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CHATHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Medway Chronicle

'Keeping Medway's History Alive'

Annie Young	Edgar Williams	Eric Ravilious
George Bond	William Coles Finch	George Winch
Peggy Fenner	Richard Dadd	Thomas Waghorn

Discovering some of Chatham's Worthies
Chatham Town FC • Local History Uncovered

CHATHAM HISTORICAL SOCIETY meets at St Stephen's Church, Maidstone Road, Chatham, ME4 6JE on the second Wednesday of each month except August. Doors open at 7:15pm and the meeting starts at 7:30pm.

News and information about Chatham Historical Society is available on the website:
<http://chathamhistoricalsoc.chessck.co.uk>

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Front cover: The names of nine 'Chatham Worthies'.

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Society Event – Discover Chatham's Worthies.

In our January session we hosted a society evening. Our topic this time was notable people from Chatham's past; those who were born, lived or worked in the town. Our motto is to 'Keep Medway's history alive', but especially that of Chatham.

We asked members to undertake research and find out some information about a particular Chatham historical figure. Members chose someone from a list of about twenty people compiled with the help of myself, Len Feist, Paul Middleton and Brian Joyce. A couple of members offered their own choice. In total twelve members took part in the research. Subjects ranged from artist to architect, feminist to chartist. On that cold, wet January evening about 22 members turned up to listen to eleven different speakers describe their research. Sadly Jean Lear could not come due to transport issues, but her research is included in this issue.

The idea was for each member to tell us in five minutes a little about their chosen subject; some took less time and others a bit longer. It was an informal setting in a semi-circle around tables with a refreshment break half way through. The feedback given described this as a very interesting and informative evening and one we would like to repeat again. Participants were invited to submit their research to be published in our magazine. In total nine members have responded to this invitation, which is the main focus of this issue of the Medway Chronicle.

As a society we subscribe to the British Association of Local Historians, who produce two quarterly magazine; The Local Historian and Local History News. They were asking societies what they were doing to promote local history in their areas and the type of projects other groups could use as a guide. I wrote to the editor and he was keen to include a piece about our society evenings. In particular, he was interested in our research into the local history of the Blitz using the Newcomb Diary and bringing it to life. He also asked for some details about our Worthies' research and the type of material we might have used. I have been told that our society will appear in the Spring edition of the Local History News which is due out at the end of April this year.

Catharina Clement, Secretary

Annie Young: Women's Rights Campaigner

by Catharina Clement

Annie Young was born in Chatham in 1837 to Joseph Young and Catherine Pratt; one of eight children. Her father ran a grocery business in the East End of Chatham High Street, whilst the family lived on Luton Road. Her father was also a deacon in the Ebenezer Church in Chatham under the Reverend G L Herman, who was a keen supporter of the anti-CD (Contagious Diseases) cause. He was a Liberal politically and had been active in the abolition of slavery and tithing movements.

The family background is vital in explaining Annie Young's venture into both the anti-CD campaign and suffrage movement. Annie's mother, Catherine Pratt, was the sister of the well-known botanist, Anne Pratt. Both girls were well educated, and Catherine assisted Anne in some of her work. Anne Pratt, as well as writing numerous books on botany, also wrote *The Excellent Woman* (1846). Although based on the Book of Proverbs in the bible, it was nevertheless a tract that promoted the qualities of women. Agnes Young, Annie's younger sister, was married into the Quaker Horsnail family of Strood. This extended family played a prominent role in the local early suffrage cause and Frederic Wheeler (his mother was Sarah Horsnail) figured heavily in the anti-CD campaign.

Annie was educated, along with her sister Emily and a number of other young ladies, by a governess at Effingham Crescent in Dover during her teenage years. Brian Joyce believes all of this background heavily influenced Annie Young to become a 'feminist': playing a central and active role in the Medway Towns' anti-CD campaign and the leading light in the local suffragette movement during the 1870s.



On 5th November 1870 Annie Young had her first letter published in the *Chatham Observer*. She was partially advertising the first local women's suffrage meeting to be held on 14th November and stating the aims of the cause in quite some detail. She complimented the local MP, Mr Otway, for presenting the Chatham Women's petition to Parliament in June 1869 and his refusal to vote on a bill that would restrict women's rights. A Women's Suffrage Committee was formed at the meeting, consisting almost entirely of men, but containing one woman, Annie Young, who was elected the secretary. She was a frequent correspondent in the local press on both women's suffrage and the anti-CD movement.

By 1871 some propertied women were taking up their right to vote in local elections. Annie Young wrote on 18th November 1871, that 'We are all much obliged to you for publicly mentioning the voting of women in the St Nicholas Ward (Rochester). The fact that they voted, is a triumph, how they voted is a comparatively indifferent matter'. On 4th April 1872 Annie Young made her first speech on Women's Suffrage at the Lecture

Hall in Chatham. She was loudly applauded and proposed the second resolution: ‘That this meeting resolves to petition Parliament in favour of the Bill to remove the electoral disabilities of women not otherwise unqualified...’. ‘She did not think the vote for women of property as a selfish thing, but as a national right. There are more women than men, and she could not see why men should have a vote, and women equally qualified should not.’ *The Chatham Observer* editorial of the same day considered it: ‘A Novelty in the way of a public speech’.

Annie Young toured with some of the leading suffrage figures of the nineteenth century; sharing the platform with Lydia Becker in 1875 at Rochester Corn Exchange and Caroline Biggs at Kent and Berkshire venues.

Her work in the anti-CD movement was linked to her connection with Frederic Wheeler, who was a national campaigner against the instigation of this Act of Parliament. Prostitution was perceived to be a major problem in towns teeming with sailors. This led to a marked increase in venereal diseases amongst both sailors and the girls plying their trade. Chatham and Portsmouth, the leading naval dockyard towns of the Victorian era, were chosen to carry out this experiment into containing the vice of prostitution. Local girls or women suspected of carrying out prostitution could be medically examined and forced to stay in ‘lock hospitals’ until they were no longer deemed a health risk to society. St Barts in Rochester was the local lock hospital at this time. However, Annie Young and others were opposed to the forced examination and detention of young women as well as Wheeler proving that this method had little impact on reducing prostitution in the Towns.

Annie Young wrote in *The Shield* that ‘I think your readers would be surprised to find how completely a government Lock Hospital resembles a prison.’ She had asked to be able to visit the hospital to see for her own eyes the conditions the women were held in, but was refused by the matron as a do-gooder. Young wrote to a number of newspapers

about the alleged conditions in these lock hospitals. The matron contended that these hospitals with the aid of the Church could save these fallen women, whilst Young believed this merely hardened the women to follow their chosen profession with a clean bill of health. Annie Young became a regular correspondent in *The Shield*, a national magazine supporting the cause of women, and stood on the local platform with Wheeler at the local anti-CD meetings. The first such meeting was held at Chatham in April 1870 with Josephine Butler, the leading female figure in the movement, the main speaker. Annie was to make a forty five minute speech at a women's only meeting in August 1871, chaired by the Rochester Quaker, Elizabeth Reynolds. She also attended a conference in London with Wheeler and made a speech there. Reported in *The Shield*, she claimed:

'We have several large sewing factories in Chatham (the main one being Axe Brand) and it is considered that every girl who enters one of these factories has lost her character. I should be glad if those present could tell me whether girls who enter factories in other places are considered unchaste.'

Annie Young was speaking out for the young women in Chatham who were tarred with the brush of prostitute even when they did an honest day's work, but sadly there was hearsay evidence that young girls were recruited to the profession in these local factories. Wheeler later revealed a case of a young teenage girl, Caroline Whybrow, who was forcibly examined and yet had never been a prostitute. He took the case all the way to the House of Commons. The Contagious Diseases Act was finally repealed in 1886.

Annie Young saw the repeal of the act in her lifetime (she died in 1895), but never witnessed female suffrage being achieved.

Photograph of Annie Young courtesy of the Women's Library, LSE.

Edgar Williams (1912 – 1995) Army Intelligence Officer

by Paul Middleton

The name Edgar Williams does not really mean anything to many people, but he played a crucial role in the second world war despite never really making the history books. He was born in Chatham and just after the end of the first world war the family moved to Wolverhampton which really ended his links with his home town. His father was a minister and this led to a few changes of address as he got different postings. The last school was King Edward V11 school in Sheffield from 1928 to 1931 and this led to Oxford university and a first in modern history in 1934 from Merton college, Oxford. As a result of his success he became an assistant lecturer at Liverpool university. However, he subsequently returned to Merton to become a research fellow working on cabinet government in 18th century England.

Edgar Williams was an historian who found himself part of the second world war and taking an important part in the second battle of El Alamein which together with Hitler's attack on Russia and the subsequent battle of Stalingrad was the turning point of the second world war in Europe. He studied modern history at Oxford university and was therefore trained to put pieces of information together to draw up an image of the greater picture. This was put to great use when he eventually became an army intelligence officer. He started as a soldier and was part of the first British unit to encounter the German Afrika Korps. The two vehicles fired at each other and missed. His report that there were now German as well as Italian forces in North Africa were initially doubted. However, the desert sun was affecting his weak eyes and his future part of the war was to be in intelligence rather than in the combat zone.

At Bletchley Park machines called the Bombes had deciphered the German enigma code which the Nazis believed was impossible to do. Their belief was based on mathematical

probability, but it did not consider factors such as a rush of happy New Year messages on January the first. The machine was really a primitive computer and intelligence gathered was called Ultra. Very few officers knew the Ultra secret, but Edgar Williams was one of them. The breakthrough in intelligence was helped initially by Polish mathematicians and was a state secret until 1974. It no doubt saved many peoples life's by shortening the war.

Edgar Williams' main role as an intelligence officer was in the second battle of El Alamein and intelligence gathered from both German and Italian codes were deciphered. The information was used to kill off Erwin Rommel's seaborne supplies by sinking ships. The FBI in the United States did not know about Ultra until November 1942 and any information gained by them was not given the code Ultra but Ostrich instead.

Military commanders were generally not told how the intelligence was gained but knowing how to react to the information was also important in winning battles. There was a danger that allied commanders would become over reliant on information from the codebreakers at Bletchley Park. Edgar Williams did know however about Ultra and how the information was obtained.

It is important to remember that Ultra was not the only source of information. The intelligence service for the North Africa campaign was based at the General Headquarters Middle East Command which was in Cairo. Personnel for safety reasons were often transported from Liverpool via the Cape, South Africa to Egypt.

The following sources were used to obtain information.

1. The Y service whose job was to listen to enemy radio traffic and to detect the direction of the traffic.
2. Prisoner of war interrogations
3. Aerial reconnaissance
4. Ground reconnaissance which took place behind enemy lines by the Long-Range desert group. This section was founded in Egypt in 1940.

Edgar Williams, tactic was to build up a theory from these sources and use Ultra to verify whether the theory was correct or not.

Montgomery assumed command of the 8th Army in August 1942 and Edgar Williams became the head of intelligence. He was to be with Montgomery for the rest of the war and was known as Bill Williams to Montgomery's staff. Ultra was to provide very accurate information for the battle of Alam El Halfa except that there was a 2-day delay caused by a shortage of petrol. It was part of the last major offensive by Rommel and was unsuccessful. The Germans failed to take Malta despite it being heavily bombed and the Allies ability to sink supply ships as a result was causing a lot of the problems. At times most ships did not make it and supply lines were getting very long. Montgomery improved training and better equipment was being used including Sherman tanks from the United States. The British had air superiority over the Germans and in a desert, there was nowhere to hide. Eventually Montgomery launched the second battle of El Alamein which was the end of the Germans in North Africa and all ambitions to take Egypt.

According to Montgomery's memoirs, Edgar, who was at the time a Major in the army, pointed out that Rommel positioned his German infantry and parachute troops between and in some places behind the Italian troops along the front. The Italians were less reliable fighters and Edgar's Williams idea was to separate the two so it was possible to smash a purely Italian front. This brilliant analysis paved the way to final victory El Alamein according to Montgomery. He had found the weakness in field marshal Rommel's plans.

British forces pushed westward out of their defensive positions in El Alamein a village in northern Egypt. First of all it was Libya, then it was Tunisia, and eventually came the final victory in North Africa in 1943.

It is not normal for British army generals to take staff with them, but Montgomery took Williams and a few others when he was transferred to be part of the allied invasion of Normandy. Williams performed well with good predictions of strength. However, delays to the operation named Overload meant that the situation was changing and by June the 5th a very accurate picture had emerged. It was a little late for D Day itself but was very useful on subsequent days. After D-day Williams involvement in the war becomes less as were a junior party to the American forces. According to one article Montgomery started to ignore Williams' advice about the importance of Antwerp, Arnhem and warning about the Americans being weak in the Ardennes, although I think that further research may be required to check whether this is correct.

El Alamein was a decisive victory and was called by Churchill as the end of the beginning. Normandy could be described as the beginning of the end. This shows the important part that Williams took part in the second world war. After the war this man born in Chatham became a fellow at Balliol college Oxford and thus doing what he really wanted to do in life. He did work for a short time for the United Nations security council in New York from 1946 to 1947. However arguments between countries was not for Williams to sort out, so he decided to return to where he felt he belonged, academia. He was also a Rhodes house trustee at Oxford and one of the students he looked after was Bill Clinton the former USA president. People who served in the two world wars always have a story to tell. It is often a story that they keep to themselves for a time that they would prefer to forget. We all have a debt to pay to them, but we often just think of the soldiers and commanders but never remember that good intelligence can make the difference between winning and losing a battle. Montgomery wrote in his memoirs that Edgar was intellectually superior to him and everyone else on his staff. His vision according to Montgomery gave him an idea which played a large part in winning El Alamein.

His death in Oxford was reported in the media including the New York Times. He was knighted in 1973 and he had been a fellow of Balliol college from 1945 to 1980 and an emeritus fellow, which means retired, for that college from 1980 to his death. He had a successful career in the army rising to the rank of brigadier in World War 2. He was heavily involved in the Rhodes scholarship program as warden of Rhodes house in Oxford from 1952 to 1980 and secretary of the Rhodes trust from 1959 to 1980. He successfully campaigned for Rhodes scholarships awarded to women. In 1977 48 males took part in the scheme plus first for the first time 24 women. For 75 years the multinational program had been going but it was no longer an all-male affair. The scholarships were the result of the will of Cecil Rhodes who was of British origin and made money from mining in Southern Africa as well as having a successful political career in that part of the British empire. The Rhodes scholarship schemes helps foreign nationals to study at Oxford.

He was awarded the United States legion of merit in 1945 and received honorary degrees from colleges and universities. He never wrote a book partly because his knowledge of the ultra-secret was a state secret. He would have had to have written it as if it never existed and he felt that it would have made it an inaccurate history. Ultra was to be a state secret for 30 years. He did have to conquer an over familiarity with the bottle, and he loved cricket and was at times an umpire. He could not drive and took the bus to wherever he wanted to go. In 1980 he was an observer of the Rhodesian elections. He was married twice and had two daughters and one son. A portrait of sir Edgar Williams hangs in Rhodes House, Oxford.

In the memoirs of Field-Marshal Montgomery it says ‘ As the campaign developed I learnt the value of intelligence. Bill Williams was the main source of inspiration as he could see the enemy picture whole and true. An excellent tribute to the man born in Chatham.

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The memoirs of Field-Marshal Montgomery by Montgomery

Eric Ravilious

by Muriel Gibson

Born in Acton, London on 22 July 1903 and, while he was still a child, his family moved to Eastbourne where his parents ran an antique shop. He was educated at Eastbourne Grammar School and won a scholarship to Eastbourne School of Art, where he studied under the engraver Paul Nash.

During his lifetime, Ravilious engraved and drew over 400 illustrations for books and publications. His woodcut of two Victorian gentlemen playing cricket has appeared on the front cover of every edition of the Wisden Cricketers' Almanack since 1938.

Ravilious was also commissioned by Wedgwood to design a commemorative mug to mark the planned coronation of Edward VIII, and the design was revised for the coronation of George VI and Elizabeth. Production of his designs continued into the 1950s, and the coronation mug was posthumously reworked for the coronation of our late Queen in 1953.

Ravilious later became a war artist and in 1939 he was given the rank of Honorary Captain of the Royal Marines. In 1940 he reported to the Royal Naval Barracks at Chatham Dockyard, where he did paintings of ships, and he then went to Sheerness and other coastal defences.

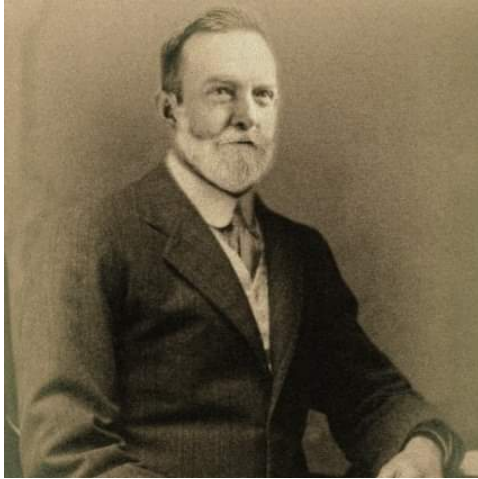
In May 1940 he sailed to Norway and from the deck of HMS Highlander, he painted HMS Ark Royal in action. He also did paintings of the de Havilland Tiger Moths. In 1942 he flew to Iceland and the day he arrived a Lockheed Hudson aircraft failed to return from patrol. The next morning 3 aircraft were despatched at dawn to search for the missing plane and Ravilious joined one of the crews. The aircraft he was in failed to return and the RAF decided that Ravilious and the 4 man crew were lost in action.

His body was never recovered and he is commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial.

George Bond

by Sue Westrup

George Bond was an Architect who had his offices in Sun Pier Chatham and designed many buildings in the town.



Described in his obituary as “The most expert architect that this part of Kent has known”, George Bond certainly left an impressive legacy of buildings in the Medway Towns.

He was born in Chester on the 4th July 1853, and moved to Medway as Clerk of Works for William Callund architects in 1883. His first major project was to oversee the building of Barnard’s Palace of Varieties in Chatham – which was located opposite the Theatre Royal. The architect for the project, James Nash, was obviously impressed with George Bond’s work as the following was written - “The attentive and obliging clerk of works was Mr G. E. Bond, who has shown much ability in superintending the whole of the works”. George Bond went on to collaborate with James Nash on the rebuilding of Sir Joseph Williamson’s Mathematical School in Rochester High Street

George Bond set up his own business in 1886 as George E. Bond, Architect and Surveyor, at Victoria Buildings, 384 High Street Rochester which is located in the area known as Chatham Intra. His first design is believed to have been ‘Ingleside’, a house in Chatham Maidstone Road that later became the Medway Registrar’s Office. By 1904 his business had expanded to necessitate purpose-built offices at Sun Pier.

He was responsible for many of the most iconic buildings in Medway, including:

Chatham Town Hall which opened in January 1900

On the first floor of the Town Hall was a multi-purpose Hall with its own Stage which was used for a variety of functions and events over the ensuing years. When the City Council officials relocated to Strood the building was left empty until it was reopened as the Medway Arts Centre in 1987. Ten years later it was reopened as the Brook Theatre.

The Theatre Royal Chatham. The theatre opened in 1899 and was once able to hold 3,000 people across two tiers and eight boxes. Located on the corner of Manor Road and the High Street, the central location of the Theatre Royal soon made it an extremely popular destination – it was even bigger than the London Palladium and one of the first theatres to use electric lighting.

The theatre closed in 1955 – a campaign was started in the 1980s to convert the building back to its original use but had to be abandoned in 2002 and it is now home to three new apartments.

The Medway Conservancy Board Office in 1909, which later became part of the Guildhall Museum until 2019 when it was purchased at Auction by Nucleus Arts.

Chatham Library

The library, which was located in New Road near Luton Arches, and the first in Chatham, was opened by the Mayor of Chatham, Councillor William Driver, on the 7th October 1903 with more than 5,000 books available to local residents. It was extended to include a new junior library in May 1962, which became home to around 12,000 children's books.

The library was closed in 1971 due to dry rot and was relocated to new premises at Chatham Riverside, before the building was demolished in May 1984.

There were many other properties – too numerous to list here - which included:

The nurses' home at St Barts Hospital,

A convalescent block at St Williams Hospital (now the site of the Wisdom Hospice),

The Baptist Church in Crow Lane,

The Liberal Club on Castle Hill and

The Aveling & Porter building on Strood Esplanade

as well as:

All Saints Church in Chatham

Ebenezer Congregational (now Emmaus),

and St. Andrew's Presbyterian (now King's).

George Bond also built many private houses and villas including his own house, St Ronan's (1909) in King Edward Road, Rochester (now part of the King's School). His initials can still be seen embellished in the front doorway.

Liberal in his politics, he was Chairman of the Rochester Liberal Club from 1904. He was a Freemason (designing their distinctly classical building at Manor Road, Chatham in 1904), a Trustee for the Chatham Savings Bank and he was appointed a JP in 1908. He was also President of the Society of Architects for four years until 1913.

George Bond died at his home St Ronan's on the 20th May 1914 and is buried in St Margaret's Cemetery, Rochester.

To conclude - an interesting observation:

George Edward Bond must be one of the most perfect names for an 'Architect'.

We have 'Georgian' style buildings.

We have 'Edwardian' style buildings.

And, in architectural language, a 'Bond' is a systematic arrangement of bricks or other building units composing a wall or structure in such a way as to ensure its stability and strength.

What did George Winch (1842-1914) do for us?

by Jean Lear

1. George Winch was born on 20th September 1842, into the Medway brewing family of Edward Winch and Sons Limited, which had taken over Bests brewery in Manor Road, Chatham. In 1899 they amalgamated with a Maidstone brewery and became Styles and Winch. They traded until the 20th century when, like many other family businesses, they were taken over by Courage Limited, which survives to this day.

Among the tied houses in their portfolio was the famous or infamous Long Bar in Chatham High Street.

2. He did not enter the family brewing firm, but with encouragement from his parents, he trained as a solicitor. He was articled to Thomas Hills, who practised from New Road, Chatham, and once qualified he became a partner and the firm became Hills and Winch. In 1892 his son George Bluett Winch joined him working from Milton Cottage in New Road and the firm of Winch and Winch is still at the same address.



3. He held many local offices, including
 - a. Clerk to the Chatham Local Board of Health
 - b. Registrar of Sheerness County Court
 - c. Stipendiary Magistrate
 - d. Clerk to Mr F E Guise, the Stipendiary Magistrate for Chatham and Sheerness
 - e. High Constable of Chatham in 1869 – when he represented Chatham in Brussels.
 - f. Returning Officer for Chatham in 1885 until it became a Borough in 1890
 - g. Member of the Court of Wardens of Rochester Bridge until 1908
 - h. County Alderman for 12 years
 - i. Director and Deputy Chairman of Chatham Water Company until his death

In early February 1914 he attended the Chatham Water Company's Half Yearly meeting in Chatham when he appeared to be his usual cheerful self.

He returned six days later for the Mayor's Banquet at which he proposed the toast to the Bishop and Clergy and ministers of all denominations. He died in Tunbridge Wells on 22nd February of pneumonia after an operation.

4. George Winch's professional skills were instrumental in drawing up the Charter of Incorporation, which led to **Chatham** becoming an **Independent Borough on December 10th 1890.**

5. He was elected as the first **Mayor of Chatham** and played a prominent part in the parades, bands and attractions which were held to celebrate Chatham's Incorporation.

6. Throughout his life George Winch also played an active part in many local campaigns and charitable organisations,
- a. He was on the governing body of St. Bartholomew's Hospital from 1876 and became a prime mover in the campaign to fund the new wing built in 1890. (NB Before the founding of the NHS).
 - b. He campaigned for the creation of a free public library service in Chatham and he made donations towards the building costs and books to fill its shelves.
 - c. He was a Founder and Patron of Chatham Working Men's Club
 - d. In his later years, his most notable charitable action was to buy and maintain a Convalescent Home for Women and Children in Maidstone Road, Chatham –almost opposite his own home “Holcombe House”
 - e. Before his move to Holcombe House, George Winch and his wife lived in Gibraltar Terrace, and while there he campaigned to fund the erection of a statue to commemorate the achievements of Thomas Waghorn. In 1888 a position visible from his then home was chosen as the site for this statue by H H. Armstead, R.A , where of course it can still be seen.
 - f. Another local scheme to receive his support was the creation and laying out of nearby Victoria Gardens.

George Winch married Mary Clarke Bluett from Holcombe, Devon in 1866. They began their married life in 1, Gibraltar Terrace, Chatham, (which was opposite Chatham Police station at the time.)

Holcombe, Maidstone Road Chatham

A growing family brought a need for a larger house and in they moved to a new-build “**Holcombe**” in Maidstone Road – subsequently the home of **Chatham Boys Grammar School**. The red brick, half-timbered house was individually designed and described as imposing. It sat in 28 acres of mature grounds, with tennis courts and croquet lawns, a sunken Italian garden, formal rose beds, a fernery and a lake with a foot-bridge. It also included a productive kitchen garden, a heated greenhouse, stabling for five horses, gardeners bothy, tool and potting sheds. In was indeed an “impressive Gentleman’s residence”. However, it is still playing a part in the life of Chatham today. In January 2023, I received a leaflet offering the opportunity to attend a Keep Fit Class in the house!

My Dainty Ariel by H.H. Armstead R.A

In his will (Chatham News, 11th July 1914p.7) George Winch bequeathed a statue “My Dainty Ariel” by Henry Hugh Armstead RA to The Trustees of the National Gallery to be placed in the Tate Gallery. The sculptor was a member of the Royal Academy and was a favourite of Queen Victoria. He worked with George Gilbert Scott and was involved in work on the Albert Memorial, The Colonial Office (now Foreign and Commonwealth Office,) Llandaff cathedral, and in churches and guildhalls across the UK. Locally, Armstead was the sculptor of Thomas Waghorn’s statue, which was funded by a public subscription begun by George Winch and which was erected on the opposite corner to George Winch’s house in Gibraltar Terrace. I have searched the National Gallery and The Tate Gallery websites but neither references this statue or its bequest by George Winch.

The Right Honourable Dame Peggy Fenner (1922-2014)

by Christine Hornby

Peggy was born in Lewisham, London and as a child was cared for by her grandparents. Obituaries referred to a difficult early life: her parents divorced when she was just three and then she no longer saw her father. Peggy Edith Bennett attended Ide Hill School in Sevenoaks but by the age of 14 was in service. She married Bernard Fenner, an architect, just four years later and went into wartime factory work.

In 1952, Peggy joined the Conservative and Unionist Party and was elected to Sevenoaks council a few years later. She chaired the Council twice, in 1962 and '63, and sat on the West Kent Education Executive. We can surmise that she impressed the local Tories, as she was shortlisted in 1964, ahead of a hundred others (mostly men), to succeed Harold Macmillan, who represented Bromley. She wasn't selected, however, and also just missed being chosen to fight a marginal Brighton seat. Peggy had to fight, and lose, a Labour seat in 1966, in the Midlands before being offered the constituency of Rochester and Chatham, which she duly won at the general election of 1970: it was a decisive victory, as she improved on the national swing and gained a majority of over 5000. This seat, in its various incarnations, remained with Peggy Fenner for 22 of the next 27 years, until the Labour landslide of 1997, when she was approaching 75 and lost to the lawyer, Bob Marshall-Andrews.

Her parliamentary career frequently centred around women's issues. In 1970, female MPs numbered in the low twenties, out of 630 members. (Peggy had expressed unhappiness that she had fought incumbent MP Anne Kerr to gain her seat: both women would have preferred a male opponent.) She was able to bring an end to the Royal Navy's 'dial a sailor' scheme, whereby the public could befriend sailors away from home, after Navy wives complained. There was less success with the recently liberalised divorce laws: Tory women, including Peggy, hoped to preserve the right of the 'innocent party' to veto the end of the marriage indefinitely.

The progressive tide was against them in this, however. Her work on the Expenditure Select Committee was recognised when PM Edward Heath made her Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Agriculture: inflation was growing and she had responsibility for prices. The press dubbed her Price Peg, and in fact, Mrs Fenner served at the new Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) under both Heath and Thatcher for much of her governmental career. She legislated for sell-by dates and in the 80s addressed concerns about livestock conditions, pesticides and cling film, among many others. Later on in her career, Peggy voted in favour of the ordination of women and for Labour's Betty Boothroyd to become the first female Speaker of the House. She was also delegated to represent the U.K. in Strasbourg at the Council of Europe for over a decade.

Local issues played their part, of course, and John Nott's decision to close Chatham Dockyard hit Peggy's constituents hard. Many complained to their MP and she voted against the proposed naval cuts. Nevertheless, she was re-elected in 1983 and held the new seat of Medway for another 14 years. The cull of junior ministers in 1986 ended her tenure of government posts and Mrs Thatcher made her a DBE, perhaps in compensation. Soon after, she campaigned against the proposed high speed link across Kent to the channel tunnel, but failed to stop this. She also attempted to relocate the research facilities of MAFF to Medway, when both Reading and Oxford were being seen as more suitable. ... But we can surely understand her preference here: Peggy enjoyed representing our towns: in fact, just prior to the 1992 election, when she was 70, she was urged by Party members to give up her seemingly safe seat to Chris Patten. "Never, never, never" was her firm response and Patten had to return to his marginal seat in Bath.

During her retirement, Peggy Fenner continued to live in Sevenoaks: Her husband died in 2001 and in 2007, on the death of Baroness Jeger, she became the oldest woman alive to have served in Parliament in the U.K. Geraldine, her only daughter also predeceased her: Peggy lived to be almost 92 and her local paper, the Sevenoaks Chronicle, proudly called her a 'senior stateswoman'.

Richard Dadd

by Sue Austin

Born: Chatham, August 1817

Parents: Father Robert was a chemist; Mother Mary was the daughter of a shipwright



He attended the King's School, Rochester, where he showed artistic flair. Later on, he went on to William Dudson's Academy of Art, then the Royal Academy at age 20.

Richard Dadd was awarded several medals for life drawings and was commissioned to illustrate books.

His drawings and painting became very detailed and *Titania Dreaming* based on a *Midsummer Night's Dream* set a precedent for his later works with his detailed fairy/goblin creatures. Fairy tales and the supernatural were very popular at the time, so

his paintings were not seen as unusual or remarkable.

In 1842 Sir Thomas Phillips was going on a tour of Europe and the Middle East and wanted someone to illustrate his travels. He offered Richard the job in return for being his patron and investor, which Dadd accepted. The journeys undertaken were harsh and long. Phillips would only stop for rest when it was essential, so Dadd had little time for his illustrations, which he found frustrating as he was used to painting in studios without time constraints.

Whilst in Egypt they undertook a cruise down the Nile and visited many ancient Egyptian ruins. At this time Dadd took to smoking a shisha pipe and would spend up to five days at a time smoking it. He became convinced that the bubbling noise was the Egyptian god Osiris sending him messages. He also suffered persistent headaches, which Phillips put down to sunstroke.

During a later trip to Rome, Dadd wanted to attack the Pope during a public appearance and became aggressive towards Phillips. He abandoned Phillips in Paris, returning to England in 1843, where he told his family that he doubted his 'own sanity'. His family sought help from a specialist doctor who found Dadd not to be of sound mind. Unfortunately, Richard convinced his father that he just needed to rest.

At this point Dadd was still obsessed with Osiris and was convinced that he was under his control. Dadd travelled to Cobham with his father on August 28th 1843. At a chalk pit, now called Dadd's Hole, he brutally murdered and dismembered his father using a knife and razor, believing that his father was the devil in disguise.

He fled to France still wearing his bloodied clothes. His brother told police to add him to the list of suspects, as he had found a sketch book with illustrations of friends and associates with their throats cut. Dadd meanwhile had tried to murder a fellow traveller

with a razor, but he was overpowered and arrested. He confessed immediately and was found to have a list of people 'who must die' in his pocket. His father was number one on the list.

After a trial in London, Dadd was sent to the Bethlem Royal Hospital (Bedlam) where he was kept in a secure area for 'criminal lunatics'. He was encouraged by doctors to continue painting and the London art scene was excited by his new works. *The Flight out of Egypt* was one of the first and it combined scenes from his travels with fairies and fantasy creatures. He also painted his carers.

By the mid-1850s his paintings had become more detailed than ever, and the focus was now even more centred on fairies and fantasy figures. *The Fairy Feller's Master-Stroke* was his most famous painting and now hangs in the Tate, along with his unfinished works. Dadd was moved to Broadmoor where he carried on painting, however typhoid was rife at the time and he died there in 1866, aged 68. Broadmoor still displays some of his art works and there is currently a display of his works at Bethlem Museum of the Mind.

Thomas Fletcher Waghorn

by Stewart Coleman

Thomas Fletcher Waghorn was born in Chatham in July 1800 and was baptised at St Marys Church (on Dock Road). His father, also named Thomas, was a butcher who supplied meat to the navy.

Aged 12, Thomas joined the Royal Navy in November 1812 as a midshipman on HMS Bahama, anchored on the river Medway, which was being used to house prisoners of war. He remained in service until 1817 when the navy was slimmed down following the end of the war with France. In 1818 aged 18, Thomas left England, sailing to Calcutta, where he joined the Bengal Pilot service of the East India Company piloting ships from the Bay of Bengal along the Hooghly River to Calcutta. In 1822 he married Elizabeth Bartlett at St John's Cathedral, Calcutta.

In 1824, Thomas fought in the First Burmese war between the Burmese and British empires over control of North Eastern India. During this conflict he commanded an East India company cutter called 'Matchless'. The war ended with a British victory in 1826, and he returned to his career in the Bengal Pilot service and began to take an interest in establishing a steamship route from England to India and the East.

During 1827 Thomas proposed a plan for the use of steamships to India on the Cape Town route but because postal rates from England to India, were set by an Act of Parliament and could not be changed and he needed to charge higher rates for his own plan to make a profit, the sea route using steam ships was not feasible. In 1829 he was commissioned by the East India Company to test the feasibility of an overland route from England to India via Egypt carrying dispatches for the governor of Bombay by the way of Suez.

The overland route, so called because it crossed the dessert between Cairo and Suez, was not a new idea and had been used before as a trade route connecting the Mediterranean and Red Sea ports until 1498, when Vasco da Gama found a sea route to India. After 1498, it was virtually abandoned, and by the end of the 18th century was largely forgotten.



In October 1829, Thomas left London and crossed the English Channel by steamer. On reaching Paris he travelled by coach to Trieste on the Adriatic coast in north east Italy, arriving just nine days after leaving London. From Trieste he sailed down the Adriatic and across the Mediterranean to Alexandria in Egypt. From Alexandria, Thomas took a two day 40 mile donkey ride to the Nile River at Rosetta where he continued on a Nile river boat to Cairo. In Cairo, he was granted a permit of safe conduct through the dessert by the Pasha of Egypt and made the 86 mile journey from Cairo to Suez by camel in three days arriving there on December 5. A scheduled paddle steamer service to Bombay failed to materialise and so he chartered an open boat which took him 620 miles down the Red Sea to Jeddah where he was struck down with a fever and after resting for six weeks eventually reached Bombay on 21st March 1830 aboard a sailing vessel. The total journey time from London to Bombay had taken four months and 21 days, still faster

than the sea route, but a lot longer than the 90 days he had said was possible, and the East India Company lost interest in the overland route.

Undaunted by this setback to his plans, in 1831 Thomas resigned his role with East India Company and once again joined the Royal Navy serving on wooden paddle steamers in the Mediterranean. This commission only lasted until November 1832 when he was paid off.

1834 was to be a significant year in Thomas' life. On the 8th March his wife died in Calcutta, and returning to England, he re married this time to Harriet Martin daughter of the miller at Snodland. Around this time, he inherited a substantial amount from his late grandfather. This new found wealth enabled the newlyweds to build a house in Snodland and also gave him the resources to set up his business venture transporting mails and passengers to India and the East via Egypt.

Thomas went to Egypt and set himself up as an independent agent for transporting mails, goods and passengers from England, via Alexandria, Cairo and Suez to India, with his business registered at Cornhill in the City of London. In his first year of operations, 275 passengers used his service, ten years later this number would rise to more than 3000. In practice. the 90-day trip to England, for either mail or passengers, became commonplace, thanks largely to the speed of the vital overland link through Egypt and the service was so well organised that the Post Office was obliged to officially recognise it as the fastest and safest way to send mail to India. On the 7th March 1835, the overland route was authorised to handle the English mails.

The impact of the traffic generated by this new route for Egypt was enormous. As the business became established it expanded by supplying guides, river-boats, horses and carriages for travellers. Sight-seeing tours in Egypt were organized by a certain Mr. Thomas Cook and Egypt became an important player in world politics.

At the moment of his success, rivals had begun to contest Thomas' monopoly of this route. The East India Company took an interest in the operation and backed a rival company, the Peninsular and Oriental Steamship Co, (better known today as P & O). A result of this was that by 1840 steamships were soon carrying mail running on regular schedules between Southampton and Alexandria and by 1844 from Suez to India. By the 1850s with the advent of steam ships, railways and Nile steam boats, the journey between England and India was reduced to around 35-40 days instead of the initial three months.

The final blow to Thomas' operation came in 1841, when his stock of 300 horses in Egypt was mostly destroyed by a plague, and the future development of the overland route was put into the hands of the Egyptian Transit Company. In 1842, he was given the honorary rank of Lieutenant by the Admiralty, for his cumulative years of service in the navy and also his efforts in establishing the overland route.

With his focus no longer on Egypt, Thomas' turned his attention to speeding the mails through Europe. The growing railway system was providing new opportunities for faster travel and Thomas' experiments were largely successful in that they were faster by up to two days. The British government had promised to reimburse his costs in making these trials, but failed to do so, leaving him in debt (by his own account) of £5000. A late pension of £100 by the East India Company and the proceeds of a public testimonial did little to alleviate these debts.

After all of the setbacks, Thomas became disillusioned with his pet project and after a brief holiday in Malta he returned to his house in Islington, where he died on 7 January 1850 aged 49. He was buried at All Saints church in Snodland, on the 14th January. His grave may be found outside the Vestry door, near many of his relatives. A memorial to him is on the south wall of the nave. His wife Harriet passed away 4 years later and was buried with him.

William Coles Finch

by Chris Nickless

Worthies begins with a W – so in the case of Mr. Coles Finch we are going to have a number of uses of the letter W.

His Christian Name was **William** and he is remembered for **Waterworks, Watermills, Windmills, Westminster** and **Walks** and his work as a **Writer**.

William was born on 23 October 1864 in Rochester.

His working life was spent in the **Waterworks** Industry. He was a member of the Institute of Civil Engineers – MICE for short. He was the Resident Engineer of the Brompton, Chatham, Gillingham and Rochester Water Company. You can imagine that there were arguments about the order of the names, as parochialism was rife, but wisely the company went with alphabetical order! That company was set up just four years before **William** was born. He lived at **Waterworks House** in Luton and in our lovely archives in Strood, there is an excellent picture of **Waterworks House**. In the picture you can observe the next **W** in **William's** list of interests – the **Windmill** that used to stand on Darland Banks- it was known as Star Windmill or Upper Chatham Mill. It operated – milling corn from 1810 to the late 1910's and it supplied milled corn to the troops stationed in the area. **William** would have been able to tell you that it was a **Wooden** Smock Mill, for he had become an expert on **Windmills** and indeed also **Watermills**. His careful and thorough research and physical visits to such structures enabled him to write **Watermills** and **Windmills**, a historical (note that the author did not like short titles for his literary efforts) survey of their rise, decline, and fall as portrayed by those of Kent. 90 years on, this is still the standard work on the topic.

To extend our use of the letter W into our watermills we have Wandle Mill on the River Rother!! So now we are on to another **W** in our survey of **William** – **William** as a **Writer**. His first great work was published in 1908 and not surprisingly the topic was **Water**. The book was entitled **Water – its origin and use**. The subject matter was the finding and distribution of water. Mr. Coles Finch was ahead of his time when in his book he wrote of the ruthless destruction of forests by the rich nations of the world and that he knew that the glaciers were retreating. As with many of his books the text was accompanied by illustrations and photographs. He himself drew the illustrations and most of the photographs used in his book were taken by him with his own camera. By then William was well known for his expertise in the Water Industry. He had for instance made a name for himself when in 1897 he had read a very erudite paper to the British Association of Waterworks Engineers meeting at the Town Hall, **Westminster** (another **W**) on the topic of Electrical Water Level Recorders. Another watery book appeared in 1914 when he co- authored Water in Nature with Ellison Hawks of Meccano fame.

Then our **Writer William** turned his attention to local history. In 1917 he paid tribute to his birth city by writing of the Foords of Rochester. Then in 1927 came probably his most famous **Work**. This was entitled In Kentish Pilgrim Land. In this work, he has an introduction informing us that the book was written at Luton, Chatham, Kent. This book is full of excellent descriptions of sites well known to all of us such as Kit's Coty House. **William** was a great **Walker** and this work demonstrates this admirably.

This great scholar, who has given us the benefit of his dedicated studies, passed away at Luton Waterworks House on D Day, Tuesday June 6th. 1944 and he was buried in St. Nicholas Church Rochester, a church about which he had written in his Kentish Pilgrim Land.

Let William have the last word: He wrote ‘ I would invite each and every reader to recall the history and sample the pleasures of all shrines, churches, castle ruins and surroundings of such beauty as are to be found in Kentish Pilgrim Land’.

For those of you who like looking out for old street furniture – keep your eyes out for one of those old stop tap covers one had in the street, before water meters appeared. One bearing the initials BCGR and the words Water Works would probably date from the time when Mr. Coles Finch was the resident engineer. He, I am sure, would have approved of our motto ‘Keep Medway’s History Alive’ with special reference to Chatham. So he has every right to be in the Chatham WORTHIES List.

History of Chatham Town Football Club 1980-1990 (Part1)

by Pat Byrne (CTFC Historian)

1980-1990 (Part 1)

The pressure was on for Chatham to retain their Kent League crown and early indications clearly showed another title challenge was possible, the squad continued to look strong with many key players reaching their peak.

Pre-season saw Chats win 3-0 at Faversham and again a Gillingham XI visited Maidstone Road Ground for another thrilling evening encounter that saw Chats win by 4-3 in front of a very excited crowd. The first league game saw Chats run out 4-0 winners over Whitstable Town and this was followed up with a 1-0 hard fought away win at Deal Town, Eastbourne United were dispatched 2-1 in the FA Cup and Chats continued their progress after defeating Tonbridge at home 1-0 following a 1-1 draw, the next round saw their Cup dreams die as they got hammered 4-0 at Bromley. Tonbridge got revenge in the FA Trophy with 2-1 win at Maidstone Road Ground.

Results were mixed which were to cost them the title as Chats beat Kent Police 4-1 at home but to lose 2-0 away, they got soundly beaten at Sittingbourne 4-1 but won the return fixture 2-1, though they beat Darenth 2-0 at home 2-0 they dropped a vital point away in a lacklustre 0-0 draw, another vital point last lost at Sheppey United in front of 500 plus as the game ended in a 2-2 draw but Chats won the home fixture 2-1 in front of a crowd of 349, Hythe at home saw another 2-1 win but point a dropped in the 1-1 away draw in a game Chatham dominated and missed many chances. The highlight of the season was evergreen striker Bobby Harrison scoring the perfect hat-trick in the 5-1 win at home to Ramsgate where he scored with his right foot, left foot and a header, pure class.

The team finished in second place playing 32 games, winning 22, drawing 6, losing 4, scoring 61 goals and conceding 23 and accumulated 53 points. The reserves also surrendered their Kent League Division Two title by finishing third.



1980-81 CTFC - Back Row: Woolford, Brown, Whiteley, Williams, Hughes, Harrison & Samwell. Front row: Donohue, Patterson, Rogers, Donahue, Steed & Mitchell.

Chatham Town finish further behind in Kent League Title race

Following Chairman Guy Swayland successful commercial activities bringing in some much needed funds, the Club held a special prize draw with a car as first prize in association with the Rochester Motor Company, thousand entered across the Medway towns as many local outlets were selling the much sought after tickets plus the new Chatham Town lottery.

This enabled manager Arthur Hughes to make two key signings from Gillingham in Alan Wilkes & Dave Quirke to add extra quality and experience for another assault on the Kent League title for coming season of 1981-82, the squad announced at the start of the season that was published in the Chatham News, Evening Post & Chatham Standard was Alan Hughes, Mick Humphrey, Kenny Rogers, Alan Wilkes, Dave Quirke, John Ribbins, Dave Samwell, John Appleyard, Brian Marshall, Bobby Harrison & Denis Housden. New goalkeeper Mick Humphrey would go on to become Chatham Town's longest ever serving goalkeeper and would go on to make over 300 first-team games in all-levels plus many more for the reserves and Chatham Town XI, Mick Humphrey was a strong and brave goalkeeper and his exceptional point blank saves earned him the nickname the 'Tank' by the Chatham Town supporters, he would also save many penalty kicks that he faced during a successful and illustrious career at Chatham and a loyal servant to the club.

Gillingham came over to Maidstone Road Ground for another pre-season friendly and on this occasion Gills won 3-2 in yet another engaging game. Chats started their Kent League campaign with three straight wins over Ramsgate at home 2-0, Slade Green away 1-0 & Whitstable away 2-1 before losing 2-1 at home to arch rivals Sheppey United. The early signs were clear they would maintain a challenge for the title this year. Chats exited the major Cup competitions at the first stage losing 4-1 at home to Hastings United in the FA Cup and another home defeat in the FA Trophy where despite leading 1-0 until the sixty-ninth minute they lost 2-1. This was Chats centenary year and the game planned against Norwich City was not to be played for another two years! Chats finally finished third in the Kent League having played 30 games, winning 18, drawing 5 and losing 7 scoring 61 conceding 34 and amassing 41 points.

Arthur Hughes leaves Chatham Town

The 1982-83 saw esteemed manager leave for the final time as the club started a steady decline in their fortunes on and off the pitch. Chairman Guy Swayland though extremely disappointed he acted swiftly to install Barry Watling, the new manager retained most of the squad from the previous season with a few new additions. The ex-Gills players Dave Quirke & Alan Wilkes were not retained as the club were on an economy drive and the whole structure of the club was under review.

Arthur Hughes will forever be remembered as Chatham Town's Football Club most successful manager in its history. A great man-manager, sound tactical ability, well respected throughout the local and county game by all those who knew him. Players who played for him speak volumes of his values & standards that he instilled in them and many will say he improved them as players. Arthur was voted as Chats great ever manager in 2020 by officials, players & supporters in a special poll.

Chairman Guy Swayland announces his intention to step down from the club

In the January Chatham Town's Chairman Guy Swayland announced his intention to step down at a time where no replacement was in place. The incoming Chairman was to be Ben Troke, the outgoing Guy Swayland & Ben both jointly campaigned to get Chatham back into the Southern League a campaign that was to be successful for the next season, so both outgoing & incoming Chairman played their part in getting the Chats back up the League system. Guy Swayland would make the 100 club legends list in 2016 as his financial support and forward thinking made him a Chairman that history would judge as being ahead of his time. It was Guy who actually introduced a proper commercial wing to the club and he strived to operate the club within its financial needs and to ensure the club remained viable.

Guy's letter of resignation was submitted to Vice Chairman Bert Salkind which was detailed and gave a full explanation as to what is required in running Chatham Town Football Club and kind gesture and showed he remained professional to the end of his tenure. Guy left the club with sincere best wishes from all colleagues and is always warmly welcomed back. In 2021 Guy kindly allowed his memorabilia from his days at Chats to be copied for the club's archive. The loss of Chairman Guy Swayland would be the start of the club once again striving towards the Southern League but without the financial structure in place. Though he returned briefly to help out as the club's finances tumbled, his own health and outside business interests resulted in him declining to provide further support as he could not commit the time required that was needed.

Under Guy's Chairmanship, ground improvements were made, regular pre-season games with Gillingham returned, the plans for club bar to help raise revenue was undertaken, kit sponsorship introduced, a vinyl record made, a club lottery introduced, a big raffle including Star Prize Draw of a car as first prize, installed new seating in the Bourneville Road Stand, got long standing repairs done, he gave personal financial backing to keep club afloat, installed new floodlights and much more in just four years.

Guy Swayland's commercial plans & ideas brought about the start of the change required to keep Chats operating within their means. Many supporters remember him as a charismatic, cheerful and forward thinking Chairman who saved the club from going under. The club struggled after his departure as there was nobody of his calibre on the Board to have his forward vision and business acumen. He is fondly remembered by those who knew him and he left a positive mark in the history of Chatham Town Football Club.

Ben Troke appointed new Chairman

Chairman Guy Swayland handed the reins of the club to Ben Troke and another new dawn was facing the club. The financial support from Guy Swayland would be missed and Ben Troke's first task would be to ensure commercial activities continued but Guy's support team also left the club as Lottery Manager Liz Gibbons had returned to Scotland, replacement John Lacombe resigned after just three months into the job, key finance strategist Stewart Rickersay also left due to promotion to an overseas post which was another blow to the club. Bobby Harrison's career end is nigh added to the concern.

Local History Uncovered: Amy Johnson and the lost flag

Chatham Historical Society often receives queries through the contact page on its website. This article and its preceding research were in response to, or initiated by, one of those queries.

Amy Johnson was the first woman to fly solo from England to Australia which she did in 1930. As part of the celebrations, she took part in a flag celebration, where she presented a flag to the Chatham state school which is situated in the Surrey Hills suburb of Melbourne, Australia and to the mayor at Chatham town hall for a primary school in Chatham, England. The school down under contacted Chatham Historical Society because they are keen to trace the whereabouts of the flag that was presented to England, but unfortunately we have found no trace.

It was in December 1930 that Amy Johnson visited Chatham town hall where she was greeted by the mayor. There was a very big crowd outside the town hall to greet her. On receiving the flag from Australia, the mayor announced that he was going to send the flag of Chatham back to them which has the motto 'Loyal and true' on it. With the flag that was going to Australia, he would send pictures and newspaper reports with it. The mayor said he would ask children of both towns to start corresponding with each other which in his opinion they should do as they have the same king and flag. He went on to say that the flag would be used on every possible occasion in Chatham. Amy Johnson got a lot of laughter when she said that the flag had come from Australia with her on a ship, as she considered it a lot safer! When making her historic journey she said she had a union jack with her as it gave her the confidence to continue the journey to the other side of the world. She has to think carefully what she had to take but there was no way she was not going to take the national flag. It also made sure that if she had died in another country she could do so under our flag. Miss Johnson was presented with flowers and after giving

thanks she said that she would send a telegram to Australia explaining that a flag was on the way to the school.

Around a year later on the last Saturday in November 1931 Amy Johnson returned to Chatham for two meetings, one in the afternoon and one in the evening at the Town hall Chatham. The talk was called 'How Jason and I flew to the land of the golden fleece' with Jason being a three-year-old aeroplane. One incident she spoke of is when she was crossing the desert on route to Baghdad and she encountered a sandstorm. As a result the plane fell from over 7000 feet to only a few feet off the ground. She decided for safety reasons to land the aircraft which had been clearly battered a little.

Amy Johnson was born in 1903 in Hull and was the eldest of 4 sisters. She worked as a typist for a firm of solicitors, but she was fascinated by flying and was soon spending a lot of her spare time at Stag Lane aerodrome in North London. Her father gave her financial help to take flying lessons and she was awarded her pilot's licence in 1929 which is the year before the solo flight to Australia. She left Croydon airport on the 5th of May 1930 in a Gypsy moth which she called Jason. She had no radio link and weather reports so it was not like flying today. The previous longest flight Amy had done was London to Hull. She planned a fairly direct route and made sure that there was fuel waiting for her. She aimed to fly 8 hours a day.

She reached India in 8 days, and it was then that she had the attention of the worlds press. She arrived in Australia on Saturday 24th May. She died in 1941 flying an aircraft in the Herne Bay area.

Written by Paul Middleton February 2023

Sources of information: Medway Archives Centre, local newspapers, and Wikipedia

Where is Amy's lost flag?

Chatham State School in the Surrey Hills suburb of Melbourne, Australia is trying to locate the flag they sent over with Amy Johnson to present to the Mayor of Chatham.

The flag was Australia's national flag as shown here: [Australian Flag](#)

About one half of it is visible on this webpage: [Amy Johnson and flag at Chatham UK](#)

It seems that Chatham council lost/misplaced it on merging with Rochester in 1973.

Please contact us if you have any information that could help us find this flag.