

January 2003

Now that Christmas is over I hope you will all have an enjoyable and prosperous New Year.

Our first meeting in January is on Tuesday the 14th of January 2003 in Bridge Village hall and is a talk by Paul Tritton about the film "A Canterbury Tale" set in wartime Canterbury and district with some rare and historic footage showing Canterbury still with it's bomb damage at the end of the war. Our founder member Jim Tamsitt and other local people were members of the cast.

On Tuesday the 11th February we have a talk by the ever entertaining Martin Lloyd on Passports, Assassins, Traitors and Spies. This will be held in the White Horse and will include hot refreshments. Please send in your slips if you are attending this meeting.

On Tuesday the 11th March in Bridge Village Hall we have a report by Paul Wilkinson of the Kent Archaeological Field School on the dig conducted by him and 20 volunteers last May on Star Hill above Bourne House.

This dig was instigated by our treasurer Maurice Raraty who noticed part of a hexagonal shape in the ground and obtained permission from the land owner to investigate it. What the shape was and what it means for Bridge is the basis of this report. Paul will outline his discoveries on this site and others in the district and what they tell us about Bridge and it's long history extending back into the Iron Age and beyond. It is a fascinating story and will be extensively reported in our next newsletter.

Advance warning of our Antiques Valuation day on Saturday afternoon 22nd of March.

We are restricting this to members only.

If you want anything valued, please send in your slips so that we can gauge numbers and organise things. The valuer will not cover jewellery, stamps or coins. Furniture can be valued from a photograph.

If you do not want anything valued but just want to watch the fun, please just turn up—you will be welcome. We will also be holding a by-gones exhibition—please bring along any items which are no longer used such as old kitchen equipment, old tools, or anything which would be of interest to other members.

Report on Meetings and Events

A Victorian Christmas Lunch

A figure in Victorian dress is making his way down Bridge High Street. Is it Mr Micawber? No, it's a Bridge History Society member on his way to the Society's Victorian Christmas Lunch.

Top hats, bonnets, sideburns, moustaches and Victorian dress were much in evidence as our members gathered at the White Horse on Saturday the 14th December for a very enjoyable social gathering. Many members had made great efforts and looked most splendid in their costumes.

The meal, authentic in every detail, including such delicacies as devilled kidneys, baron of beef and syllabub was superbly cooked by Alan and his staff and was thoroughly enjoyed by all those present. Alan also very generously supplied all the wine as his contribution towards the celebration.

John Tom of Bossington Wood.

On Tuesday the 12th of November we were pleased to welcome Dick Bolton, who stepped in at the last moment, to give the scheduled talk on John Tom.

He was a more than worthy replacement for he kept us enthralled and entertained by his lucid and amusing account of the strange tale of John Tom.

Our "hero" arrived in Canterbury in 1832 calling himself Sir William Percy Honeywood Courtenay and laying claim to extensive estates in Kent and to the earldom of Devon. But really he was only one John Nichols Tom from Truro, in whose family there was a history of madness. In 1833, acting as witness for some smugglers, he overreached himself by committing blatant perjury and was sentenced to be transported; but then, declared mad, he was instead locked away in an asylum. On his release he sought to establish himself as a radical leader.

On Sunday 27 May 1838 Courtenay held a meeting at the foot of Boughton Hill and more than a hundred attended. ... 'The days of the landowners were now numbered be told his congregation. On Tuesday a great revolution was to start. All there were to leave their work and follow him.

On the following day as he marched his men to Sittingbourne local JP Dr Poore took horse for Faversham and there signed warrants for the arrest of Courtenay and two others.

It fell to the lot of Boughton's high constable John Mears, Tom Mears' cousin, to execute the warrant. They arrived at Bosenden early Thursday morning, 31 May. Several men were outside the farmhouse including Price and Tom Mears. Courtenay came out, heavily armed. 'Who is the constable?' he demanded, and it was Nicholas Mears, wearing the uniform, who answered. Courtenay drew his pistol and shot him at point-blank range.

Back at Bosenden, Courtenay had Nicholas Mears' body thrown into a ditch. A lookout informed Courtenay that cavalry were approaching. Courtenay discovered the supposed cavalry to be only Norton Knatchbull and a posse of constables.

When eventually Courtenay turned for the woods Knatchbull went on up Boughton Hill; and there in due course, at the *Red Lion* in Dunkirk, Knatchbull met up with Dr Poore, who arrived with a Major Armstrong, three officers, and a hundred men of the 45th. The operation was now in the hands of the military.

Taking just one NCO and nine men Bennett and Knatchbull entered the trees, to circle round and thus approach Courtenay from the north. Bennett's small detachment crossed a stream then turned south.

Bennett's maneuver had actually brought him round almost to Armstrong's expected position and the red jackets of the latter's force could now be glimpsed among the trees. With them was Major Handley who, seeing the unpainted side of Courtenay's banner, mistook it for a flag of truce. 'You misguided and deluded men!' he called, 'Are you coming then to reason or speak with us?'

Courtenay and the lieutenant were rushing towards other, Bennett unsheathing his sword. 'In the name of the Queen, surrender!' he cried. Courtenay, eyes ablaze, levelled his pistol and fired.

The shot killed Bennett but he went down slashing with his sword. Courtenay staggered, slashing back, and at the same moment special constable Tom Miligate truncheoned Courtenay from behind. Then Miligate was felled, whilst Courtenay still on his feet — was beset by others of Miligate's party.

Armstrong gave the order, and his men and Bennett's fired into the riot. Men tumbled into the undergrowth, dead or dying. Courtenay was shot through the lungs. And special constable George Catt of Faversham was killed, shot with a stray ball from Armstrong's volley.

Yet amid the bullets most of Courtenay's men were still on their feet and there was not time for the soldiers to reload. Now the mob went for them. Never had Armstrong seen men more madly determined. Armstrong called for fixed bayonets, and then the sixty soldiers waded into the rioters, thrusting and clubbing; and in a short time it was all over. Blood spattered the green leaves, and the bloodied remnants of Courtenay's erstwhile disciples scattered through the woods.

And as the din died away, ignoring the soldiers' bayonets, Sarah Culver came down half crazy from Bosenden Farm with a pail of water. Tenderly she washed Courtenay's face, for he had told her that should he be killed she had but to do this and he would be restored to life. But the eyes of mad John Tom stared on unseeing at the sky. And so ended one of the most bizarre events in the history of our county.

March 2003.

CHANGE OF VENUE

The next meeting on **Tuesday 11th March** will now take place in the **School Hall at Bridge Village School**.

Our meetings are becoming ever more popular and we are finding that when we have an attendance of over 75 we do not have sufficient chairs to seat everyone and there also difficulties with hearing and seeing the speaker and the screen.

Bridge Village Hall has served us well over the years but for the more popular items on our programme we now have to seek more suitable accommodation. The School Hall can seat up to 150 and also has superior facilities for our audio-visual equipment which will make life more comfortable both for the speaker and for the audience. We intend to use the School Hall in the future when we anticipate a larger than normal audience.

Please let any of the committee members know what you think of this change, and whether it is an improvement or not. I am sure many of you have already used these facilities on other occasions with other organisations.

The meeting will start at the normal time of **7.30 pm** and refreshments will be served as usual. The topic for this meeting is the Star Hill, Bridge dig. This was undertaken by the Kent Archaeological Field School in May 2002 and **Dr. Paul Wilkinson** will be talking both about the dig and his discoveries there and also on other digs he has conducted in East Kent and what these investigations add to our knowledge of the local area and its history.

He will also be conducting a further dig on this site in May 2003 as well as a dig on a previously unknown Anglo-Saxon site nearby.

Antiques Valuation Afternoon Saturday 22nd March.

The Antiques Valuation afternoon at Bridge Village Hall will also include a by-gones exhibition. We would appreciate the loan of any items of by-gone days which would be of interest to our members. Please hunt through your attics and ring David Gilmour on 832450 so that we can arrange for them to be exhibited, or bring them along on the day. We will also be displaying a selection of the boards of the millennium exhibition.

The valuer **Mr. Tony Pratt** from **Canterbury Auction Galleries** will also be holding an antiques quiz, so there will be a chance to show how much you know, or how much you have watched the antiques programmes on television.

Entry to the village hall will be the normal £2.00 and this will include viewing of the exhibitions, refreshments and valuation of your antiques.

On payment of the entrance fee you will be given a numbered ticket for each item you wish valued and the valuer will take items in numerical order.

Those who have registered in advance will already have received their numbered tickets and will be first in the queue.

KHF Conference—Cranbrook

This year's Kent History Federation One Day Conference will take place at Cranbrook on **Saturday 10th May**.

Being a member of Bridge and District History Society automatically makes you a member of the Kent History Federation who are most anxious that as many members as possible attend their One Day Conference. It is a very sociable occasion and the format will be a morning session of talks on three topics of interest. The first will be by Tony Single-

-ton on "The Cloth Trade in Cranbrook" next Peter Allen on "Cranbrook School" and third Tony Al-
linson on "St. Dunstons in Victorian Times".

There will be a break for lunch and starting at 2.15 there will be a choice of visits. These will include a visit to Cranbrook Museum, a guided walk around Cranbrook, a guided visit to Cranbrook Windmill, a guided walk to Cranbrook's chapels, a visit to Goddards Green House or a visit to the Manor House, Benenden.

On returning from the visits afternoon tea will be served from 3.45 pm to 5.00 pm.

Those of our members who have been to previous Kent History Conferences have thoroughly enjoyed them, met some very interesting people and learned a lot more about the history of Kent.

If you wish to take part please contact Maurice Raraty on 830508 for an application form and timetable as soon as possible.

FIREPOWER EXHIBITION AT WOOLWICH ARSENAL

Places are still available on this visit which will take place on **Saturday 26th April**.

The arsenal was opened to the public three years ago for the first time in 250 years. As well as the exhibition of guns and medals there is now a spectacular "Fields of Fire" audio-visual presentation. We have arranged a guide exclusively to our group to show us round the exhibition which will include the old officer's training block and the gunpowder store.

There is a cafeteria for refreshments and a new landscaped walk along the river with views of the Thames Barrier.

This visit will definitely be going ahead. If the numbers already booked are insufficient for a coach this will take place in members cars. Anyone who wishes to go and does not have their own transport are asked to contact John Bishop on 832596 to arrange accommodation in the spare seats. The cost would be reduced to £10 for members and £12 for non members. Please either send those slips in or ring John Bishop to book a place.

This newsletter is published and produced by David Gilmour on behalf of Bridge and District History Society.

Reports of previous meetings and events.

A Canterbury Tale—The Film.

On **Tuesday the 14th January 2003** a large number of members (75) gathered to hear **Paul Tritton** talk about this strange film.

He was able to identify all the locations in the film, set in this area and in wartime Canterbury, and also tell us those location which looked genuine but which were in fact studio shots, some done with trick camera work. Permission to film scenes inside the cathedral was refused and a very clever trick with a picture of the inside of the cathedral forming the backdrop for people moving across was only discernable as a fake by the pulpit being on the wrong side of the nave.

Several scenes were shown to be incorrect in several details as for example when travellers by train set off from Selling station for Canterbury but actually left in the opposite direction but other scenes were genuinely authentic as the locations and buildings have changed very little up to the present day. The scenes showing the devastation wrought by the bombing in Canterbury will be remembered by our oldest members. So many lovely buildings were lost then.

Local members of the cast (very much in their younger years) were also identified including Jim Tamsitt as a young lad, doing what young lads used to do when they had the freedom to roam the countryside, unlike today.

This film was produced by Bekesbourne-born Michael Powell who no doubt remembered scenes from his childhood which were used in the film

Passports, Assassins, Traitors and Spies.

The strange title chosen by **Martin Lloyd** for his talk at the White Horse on **Tuesday the 11th February** was appropriate for his tales of dark deeds and wicked people whose deeds altered the course of history and forced changes to our system of travel with passports.

It was intriguing to learn that in the 19th century that a passport was not required to leave the British Isles but you did need one to enter France or Belgium and people were able to obtain documents from the French or Belgian consul to travel to these places. The person who plotted to assassinate the Emperor Napoleon III of France had used a passport issued to someone else, but as there were no photographs on passports at this time no-one was any the wiser.

BRIDGE & DISTRICT HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

May 2003.

Review of the year

As this is the last newsletter of the current year we include a summary of the Society activities in the year, apart from the reviews of the last few meetings in March and April which will be shown separately.

We have had a very successful year with almost 160 members joining and most meetings and visits have been very well attended, so much so that we will be holding meetings in the School Hall next season instead of the Village Hall.

Our first meeting in September, with a larger than expected attendance, was on "The First 2000 years of Bridge" by our treasurer, Dr. Maurice Raraty.

Unfortunately the acoustics in the Village Hall are not all that we would like and this also applies to the School Hall. With this in mind the committee have decided to purchase a sound system to ensure that everyone will be able to hear, whichever venue we use.

Our first visit in October was to Wye and a small party in the charge of Meriel Conner travelled to Wye in their own cars and enjoyed a walk round the village and the ancient college followed by a superb cream tea.

Our second meeting in November involved a last minute change of speaker but as we had a very entertaining and intriguing talk by Dick Bolton on John Tom and the Battle of Bossington Wood, the last battle involving troops fought on British soil. perhaps we were fortunate to have been let down by the original speaker.

Our Christmas event was A Victorian Christmas Lunch in the White Horse with an authentic Victorian menu. The small number of members who attended sported a variety of Victorian costumes as can be seen below. A wonderful meal and a very good time was had by one and all.



In the New Year our January meeting was on the film "A Canterbury Tale" with a most interesting talk by Paul Tritton with excerpts from the film. Once again more members attended than the Village Hall had chairs for and prompted our search for another venue.

Our February meeting was held in the White Horse and was a short but entertaining talk by Martin Lloyd on Passports, Assassins and spies, followed by hot refreshments.

The March meeting was our first held in the School Hall and was billed as a talk on the Star Hill Dig in Bridge. We must however say that we were disappointed by the speaker Dr. Paul Wilkinson who talked about excavations in East Kent but tended to skip over the Star Hill Dig. For those interested he will however be carrying out a further dig on Star Hill over the weekend of the 3/4/5th May and spectators are welcome.

The second event in March was the Antiques Valuation afternoon at Bridge Village Hall. We also had a bygone exhibition and a selection of the boards of the millennium exhibition on display.

The valuer **Mr. Tony Pratt** from **Canterbury Auction Galleries** had a very busy afternoon eventually seeing over 60 items from our members. If anyone was unable to get to the Valuation afternoon and would like a valuation, Canterbury Auction Galleries by the West Station in Canterbury hold a free valuation morning on most Friday mornings.

The winner of the quiz held during the afternoon was Mrs. Barbara Beinder.

The answers to the quiz were:-

1. Norwegian porridge spoon
2. Babies pusher and spoon
3. 1st World War shell case
4. Knitting needle case
5. Snuff Box
6. Salt and pepper holder
7. Door Knocker
8. Bag Handle
9. 1901 Coronation cup and Saucer
10. Dinkie curler

The visit in April was to the **FIREPOWER EXHIBITION AT WOOLWICH ARSENAL**

on **Saturday 26th April.**

A small select band of members set off in their own cars to visit this exhibition. They were met by our exclusive guide Derek Jobson who conducted them on a tour of the arsenal with its exhibition of guns and medals, the gunpowder store and also including the first officers training academy, now moved to Sandhurst, and then on to the spectacular "Fields of Fire" audio-visual presentation.

The arsenal was opened to the public three years ago for the first time in 250 years and new facilities are being added all the time.

Our group walked down to the new landscaped walk along the river and on to the new pier with views of the Thames Barrier. This pier will be used in the future for river buses up to Westminster.

For those who would be interested the Arsenal is staging a big musical spectacular on the 14th to the 19th of July featuring music from the big musicals such as West Side Story and including 84 guns going off during the 1812 overture.

Facilities for Members

As already mentioned we are purchasing a sound system for the Society's use at any venue as we find most venues have inadequate acoustics. In the same vein, last year we purchased the slide projector, stand and screen as some speakers need us to provide these facilities for them

Forthcoming Events

The next three events take us to the end of the year, the first being the Kent History Federation Conference at Cranbrook on Saturday the 10th May. If you wish to go and have still not booked please telephone Dr. Maurice Raraty on 830508 as soon as possible.

The next event is the visit to Bourne House on Monday the 12th of May. This is already fully booked as is the overflow visit which will take place in October. John Bishop is keeping a waiting list and if you wish to be placed on that list please telephone him on 832596.

Our last event of this season is the Summer Evening in Deal on Saturday the 21st of June.

We are limited in the numbers on this trip so get your slips in as soon as possible, as we are already half full.

This visit will reverse the normal order of things by starting with a tea and continuing with a guided walk with David Collyer on "Hidden Deal" which will take about an hour and a half and will finish up at Deal Pier, which is a good place to be on a fine summer evening on the longest day of the year. As the success of this trip depends on fine weather if the weather threatens to be absolutely awful on the day we will postpone it for a week. Places are still available, please send in your slips, or telephone the organiser David Gilmour on 832450.

This newsletter is published and produced by David Gilmour on behalf of Bridge and District History Society.

Telephone 01227 832450.

01233 813 582
Mary Tideman

**BRIDGE
& DISTRICT
HISTORY
SOCIETY**

NEWSLETTER

August 2003

Notes about next season's programme

A message from our Chairman.

It hardly seems possible that another year has passed and we are about to enter our ninth season. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support making our Society by far the best attended group or society in the village or, quite possibly, in the area. Thanks also to the committee for their hard work in organising and arranging a varied and pleasing programme over the past year. I hope we continue to offer good value and interest in the future. We will be using new venues for our meetings and events this coming year, not because we are dissatisfied with the current ones but we feel that we should support as many local businesses as possible.

I look forward to welcoming as many of you as possible in September. Enjoy your summer holidays.

WEB SITE

We are planning a web site for the Society which will have the programme and the latest newsletter on it and will be linked to the Bridge Parish Council site. We will at a future date include some of our archive material.

VENUES

All of the meetings in this season's programmes which would have taken place in the Village Hall will now take place in the **School Hall** at Bridge Village School. This venue can accommodate more people in more comfort and with better acoustics. We hope you will appreciate the change, but please let the committee have your views on this.

Bekesbourne Aerodrome

The Friends of Bekesbourne Church are presenting a talk on "Bekesbourne Aerodrome in War and Peace" by David Collyer at Bekesbourne Village Hall on Friday 26 September 2003 at 7.45 pm. This may be of interest to member interested in aviation or Bekesbourne.

A few notes to amplify the details there was no room to put into the programme.

NAILBOURNE CHURCH TRAIL

There will be a guide stationed at each church to give a guided tour of the church. They are giving their services free but we are including in the cost a donation to each church.

Depending on the numbers we will have parties of 20 – 25 and will start each party at a different church but we will all meet up for lunch at the Red Lion.

BOURNE HOUSE

Lady Tadgell has very kindly offered to allow more tours of her house to ensure that all members who wish to do so, have the opportunity of taking the tour. Please fill in the slip if you wish to be included this year.

HOP PICKING IN KENT

The main attraction "Adventures in the Hopfields" was originally made for the Children's Film Unit and was believed to be lost until enthusiast Barry Littlechild located a print in the U.S. and acquired it for the princely sum of \$35.00. It had been rescued from a rubbish skip in Chicago by a fellow film buff.

The film features a host of British 50's child stars many of whom like Jane Asher and Melvyn Hayes went on to become big names.

The full programme will include several short films including a showing of rediscovered Pathé hand-coloured film of Canterbury made around 1914 and rare hop garden footage from the Huntley Film Archives.

There will then be an interval of 30 minutes after which will be shown the main film:

"Adventures in the Hopfields"

The main film will last 60 minutes and the whole programme including the interval will be two and a half hours. This is why we are starting at 7.00 pm prompt.

CHRISTMAS GET TOGETHER.

We are holding this in our normal Tuesday evening slot as we have had difficulty in securing a Saturday buffet lunch at a reasonable time. Following negotiations with the Red Lion, they were only able to accommodate us on a Saturday from 3.00 pm onwards which was too late for lunch and too early for dinner and it was considered an evening function would be preferable. It will also be quite close to Christmas so we expect you all to get into the spirit of things.

MEMBERS EVENING

This new idea will take place in the upstairs bar of Bridge Country Club. The bar is in the centre of two rooms and each room will have a roaring log fire in the ancient fireplaces. Food will not be served although there will nibbles at the bar, and there is minimal seating as the intention is for members to circulate throughout the evening pausing only for the short presentations by two of our members.

BELMONT HOUSE

This visit is a follow up to Prof. Ted Parker's talk on clocks, as Belmont House has a wonderful collection of clocks and watches.

As it is so close and we are visiting by our own cars we will not collect money in advance but simply ask you to pay on arrival at the House. But please fill in the slips as we need to know how many are interested and also if anyone requires a lift to the House.

KHF SANDWICH

No great amount of travelling this time and we would hope to have large number of members attend this always interesting and enjoyable meeting.

There will be further information on this event in the March newsletter, but if you think you will go, please fill in the form and send it in. We will then send out the information as soon as it is received from the KHF. If you want to go and do not book early there is a distinct possibility that the tour you are interested in will be fully booked.

SHOREHAM (KENT)

This will be our only outing by coach this season and we hope to make it a great success. Providing there are at least 30 people wanting to go the coach will definitely run. This will be a really interesting visit as first we will have a private visit to Lullingstone Castle with a guided tour by the owner. We then proceed to Shoreham where lunch will be provided by the Shoreham W.I. After lunch there will be a guided tour of this picturesque riverside village that in medieval times was a busy port and a centre for the export of wool. Shoreham has two magnificent Norman churches, medieval almshouses, and fine architecture. After the tour tea will again be provided by the W.I. And we will return to Bridge around 6.00 pm.

FORDWICH

Following on the success of the evening visit to Deal we had originally intended to have an evening visit to Chilham but as the castle is not fully ready for visitors we will do this another year. Instead we have arranged an evening stroll around Fordwich and will finish at a local hostelry for drinks or if preferred there are ample opportunities for a meal.

Archive and Research Sub-Committee

We have recently received bound copies of the Bridge, Bekesbourne and Patricbourne Parish magazine for the years 1962 -1979 and the Society now has an almost complete collection from 1957 to date.

LAST SEASONS PROGRAMME

A report on the last three events of last season.

Kent History Federation Conference

A small number of members attended this conference at Cranbrook. Those who went said the whole day was very enjoyable and thoroughly recommend it to you all for next year at Sandwich. More on this in the March newsletter.

Visit to Bourne House

A fascinating tour personally conducted by Lady Tadgell was enjoyed by 30 of our members. Such was the enthusiasm shown that Lady Tadgell has agreed to host further tours to make sure all those members who wish to visit the house may do so.

As a result of this tour a cheque from the Society was sent to the Pilgrim's Hospice.

A Summer Evening in Deal

On the warm sunny evening of the longest day, twenty of our members enjoyed a visit to Deal. We started with a visit to the small but incredibly interesting Deal Maritime and Local History Museum. The 45 minutes we spent there not really being long enough to take it all in. We then had a tour of "Hidden Deal" by David Collyer, who told many tales of smuggling and law breaking generally but including a visit to the Hangman's Cottage. We finished at the Lobster Pot café where we enjoyed a fish and chip supper.

Published By David Gilmour on behalf of Bridge and District History Society.

Telephone 01227 832450.

November 2003

BOOK NOW

The next event in our programme is the film show **TOP PICKING IN KENT**. We are already two thirds full and as we are limited to a maximum of 120 at the School Hall, please book in advance and send those slips in to John Bishop.

Once we reach our maximum no further tickets will be sold on the door.

The tickets which have been booked will not be sent out but can be collected at the door on the night.

The main attraction "Adventures in the Hopfields" was originally made for the Children's Film Unit and was believed to be lost until enthusiast Barry Littlechild located a print in the U.S.A. and acquired it for the princely sum of \$35.00. It had been rescued from a rubbish skip in Chicago by a fellow film buff.

The film features a host of British 50's child stars many of whom like Jane Asher and Melvyn Hayes went on to become big names.

The full programme will include several short films including a showing of rediscovered Pathé hand-coloured film of Canterbury made around 1914 and rare hop garden footage from the Huntley Film Archives.

There will then be an interval of 30 minutes after which will be shown the main film:

"Adventures in the Hopfields"

The main film will last 60 minutes and the whole programme including the interval will be two and a half hours. This is why we are starting at 7.00 pm prompt.

This may be the last showing of this film as it will require expensive restoration to be shown in the future.

All of the proceeds from this event will be going to the Hospice in the Weald.

CHRISTMAS GET TOGETHER.

We have traditionally held this function on a Saturday afternoon near Christmas but this year we have had difficulty in securing a Saturday buffet lunch at a reasonable time. Following negotiations with the Red Lion, they were only able to accommodate us on a Saturday from 3.00 pm onwards which was too late for lunch and too early for dinner and it was considered an evening function would be preferable.

We are therefore holding this in our normal Tuesday evening slot. This is always a happy sociable event and we are anticipating a good spread from the Red Lion. We will also be testing your History and General Knowledge skills with a Round Robin Quiz. It will be quite close to Christmas so we expect you all to get into the spirit of things.

Do please send your slips into John Bishop as we are limited to a maximum of 50 participants—so do not be disappointed.

KHF SANDWICH

We would like to have a good turnout for the Kent History Federation Conference at Sandwich in May. There is no great amount of travelling this time and we would hope to have large number of members attend this always interesting and enjoy-

able meeting.

There will be further information on this event in the March newsletter, but if you think you will go, please fill in the form and send it in. We will then send out the information as soon as it is received from the KHF. The Conference will follow the usual pattern of several seminars on topics of interest followed by tours to nearby places of interest.

If you want to go and do not book early there is a distinct possibility that the tour you are interested in will be fully booked.

REPORT ON THIS SEASONS PROGRAMME

A report on the last three events of this season.

The Forgotten Gardens of East Kent

This talk on Tuesday 23rd September 2003 by David Collyer was unfortunately not up to David's usual standard or to ours. David had a very heavy cold and this combined with the fact that he was not using any slides combined to deliver a below par performance.

We are quite sure this will not be the case with the others speakers booked for this year.

Nailbourne Church Trail

This visit on Saturday 11th October was attended by 25 members and got off to a very good start with a tour of Bekesbourne church by David Millyard who gave a detailed explanation of the various features of the church both inside and outside.

This was followed by Patrixbourne church and a talk by Dr. Andrea Nicholson. She told us of the history of the unusual stained glass (although enamelled glass would be a better description) which was brought to Patrixbourne from Switzerland and Germany. After her talk we had a wander round the outside of the church to see in detail the Norman doorway and the mass clocks. There is a good set of mass clocks at Patrixbourne as there is also at Barfrestone.

The party then adjourned to the Red Lion in Bridge for a buffet lunch which with hot and cold dishes was greatly enjoyed.

After lunch we made our way to Bishopsbourne for our visit to the church there. We had not been able to find anyone from Bishopsbourne who could give us a tour of the church so I did it myself. Fortunately I had been doing some research on Medieval Wall Paintings and as this is one of the main features of Bishopsbourne I was able to point out its unusual features.

The slightly depleted party then returned to Bridge for the final visit of the day to Bridge church. The tour was given by Dr. Maurice Raraty who as a result of his detailed research into the fabric of the church was able to give a full and detailed explanation of the history of the church.

As a result of these visits the Society have given a donation to the Parochial Church Council of each church of £25.00 to thank them for the facilities provided to the Society.

Visit to Bourne House

A small party of members (we were limited to 30) made a further visit to Bourne House. Lady Tadgell has been very generous in allowing us to continue taking our members over her house. This is the third visit and we have more to come as detailed below.

The Society has made a further donation of £100 to the Pilgrim's Hospice on behalf of Lady Tadgell.

She has also kindly agreed to a further visit in April 2004 for which we are almost already fully booked from our waiting list and as we may also be able to arrange yet another tour in October 2004, please send those slips into John Bishop so we know how many we have to cater for.

MEMBERSHIP CARDS

Membership cards for the current season are being sent out with this newsletter.

Published By David Gilmour on behalf of Bridge and District History Society.

Telephone 01227 832450.

January 2004

We hope you have all had a merry Christmas and you are looking forward to what the New Year brings.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

By the time you receive this newsletter we will have had the talk on Christopher Marlowe and his connections with Canterbury by Marjorie Lyle. A report will appear in the next newsletter.

The next meeting after that will be the **Members Evening** on Tuesday the 10th February 2004 it will be held at the Bridge Country Club which will be open exclusively for us. We will be meeting in the upstairs bar which will have two open log fires in the medieval fireplaces.

We are trying to develop member's participation in the club and the format of the evening will be two short talks by our members, one by Alan Walton on "Railways and one by Roger Mardon on "The Fire Service."

Jenny Vye who was designated as the coordinator for this meeting will, unfortunately (for us), be in New Zealand and I would therefore urge those that have not already booked to please complete the slips but send them to:

David Gilmour, St. Quentin, Bekesbourne Lane, Bekesbourne, Kent, CT4 5DY, as soon as possible.

The meeting in March will be on **Clocks** by Prof. Ted Parker and will be followed up by a visit in April to **Belmont House** which has a fine collection of clocks. For those who don't know Belmont House, it is a fine Georgian house situated near Faversham, so not a great distance from Bridge. We will be conducting the visit in member's own cars so if anyone needs transport please contact the coordinator Dr. Maurice Raraty.

Belmont House—front



KHF SANDWICH

We would like to have a good turnout for the Kent History Federation Conference at Sandwich in May. There is no great amount of travelling this time and we would hope to have large number of members attend this always interesting and enjoyable meeting

The usual format of a Federation conference is for talks by experts on topics of local and county interest followed by visits to places of interest in the locality. The excursions usually get very heavily booked and early booking both for the conference and the visits is advised. Further details will follow in the March newsletter.

Visit to Bourne House

In addition to this season's programme we have also arranged a further visit to Bourne House in April of this year. If you have already put your name down you will hear in due course from John Bishop. If you wish to go please write to John at The Stable Flat, Bourne Park, Bishopsbourne, Kent, CT4 5BJ. This will be the final, final visit

ADVANCE NOTICE

We are planning that the first event of the next programme will be a visit to the **Son-et-Lumiere** at Bekesbourne church. This will take place in September this year, but as we want bookings in earlier, full details and a booking slip will be included with the May newsletter. We will be reserving the first performance on **Thursday 23 September 2004** exclusively for Bridge and District History Society. This event is celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Friends of Bekesbourne Church and commemorating the last performance of a Son-et-Lumiere at Bekesbourne Church 30 years ago.

This is a unique and exciting event covering the history of Bekesbourne and its church over the last 1500 years. So put this date in your diary Thursday 23rd September 2004.

REPORTS ON THIS SEASONS PROGRAMME

A report on the last two events of this season.

Hop Picking in Kent

Our film presentation evening on 11 November was a sell-out. Film historian and retired BBC producer Barry Littlechild showed us a number of clips from historic movies, with local interest, which proved to be extremely nostalgic for most of those present. Nobody, though, could have remembered the film made in 1897 - an amusing encounter between a miller and a sweep who used the flour and soot of their trade as their weapons! This was fun, but more amazing was a coloured film made of Canterbury pre-1914. More than 400 workers had taken over 3 years to paint by hand each frame of this film. Moving forward, we were shown a fascinating review of the year 1952, a remarkable year featuring flooding in Devon a rail crash at Wealdstone with 100 killed, the breaking of the sound barrier - and the death of the test pilot, the first flight of the Comet, the death of King George VI and the accession of Elizabeth II - to name but a few. Another film shot in 1954 showed the arrival of the hop-pickers to Paddock Wood, and we were reminded that in the 1950s most local trains were still steam-hauled. Finally came the feature film, *Adventure in the Hop fields*, the only surviving complete print of a movie made by John Guillermin (who went on to make such films as *Towering Inferno* and *Death on the Nile*), which was rescued by Barry Littlechild from a rubbish skip in Chicago and lovingly restored. Everyone was charmed by this story, made for children's

Saturday film matinees, which kept us riveted. A most successful evening that gave great pleasure and we were able to give the Hospice in the Weald a cheque for £400.00 plus they raised over £80.00 in donations from you.

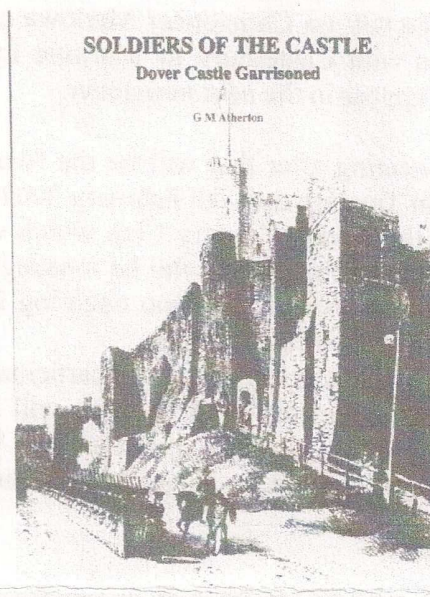
Meriel Connor

Christmas Get Together

A very convivial evening was enjoyed by those who could attend our annual Christmas Get Together held at the Red Lion this year. A very splendid buffet was laid on and the quiz had to go to a tie-break but was eventually won by David Gilmour.

Soldiers of the Castle

Wendi Atherton, one of our members, has written a book on the History of the Garrison of Dover Castle.



The title is *Soldiers of the Castle— Dover Castle Garrisoned*. It is available from her at Digges Place, Barham, Kent, CT4 6PJ for £10.00 plus £2.00 post and packing. Please enclose cheque with order.

MEMBERSHIP CARDS

Membership cards for the current season were sent out with the wrong date on them this will be corrected next year

Published By David Gilmour on behalf of Bridge and District History Society.

Telephone 01227 832450.

May 2004

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The last two events on this season's programme are

Saturday 22 May 2004—A visit to Lullingstone Castle & Shoreham (Kent).

This is an unusual and very interesting visit which has been organised with the help of the Woman's Institute in Shoreham who will be arranging both the lunch and tea. There will be a guided walk around Shoreham in the morning, followed by lunch and then a visit to Lullingstone Castle in the afternoon followed by tea.

All the entrance fees, guide fees, lunch and tea are all included in the price which should make for a very enjoyable and cosseted day out. It will be an opportunity to see a little known corner of Kent which a great deal of history to offer

.This trip by coach will definitely run and there are a few seats still left. If you wish to go please contact Meriel Conner on 830487 immediately.

Wednesday 17 June 2004—An Evening Walk in Fordwich.

This will be a guided walk around the smallest town in England and the site of the port for Canterbury. There are many historical buildings to see and a many historical events have taken place here.

Please send in your slips to Meriel Conner as soon as possible.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS NEXT SEASON

In September 2004, St. Peter's Church, Bekesbourne is presenting a *Son et Lumiere* in the church. They will be tracing the history of the church and the village in Sound, Light and Pictures in a multimedia extravaganza illustrating how the village had developed from Saxon times right up to the present day.

They will be covering the evolution of the church from a wooden Saxon building through the Norman and Medieval structures to the present day and touch on the great events in the church and village's history with the building and demolition of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Palace, and the building of the First World War aerodrome. We will see the great figures in history who were born, lived or died in the village including Thomas Cranmer, Stephen Hales and Dr. Charles Tilstone Beke.

In advance of the bookings opening we have secured a special showing on Thursday 23rd September for Bridge & District History Society members, and a booking form is attached.

St. Peter's church, Bekesbourne is quite small and is limited to a maximum of 80 people per performance, so if all our member's wanted to come we would be oversubscribed so I would ask you to book up as soon as possible.

Please be aware that the church is quite a steep climb up from the gateway and disabled access is virtually impossible, and like most churches there are no toilet facilities available. Parking will be available next to the church and will be free.

REPORTS ON THIS SEASONS PROGRAMME

A report on the last four events of this season.

Tuesday 13th January 2004—Christopher Marlowe and Canterbury.

Marjorie Lyle, well known for the books she has written on Canterbury's history gave us a very interesting talk on Christopher Marlowe. She set out the influences Canterbury and it's school had on his life and work and told of his many interesting character traits, including his unseemly and untimely end in a brawl at Deptford.

This was followed by Tuesday 13th February 2004—Member's Evening.

This should have taken place at Bridge Country Club but due to renovation work which overran we were forced at short notice to transfer the venue to the Plough & Harrow.

Despite the short notice, Chris Maclean at the Plough & Harrow agreed that we could use the upstairs room, laid on a huge open fire, and made us very welcome.

The format of the evening was for one or more members to give talks on a topic of local interest and hopefully, historical interest. We had two very interesting talks by our own members. Alan Walton illustrated the various railways he had been associated with, and in particular the Elham Valley line which ran through Bridge and Bishopsbourne. He had many interesting pictures of this line and of stations now long vanished.

Roger Mardon talked of the Fire Service in Bridge and showed many pictures of this now vanished way of life, and of the various appliances and men who guarded our homes early in the twentieth century.

.After these talks we went downstairs where Chris had laid on a superb buffet which rounded off a very enjoyable evening.

We hope to repeat this format each year as we are sure many of our members have stories of great interest that they would like to share with us. If anyone would like to be included in future member's evenings please get in touch with a member of the committee who will be pleased to provide any assistance required.

At our March meeting on **Tuesday 9th March** we had a talk on **Clocks** by Professor Ted Parker. He talked to us about antique English clocks and time-pieces. The principal driving forces for the development of reliable time keeping were the church, navigation and finally the railway, when the efficient running of the system depended on reliable arrival and departure times. The invention of the pendulum clock in the 17th century improved accuracy considerably and made a minute hand possible, and the placing of a balance wheel under spring control revolutionised time-keeping. By the latter half of the 17th century pocket watches of great beauty were being produced and Charles II was so impressed that he ordered one for himself. Dials as well as cases were often highly decorative and the production of a pair of hands in a fine clock could take two weeks. There were clocks with one hand and clocks with two; clocks with pointed dials; regulator clocks for measurement; astronomical clocks, and even clocks that played dance tunes. So-called Act of Parliament clocks were produced for public use when William Pitt created a tax for raising revenue on domestic clocks - a less well known outrage than the hated window tax! And finally, a clock that was made right here in Bridge that went for a whole year on only one wind.

On **Saturday 17 April**, this talk was followed up by a visit to **Belmont**, not far from Canterbury. Belmont is a charming 18th century house with fine furniture and paintings and a wonderful collection of clocks and watches. The curator gave a fascinating tour of the house and clocks and for those who went it was a very enjoyable visit.

Change of Address

Please let the membership secretary know if you have changed your address in the last year, so that we can keep the records up to date. Newsletters and programmes are sent to the last known address.

Published By David Gilmour on behalf of Bridge
and District History Society.

Telephone 01227 832450.

August 2004

A message from our Chairman.

The Society is about to enter its 9th year which does not seem possible and we are already making plans to celebrate our 10th Anniversary next year.

I can still remember the first meetings as if they were yesterday. Sadly two of our founder members, Jim Tamsitt and Bill Dawson are no longer with us to see the success that the society has become. However a lot of that success is due to their hard work in the early years.

I would also like to thank you, the members for your support as well. Without you we would not have a History Society in the area.

There have been a lot of memorable evenings and trips through the years and thanks must go to the committee who organised them. I makes my job as chairman a lot easier with the help and support that I receive from the. With this newsletter you will be receiving your new programme. We have I hope managed to arrange something of interest for everyone. We have arranged another coach trip to France. I hope you will be able to support this as it will be an interesting day. But we will not be able to go unless we can almost fill the coach.. We have also some very interesting guest speakers organised. We do need feedback from you. If you enjoy the meetings and trips please let us know. Also if you have any suggestions for the future we want to hear from you. I hope next year will be as enjoyable as the last and look forward to seeing you in the new season.

John Bishop

Data Protection Act

Last year we asked you to complete and sign a form saying that you agreed we could keep records of you on computer. This year we are changing this so that payment of the subscription will be deemed to be acceptance of this fact. If you disagree, please contact the membership secretary.

Notes about next season's programme

A few notes to amplify the details there was no room to put into the programme.

Son-et-Lumiere at Bekesbourne Church

We still have seats left for the special Bridge & District History Society special evening and a booking form is enclosed with this newsletter. Please book your tickets as soon as possible. If you are unable to attend on the Thursday there will be performances on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday for which we can also obtain tickets at the moment.

This special event is tracing the history of the church and village through, sound, light, pictures, music and special effects—Are you sure you saw the monk walk through?

Due to Bekesbourne church's long association with the Archbishops of Canterbury this presentation will include an introduction by the present Archbishop, Dr. Rowan Williams. For those who have already booked—their tickets are enclosed with this newsletter. For those who now wish to book please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

Napoleonic Defences

Julia Page, who is to give this talk, is away on holiday at present and we are unable to get more details from her, but this information will be included in a subsequent newsletter.

Christmas Get Together

This year we are reinstating the photo quiz which will be themed on historical photos and centred on our area but will include some of Canterbury.

We have also been fortunate in arranging a concert by "Quodlibet" a quartet singing group organised by a local Bridge resident, some of you may know well, Peter Giles. He has promised a varied, interesting and entertaining evening with some audience participation so be prepared to put your best voice forward. We are returning to the White Horse which has more room available this sort of concert but even so we will have to restrict the numbers so please book early.

Members Evening

Those who attended last year's member's evening had a very enjoyable time and the social get together with the splendid buffet after the presentation was much appreciated by all present.

Canterbury Brick by Brick

Dick Bolton is also on holiday and when he returns we will get some further information on his talk and what the subject will cover. Further details will be included in a future newsletter.

Agincourt & Montreuil

We thought it would be appropriate to visit the battlefield at Agincourt on St. George's Day. The French have a very fine museum here and it is not biased in favour of the French. We also are including a visit to the battlefield of Crecy and on to the walled town of Montreuil. The abbey church here has the banners of the French knights who fell at Agincourt. It is also the setting for Victor Hugo's Les Miserables and was the headquarters for General Haig during the First World War.

A very full day with a lot to see and do.

We have arranged a coach trip in each programme for the last few years and many times we have struggled to reach a break even level. If this trip does not reach its break even level then it will be cancelled and we will reluctantly decide that in future there is no demand for coach trips to be organised.

Big Houses in Bridge

We are negotiating for this talk on the three big houses of Bridge to take place in one of them—Bridge Place. We did try to hold a function there last year but due to restoration work which is still continuing we had to change the venue at the last minute. In the event that we cannot, once again, use Bridge Place we will switch the venue to the School Hall with a consequent reduction in the cost.

Chilham

Details of the Summer Walk in Chilham were not received in time for the brochure or for the newsletter and full details will be in the next newsletter. We have however included it in the booking slip.

Archive and Research Sub-Committee

We would like the History Society to be more active and involve members in projects and we detail below some of the projects being undertaken by other history societies in Kent so that you can see what would be possible.

Plaxtol in The Past—a 48 page booklet of pictures and text of village life from Victorian times to the present day .

Plaxtol LH Group.

A book on Tenterden to be published to commemorate the Society's 50th anniversary.

Tenterden & District LHS.

Fragments of Wrotham History—Farming & Agriculture in Wrotham.

From Slate to Computers - a booklet on Schools & education.
Wrotham Historical Society.

Photographic Exhibition of church's archival material.
Baroness Orczy in Bearsted—a Photographic exhibition.

Guided tours of Holy Cross church.

Bearsted & District LHS

Cataloguing of Charing Parish Council records.

Charing & District LHS.

Research on the farms and farmers in Cranbrook based on the tithe records of 1839/40.

Cranbrook & District LHS.

Index of 1901 census and research into Poor Law as it operated in Eynsford.

Farningham & Eynsford LHS.

Research on the history of Nacolts Brickworks with a view to publication.

Wye Historical Society.

Guided tours of village and church for Heritage Days.

Hadlow Historical Society.

Many of these things our Society has already been involved with in Bridge, from the Photo Exhibition at the Village Hall to the guided walks for other History Societies and the publication of a walk through Bridge. We have also analysed and computerised the census records for Bridge

One of our members—Wendi Atherton—has published a

book, *Soldiers of the Castle*, a history of the Garrisoning of Dover Castle.

Most of these activities have however been carried out by a small number, mostly the committee and we would like the wider membership to participate more.

In this years programme you will see an article on the Archive and Research Sub-Committee and the project on oral history and we would like many members to take part. The equipment will be available on loan. Would those who would like to help please register with Dr. Maurice Raraty on 830508

If you have any suggestions for your pet project and you need help to bring it to fruition please contact any committee member. We want an active and participating Society for the 10th anniversary next year.

LAST SEASONS PROGRAMME

A report on the last two events of last season.

Coach Trip to Shoreham

34 members and friends had a memorable day's outing to Shoreham and Lullingstone Castle. We arrived in Shoreham at 10.30 and met Ann Bell (Meriel Conner's cousin) who gave a most interesting talk on the history of the church and the village. Shoreham, in the picturesque Darenth valley, although close to the urban spread of London is an oasis of peace and tranquillity. We walked through the village to the village hall where the local W.I. Laid on a delicious lunch for us. After lunch we left for Lullingstone Castle where we were met by Mr. Hart-Dyke the owner and given a guided tour of the house and grounds. Some of us met Tom Hart-Dyke who was captured by terrorists in Colombia in 2000 and lived to tell the tale. We finished our trip at the Visitor centre with a traditional cream tea.

John Bishop

A Summer Evening in Fordwich

There was a good turnout—and thankfully good weather—for Meriel Connor's guided tour of Fordwich on June the 17th. We began by walking over the river bridge, and then skirted the eastern edge of the village by footpath, thus gaining a clear idea of Fordwich's ancient position as port to Canterbury, where goods coming upriver from the sea would be off-loaded, mainly onto porters' backs. Coming down into the main street we had time to look at the historic buildings, and then took a turn off into the side-lanes, where we were shown the old and tiny school. We emerged into the centre of the village, where Meriel uncovered, as it were, a row of cottages as a mediaeval 'rest and recuperation' hostel for tired monks.

We had time to look around the beautiful church, before going to see the Town Hall. In the ancient council chamber Meriel made us feel as if it were just taking a day off from the busy mediaeval port scene: a place where port dues were paid, and offenders brought before the bar to be sentenced to ducking or even drowning.

The evening concluded with a communal meal in the 'Unicorn' in Bekesbourne.

Martin Vye.

December 2004

Notes about this season's programme

A message from our Chairman.

Your committee have had extensive discussions on the venues for our meetings and at the moment we are using the School Hall for those meetings not taking place in the various hostelrys of the village.

We originally moved to the School Hall because the Village Hall is restricted in numbers and there were several occasions when the Village Hall became too crowded and people complained that they could not hear the speaker.

Lately the numbers attending the meetings have been such that we could easily accommodate them in the Village Hall and we are of the opinion that many find it easier to get to the Village Hall on a dark winter's evening than to find their way to the school. We have also solved the problems of audibility by purchasing a sound system which can equally be used in the Village Hall.

If, however, we anticipate a large audience as happened with the recent film showing of "Adventure in the hop fields" then we will once again use the School Hall.

We have already booked the School Hall for the rest of this season's programme but we are considering returning to the Village Hall for the new programme starting next September. We would appreciate your comments on this matter and would ask you to make your views known to any of the committee members.

John Bishop

Son-et-Lumiere at Bekesbourne Church

The first meeting of this year took place on September 23rd in the form of a visit to one of the showings of the *son et lumière* production depicting the history of Bekesbourne, in Bekesbourne Church in aid of the Church and its bells. The evening was fine, and the event sold out, as it was for every performance that week. Preceded by a recorded message from the Archbishop of Canterbury we were presented with a series of 34 short scenes illustrating the history of Bekesbourne (out of which both Patrixbourne and Bridge were carved in early mediaeval times), from the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons in the mid-fifth century to the Millennium celebrations of 2000 and beyond.

The scenes were presented in a mixture of live and recorded action presented by a cast of thousands (well, several dozen) who had been well-rehearsed and who had obviously put in a great deal of work under the enthusiastic direction of Producer David Gilmour, who was very ably supported by his team.

If this correspondent could find fault it would be to have wished for a little more *lumière* to go with the *son*, and for some of that to have been recorded more clearly than it was. Nevertheless the audience went away very well satisfied, and, I would hope, more enlightened about the long and varied history of a quintessential English village which had once contributed, through its role as a limb of the Cinque Ports, to the naval defences of the realm.

Maurice Raraty

Napoleonic Defences

Julia Page gave a very spirited talk on the defences around Kent during the Napoleonic period and combined this with details of what public opinion of the day had to say about it.

She managed to convey something of the war hysteria of this day comparable only with the present government's boosting of terrorist threats.

The Big Dig

Paul Bennet of the Canterbury Archaeological Trust gave a very interesting talk on the excavations at the Whitefriars development which were carried out over many years. He outlined the sequence of the excavations undertaken prior to the redevelopment of each area of the scheme. It was interesting to note that some of the building in the 1950's had destroyed some of the archaeological evidence but the evidence collected from this dig had been extensive and contributed to a greater understanding of the area and it's inhabitants over the years.

Forthcoming events

Christmas Get Together

This year we are reinstating the photo quiz which will be themed on historical photos and centred on our area but will include things connected with our programme talks and visits.

We have also been fortunate in arranging a concert by "Quodlibet" a quartet singing group organised by a local Bridge resident, some of you may know well, Peter Giles. He has promised a varied, interesting and entertaining evening with some audience participation so be prepared to put best voice forward. We are returning to the White Horse which has more room available this sort of concert but even so we have had to restrict the numbers and the event is practically fully booked.

Member's Social Evening

We are holding this meeting in the upstairs room at the Plough & Harrow and once again we are restricted in numbers and it also virtually fully booked.

Those who came to the event last year will remember what a very enjoyable time we had.

Agincourt & Montreuil

We thought it would be appropriate to visit the battlefield at Agincourt on St. George's Day. The French have a very fine museum here and it is not biased in favour of the French. We also are including a visit to the battlefield of Crecy and on to the walled town of Montreuil. The abbey church here has the banners of the French knights who fell at Agincourt. It is also the setting for Victor Hugo's Les Miserables and was the headquarters for General Haig during the First World War.

We have arranged a coach trip in each programme for the last few years and many times we have struggled to reach a break even level. If this trip does not reach it's break even level then it will be cancelled and we will reluctantly decide that in future there is no demand for coach trips to be organised. **If you wish to go please send in those slips as soon after Christmas as possible**

Big Houses in Bridge

You may recall we were negotiating for this talk on the three big houses of Bridge to take place in one of them—Bridge Place. We did try to hold a function there last year but due to restoration work which is still continuing we had to change the venue at the last minute. In the event that we cannot, once again, use Bridge Place as is looking increasingly unlikely due to it's change of status we will switch the venue to the School Hall with a consequent reduction in the cost.

Chilham

Saturday 25th June 2005.

Details of the Summer Walk in Chilham were not received in time for the brochure but this now been fixed for Saturday 25th June 2005 and we will meet at the Recreation Ground Car Park at 2.00 pm.

The cost will be £2.00 for members and £3.00 for non members and this does not include a cream tea. We will arrange tea if you require it and the cost will be advised in due course. When filling in the slip please advise if you require tea to be booked.

We are hoping to include a visit to the castle which has been undergoing restoration over the last year but this is not guaranteed. Even so there is much of interest in this largely unspoiled village.

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