader has to help pay for a business which may be his most serious competitor".

The restaurant opened at "dinner time" (i.e. 11.45am to 2.00pm) and "tea time" (i.e. 4.00pm to 6.00pm). The premises could also be hired for evening events.

In 1956, a dinner cost 1s6d and a sweet course 6d. A cup of tea was 3d.

Criticisms of its shabby post-war appearance were addressed in 1957 when it was redecorated in bright pastel colours. Modern furniture and curtains were fitted. The *Chatham News* observed that it only required a few tables with umbrellas outside to give Military Road "a Parisian touch".

The Paddock even began to offer "continental dishes and curried foods", which proved to be too daring for 1950s Chatham residents who demanded blander meals.

# NEW PADDOCK RESTAURANT

CHATHAM

Telephone: MEDWAY 43580

FULL TARIFF WEEKDAYS 8.30 a.m. — 6.00 p.m.

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BREAKFASTS — LUNCHEONS  
AFTERNOON TEAS — MORNING COFFEE

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NO COVER CHARGES      NO SERVICE CHARGES  
NO GRATUITIES

Fully Licensed      Seating up to 240

Available for Wedding Receptions Buffet and Dinner  
Dances, Parties etc.

By the early 1970s, most of The Paddock's income was derived from evening hires and the venue had begun to lose money. By then, the tastes

of many people had changed. Why go out to eat the same types of food you could cook at home when Chatham had acquired a range of restaurants providing tastier ethnic alternatives?

A reporter visiting The Paddock at this time was not impressed. He ate a “satisfying but uninspired” meal for 98p. This included roast beef, creamed potatoes and peas at 62p and apple pie and custard at 9p. A glass of red wine, “which wasn’t cheap”, cost him 20p. The most exotic food on the menu was scampi. The building and its decor reminded him of a holiday camp.

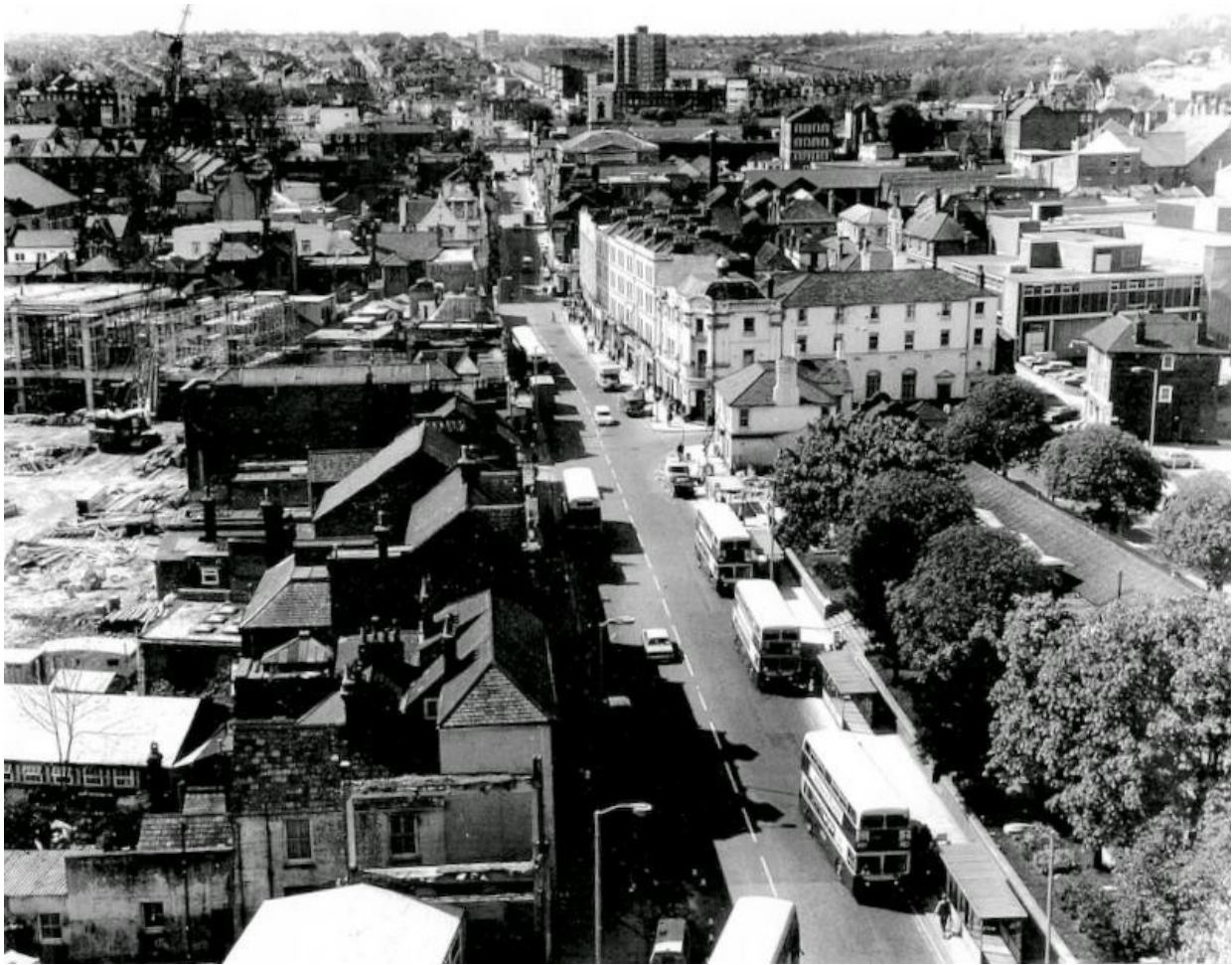
The Paddock’s defenders, for example Councillor Betty Grievson, pointed to its value to the community. Pensioners, whose tastes had not caught up with modern trends, used the restaurant as a meeting place. It was also earning money via dinner dances and other private hirings.

However, by 1976, the writing was on the wall. The Paddock was losing money annually, the building was deteriorating, and tastes in food had left the venue’s unsophisticated menu behind. Chatham Council closed the restaurant.

Mrs Miriam Caley, the Paddock’s cashier, felt that customers, some of whom visited every day, would miss the personal service. However, Mrs Beryl Bowden, the restaurant’s clerk pointed out that the building’s structural problems would be too expensive to repair.

The Paddock Restaurant was an anachronistic survivor from the Second World War which was only ever meant to be a temporary expedient. It could not survive the brash new world of the 1970s.





View of Military Road from the Town Hall, showing the Paddock Restaurant building surrounded by trees.

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## **For King and Country**

by Vic Chidgey (2014)

No smiles to indicate your current mood  
 Bully beef tinned to perfection, no Mum's food  
 Darning socks by the light of the howitzer's flash  
 Me, trench foot Sam and a Private named Nash.

Gargling with tea served with a slice of Somme mud pie  
 Scribbling memos to mother the last before I die  
 Irritating Sergeant Majors, lice, and the irritating rash  
 Me, trench foot Sam and a bloke named Nash.

Sitting in your summer house on this French July morn  
Face it dear, the chances are I'll be dead before the coming dawn  
The officer hollers: Lets go, across the mire where the tribes clash  
Me, trench foot Sam and Private Nash.

The angel of Mons cradles the clouds above the enemy lines  
Shaming man's wreckage on which the vermin dine  
Shell shocked you face the barrage, better the cat or the lash  
Me, old trench foot Sam and a bloke named Private Nash.

Man up men, no need to fear, flee or fret  
Over by Christmas I'll wager, here take my sure fire bet  
Then home to Blighty for sausages, onions and mash  
Me, trench foot Sam and the trembling wreck Private Nash.

Divert the rivers of blood around us, stack the limbs up high  
Make castles from the Somme mud, watch the shrapnel fly  
Dead soldiers on parade dressed in uniforms and a sash  
Me, trench foot Sam and a Private named Nash.

Mask your guns, open your blindfold, shell shocked on parade  
Did you see the ragged firing squad pass along this way  
We the guilty waiting for the Lee Enfields to crash  
Me, trench foot Sam and a boy named Private Nash.

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**Chatham & Rochester News & North Kent Spectator**  
**On the Lines in Wartime    5 Sept.1914**

**QUEEN ALEXANDRA AND NURSES**

Queen Alexandra, who is specially interested in Red Cross work, has addressed the following letter to the chairman of each hospital throughout the United Kingdom which has sent nurses to assist in tending the wounded, in response to her appeal:-

Marlborough House, Aug 29 1914.

It is my earnest desire to express, through your kind medium, my heartfelt thanks to the matron of your hospital for the response made to our appeal for nurses during the present terrible war crises.

Pray also accept my grateful appreciation of the prompt and un- tiring trouble taken in selecting them and sending them out with the shortest possible delay to the seat of war.

May God bless their efforts – ALEXANDRA.

**NOTICE TO WIVES OF DOCKYARDMEN AT CHATHAM**

We are requested to state that wives of dockyardmen at Chatham called up to active service should attend at the Cashier's Office on Saturday, from two to five o'clock, when they will be paid their husbands full pay, less seven shillings a week and any separation allowance received. Each should bring with her her marriage certificate and 'ring' paper.

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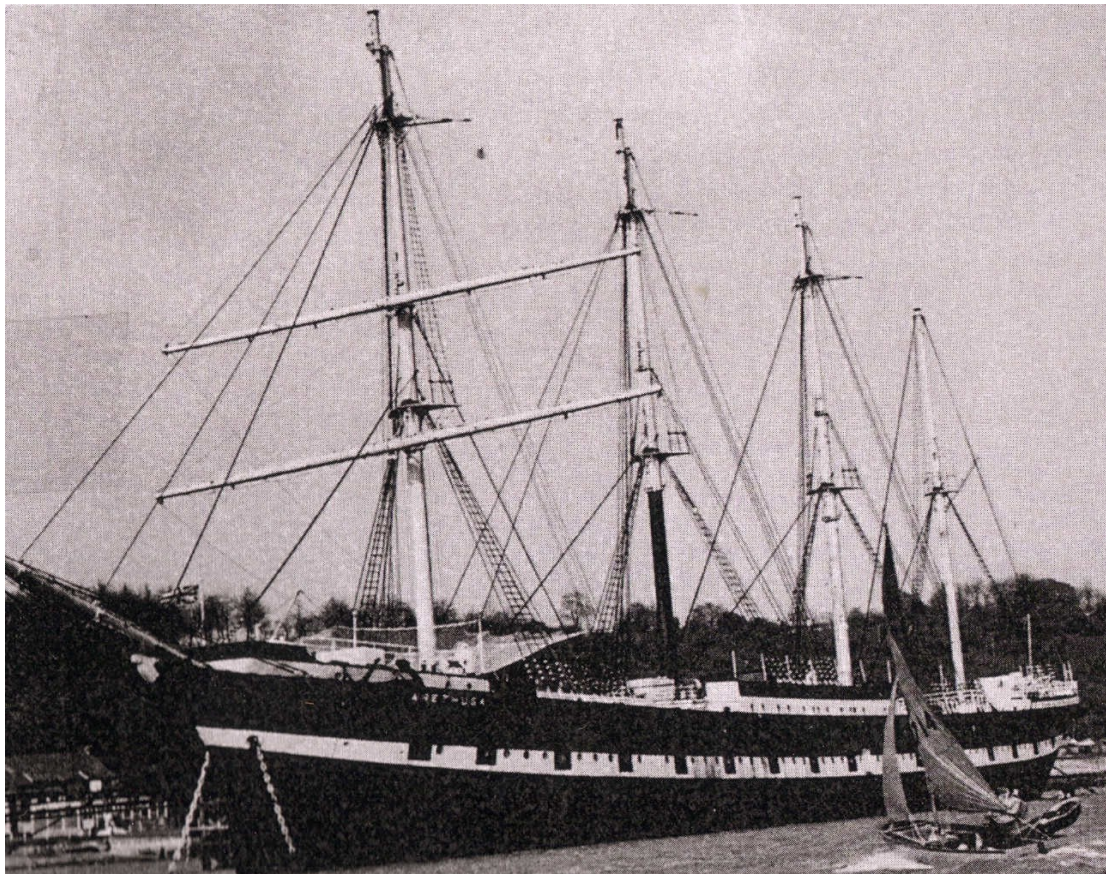
# **Jack Lacey - A Full Life**

## **Part One. An Arethusa boy.**

by Sheila Erwin

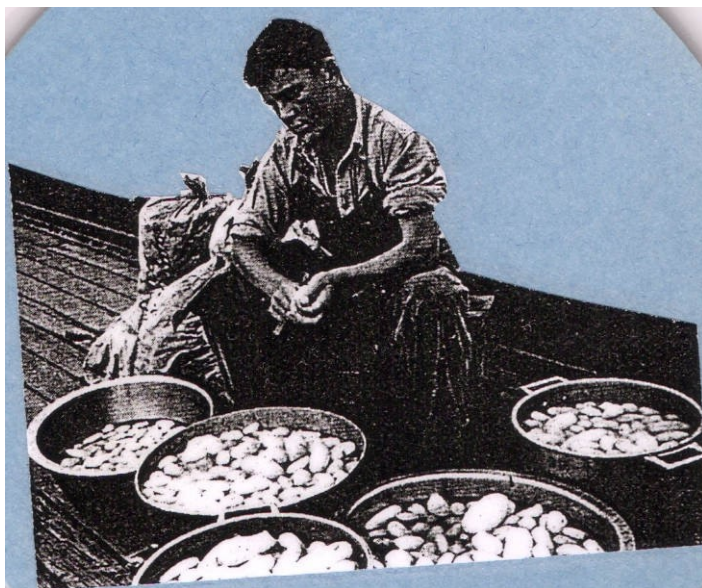
Jack wrote that he came to the 'Arethusa' at Easter 1935. He describes a busy River which "seemed to be full of sailing barges, tugs and lighters nosed all over, fishing bawleys, paddle steamers, larger ships waited to load or to unloaded their freight. It was a scene of great activity."

He boarded the Arethusa's motor launch with four other 'nozzers' (new recruits) and proceeded down-river to her mooring at Lower Upnor.



Life on the Arethusa was quite spartan, and had nothing of the pastoral gentleness of the Bisley School in Surrey where he had spent the previous seven years.

‘Nozzers’ were issued with twenty three rules and the other boys encouraged them to break to them all. There was some bullying on the ship but once Jack had learned to box he was able to “confidently scotch” it.



Discipline, as he recalled, was not repressively strict but ‘cuts’ were administered for some offences. Jack received four cuts for accidentally damaging a porthole.

He remembered the interminable pause between each stroke and the weals which did not heal until after he left the ship.

The ‘Aree’ was the Royal Navy in embryo – rough, tough, rude and a little lewd’. There was an obsession with scrubbing decks, ladders and polishing brass.

Reveille was at 0600 and hammocks were lashed and ablutions completed. Then to breakfast, usually porridge, bread and margarine and tea, to be followed by an orgy of scrubbing and polishing.

Monday was Ddobi-Day, when the boys washed their clothes in large tubs kept at the end of each mess. Each item was washed in strict order – towels, flannels, pants and socks. The voluminous flannel shirts were

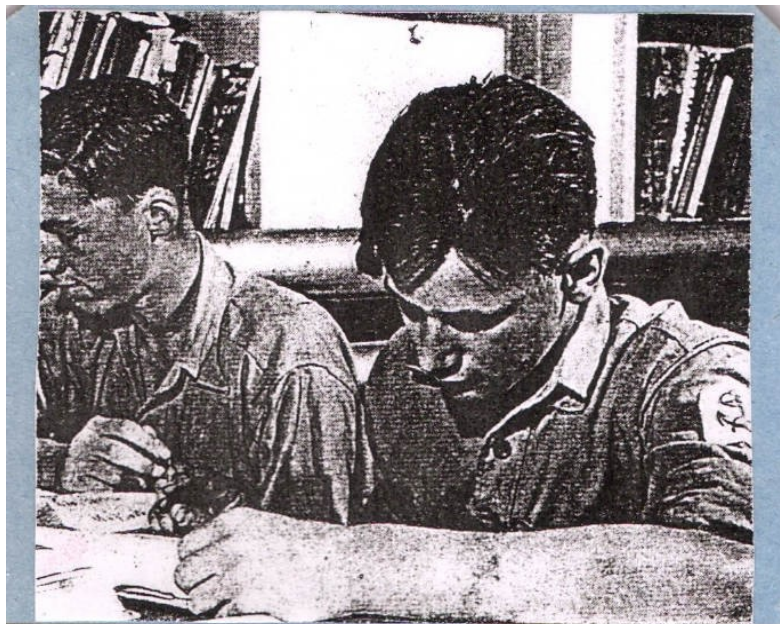


rigged between the masts with 'stops' of unravelled rope instead of pegs. It was then time to be rigged for Division, at 9am on the quarterdeck. Prayers were conducted by the Captain, the Chief Officer or the Purser, followed by classes in seamanship, knot and splices, signalling, swimming and normal school subjects, until dinner at noon.

Food was excellent but they never thought that they had enough of it. After dinner classes went on until four. All orders were given by bugle or Bosun's pipe. After tea at five the boys' time was their own, except if you were a defaulter and then you would be kept busy at work or drill for an hour. Supper was followed by prayers at seven.

Hardtack biscuits were issued with cocoa. There was some limit on the cocoa but none on the biscuits.

The main hold had been turned in to a gymnasium. Most equipment was available and what with the gym, climbing the rigging and doing everything 'at the double', most boys became not only agile but also acrobatic.



**Private Study.** Applied Maths includes Navigation and wasn't too easy. But who else had a classroom that had Sailed round the Horn.

After twelve months on the “Aree” He went to Chatham (H.M.S.Chatham) to enter the Royal Navy as a Boy Seaman. There was a choice of H.M.S Ganges (said to be very tough) or St.Vincent (said to be kind). But his hopes of going to St Vincent were dashed when the Naval Surgeon declared him to be below the ‘physical standard required’ but later he was to serve for twenty two years in the Royal Marines – but that is another Story.

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**Chatham & Rochester News & North Kent Spectator  
September 1914**

**“WHITE FEATHERS”**

An amazing, novel, and forceful method of obtaining recruits for Lord Kitchener’s Army, was demonstrated at Deal on Tuesday, when the Town Crier paraded the town and, crying with all the dignity of his ancient calling, gave forth the following startling announcement:-

**Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!  
“The White Feather Brigade”**

“Ladies wanted to present to the young men of Deal and Walmer who have no one dependent upon them, the Order of the White Feather for shirking their duty in not coming forward to uphold the Union Jack of Old England” “God Save The King”.

During the morning a number of young women had been busy presenting white goose feathers among young men lolling on beach and promenades, and fixing them in the coat lapels and hat bands.

# **The Hoo Peninsula**

## **Part 2 – Cooling (Culinge - Saxon)**

by Len Feist

In Part 1 we looked at Cliffe, but there is much of interest in the history of Cooling, this other small hamlet on the Hoo peninsula.

Roman works and Anglo Saxon finds have been uncovered. The Normans made their mark. Bishop Odo the half brother of William the first was given right to this area, but owing to a falling out with his half brother he returned to France. The castle was originally a house, but it was later extended and fortified into a stronghold, but plots by the owners against the realm became its downfall and in many parts today it looks broken down. It has at times been owned by the Earls of Darnley, and may have been considered as a defence against attack in this part of Kent.

The church, St James', was started in the late eleventh century and completed in the twelfth





The writer Charles Dickens gave the hamlet some form of notice to the world at large because he used the church yard in great expectations with regard to the twelve bottle shaped grave stones that are still visible today.



The death of children was quite a common event at that time in England. It is worth a look at this area and imagining the isolation that must have existed then.



St James' church font.





The pews inside the church.

Cooling's Horseshoe and Castle inn, now of brick construction, was built on the same site as an earlier wooden building, shown below, which burnt down.





**Snippets from WINGET LIFE**  
**June 1939 Vol 1 No.6 Price 3d**

Pips:

Satire is the sort of glass wherein beholders do generally discover every face but their own. (Swift)

What is harder than a rock what softer than water? Yet hard rocks are hollowed out by soft water (Ovid)

Don't go as you please but please as you go

The worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them but to be indifferent to them

That's the essence of inhumanity (G.B.Shaw)

and squeaks:

A very proud man traced his ancestry so far back the he found himself up a tree.

Even the best family tree has its sap

Only a convict likes to be stopped in the middle of a sentence.

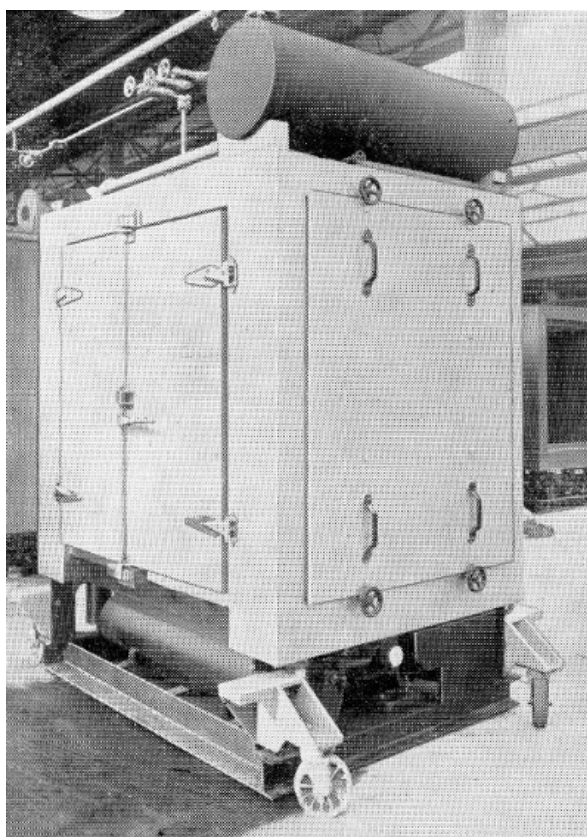
A friend is one who knows all about you and likes you just the same.

Marcel – the man who invented brain waves.

## Quick-Freezing Units In The Froster Assembly Shop

Winter in summer

In their cases over ten feet high, weighing about five tons each, Frosters going out for the first real Birds-eye quick freezing season in England, are giving our Despatch Bay an un-Winget look these days. They go out to the packing factories of prominent firms in the fruit and vegetable trade to catch the pick of the summer produce so that next winter or twenty years from now some lucky tables will enjoy the best of 1939 as fresh as the day it was picked



As Manufacturers of the freezing units we have now completed, tested (to fifty below zero) and despatched our first orders for Frosted Foods, Ltd., of which our Chairman, Mr. R. Ducas, is Managing Director. The next units are now ready for immediate despatch, and in the midst of record concrete machinery sales and production we are happy to fit in still more Frosters to be completed in rotation during June and July. Good luck to quick-freezing!

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# From Dresden To Strood

by Brian Joyce

Emily Manley, the 26-year-old daughter of Stephen Manley, a baker of Cross Street, Strood, was in the wrong place at the wrong time when the Great War broke out in August 1914. Miss Manley was governess to the children of a Danish count and his English wife who lived in Klotzsche, a suburb of Dresden in Germany. As it happened, Emily's employers were visiting Denmark in early August, and she was looking after the children of the countess's sister.



During the first few days of the War, stories reached Emily that both resident and visiting British men were being arrested by the police, and she was afraid of leaving the house for fear of suffering the same fate. However, for the time being, the authorities merely insisted that aliens, both male and female, should register with the police and obey a 6pm curfew. The village policeman visited the house several times a week to

check that Emily had remained at the same address. Additionally, once and sometimes twice a week, the frightened English governess had to report to the Chief of Police in Dresden. Not content with this, the zealous official telephoned the house between her visits, again to ensure that Emily had not fled.

The pressure on Emily eventually affected her health. She became ill with worry and was hospitalised. During her time there, rumours were rife. The vulnerable young Englishwoman was told that the German army had invaded England, that Dover was in ruins and that there had been a mass evacuation of Kent towns. The Medway Towns were supposedly deserted, with the expected German advance on London imminent.



Eventually, the hospital at Dresden became full of wounded from the Russian front, so Emily was moved to another institution at Radeberg, about fifteen miles to the east. There the doctors shielded Emily from the police, who frequently telephoned to check that the Englishwoman had not been discharged.

Emily observed that most of the population in the early months blamed

Britain and France for the outbreak of war, and enthusiastically supported the Kaiser and his army. Every few days, church bells would be rung to celebrate a triumph over allied forces. It was commonplace at this stage in the War for the civilians of Dresden to wear miniature German and American flags in their lapels, the latter because people mistakenly believed that the then neutral USA would eventually enter the War on Germany's side. To avoid undue attention after her discharge from hospital, Emily adopted this practice while in public.

Eventually, the German government decided to allow female enemy aliens to leave Germany, and with help from the American consul, Miss Manley left Dresden on 12 October 1914. After an exhausting journey, which involved six changes of train and insults from German civilians and border guards, Emily reached Rotterdam in neutral Holland. She recovered from her ordeal in a hotel there for a few days, and then boarded a ship bound for England.

While in Holland, Emily soon came to realise that the stories she had been told about a German invasion of England were untrue, a fact that was confirmed when her ship docked. Emily Manley arrived back in Strood with virtually nothing; she had been forced to leave most of her belongings in Germany. She told the Chatham News that despite the treatment she had received as a result of the aggressive patriotism prevalent in Germany, she bore no grudges against the German people as a whole.

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## **Rochester Greyhound Stadium**



The stadium, which was located off City Way, opened in 1936, closed in 1979, and was demolished a few years later. Barkis Close and Appleby Close occupy the site now.

This picture, showing post closure dilapidation, was taken sometime in the early 1980s and is used here with the permission of Mr. M. Haswell.