

**Autumn
2009**

Royal Tunbridge Wells

Civic Society

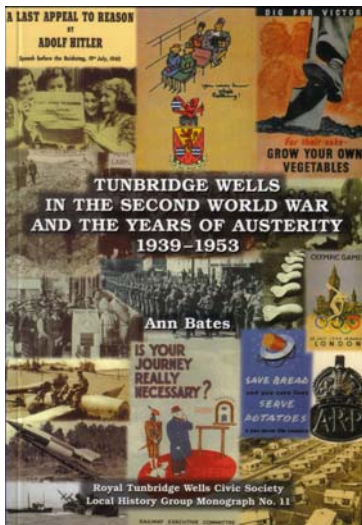
Newsletter

**TWO NEW LOCAL HISTORY GROUP PUBLICATIONS WHICH
COULD SOLVE SOME OF YOUR CHRISTMAS PRESENT PROBLEMS.**

CAN YOU REMEMBER WHAT IT WAS LIKE?
(It's not possible if you're under 67!)

**TUNBRIDGE WELLS
IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR
AND THE YEARS OF AUSTERITY
1939-1953**

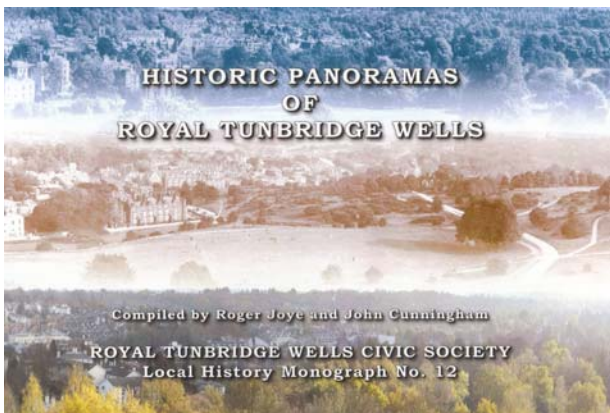
The first history of Tunbridge Wells in the Second World War and after, drawn from the archives of the Town Hall, military War Diaries, local newspapers, personal memories and oral history. It reflects the paranoia of the time – the fear of gas attacks, aerial bombing, spies and Fifth Columnists – and the almost daily fear of invasion, coupled with the hardships – rationing, blackout, gas masks, air-raid warnings, conscription, Home Guard, ARP and fire-watching duties – and the new role of women in wartime.



PUBLISHED TO MARK THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF 3RD SEPTEMBER 1939
A5 format. 216 pp. 185 illustrations. Laminated colour cover.

Retail Price: £9.95

Special Price for Civic Society members: £7.50



**THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS
PRESENT
FOR ANYONE WHO LOVES
TUNBRIDGE WELLS**

**HISTORIC PANORAMAS OF
ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS**

Just published – September 2009
A compilation of 21 'Panoramas' of Tunbridge Wells ranging from the early 18th to the 21st century, with up to four separate Plates for each 'Panorama'.

**A4 landscape format. 70 pp. 52 Plates (39 in colour) . Wirebound.
Laminated colour cover.**

Retail Price : £15.95

Special Price for Civic Society members: £12.00

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Front cover: The Band of the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (previously known as the Kohima Band), on parade in Tunbridge Wells in July.



Personally Speaking

by Chris Jones

Why do people come to live in Tunbridge Wells? Because it's easy to travel into London? It's easier from Tonbridge. Because there are good schools? The schools in Tonbridge are at least as good. Because there is easy access to attractive countryside? It's just as accessible from Tonbridge. So why are house prices 27% to 58% higher in Tunbridge Wells (average selling prices for July 2009)? It could be the shopping, though they have a Waitrose and we don't. Surely one of the main reasons must be the attractiveness of our buildings; not just the tourist attractions of the Pantiles and King Charles, but Mount Sion, the 'residential parks' and the Victorian developments by William Willicombe and others. That is why we have such an extensive Conservation Area. There are suggestions that it should be extended further, but a Conservation Area is only worth having if the rules are enforced, and the appearance of the buildings really is protected. It's not a petty restriction on the rights of the individual householders, but a safeguarding of something that is valued by us all. On page 10 Alastair Tod explains how recent changes in the planning regulations make it easier for homeowners to make changes to their properties without taking into account the impact on their neighbours. There are simple steps that the Council could take that would protect Conservation Areas from these changes. It's just a matter of political will.

Brian Hayward... We greatly regret the untimely loss, in late July, of Council Officer Brian Hayward. He was our contact and adviser on several projects, including the repair of the George Whitefield Monument (see page 16) and the Panorama celebrating the 'Royal' centenary (see page 8). He also helped with the 2007 restoration of the Gower fountain in Quarry Road, and with the 'burgundy plaque' scheme to celebrate the 400th anniversary in 2006; and in 2003 he wrote an article for this Newsletter on the Council's work with Buildings at Risk.

Walks Booklet... Jane Dickson has published the second of her hand-books of walks around Tunbridge Wells which go under the general title of '*Beyond the Pantiles*'. This one covers: Calverley New Town; the Camden Road area; and the area around Five Ways, including Monson and Grosvenor Roads. The book is illustrated by the colour photographs of Harry Fenton. It costs £4.50, any profits going to the Hospice in the Weald.

From the Planning Scrutineers

by Gill Twells



Recent Decisions

Withdrawn:

- The proposed extensions to Pomander Cottage in **Hungershall Park** were withdrawn, and a new, simpler, application submitted. We will not comment.

Approved:

- The revised scheme for re-development of the **Medway Depot** site - with a reduced amount of affordable housing.
- The scheme for redevelopment of Spencer Mews (off **Camden Road**).

New proposals

An application has been submitted to more than double the size of the Tesco Store on **Pembury Road** with increased car-parking - some of it proposed as a Park & Ride facility. We have commented as follows:-

- a great deal of the trade done by a store on this peripheral site would necessarily be car-borne and add to the congestion on Pembury Road and the complex junction with the A21, the A228 and Pembury High Street;
- if, as we believe, the arrival of another superstore results in the closure of many smaller shops, the effect will be to cause more shopping trips overall to be performed by car, adding to congestion and pollution throughout the area;
- the proposal envisages dedicating an area of the car-park to park-and-ride, but in light of the demand from the store itself, we doubt how much parking will in fact be available to those travelling into Tunbridge Wells, and that this can be enforced;
- we strongly support the provision of park-and-ride but believe that, to be effective, it needs to be actively managed, free, secure, and served by dedicated bus services and waiting facilities on a site large enough to justify these.

We have not objected to a proposal for a new house in **Upper Cumberland Walk**, in the garden between Brook Cottage and the disused railway line, because we think the site is large enough to accommodate it.

We were pleased to see a proposal to replace the timber fencing on the road boundaries of 69 **London Road** (at the corner of Church Road) with iron railings.

Chairman's Letter



Many years ago (well in 1967) an official report produced the novel idea that councils should consult with their public. That is, publish and invite views on their policies and performance at any time, not merely during elections. (It was some years later that the idea was applied to Whitehall, but that's a different story).

Consultation has prospered since, with more formal requirements as local government has got more complex. There is even a Consultation Plan for the emerging Local Development Framework (requiring, would you believe it, approval by Whitehall). Tunbridge Wells Council is well up with this, publishing a magazine I Local, operating a Consultation Portal, an excellent website and even a Leader's blog. The Society also has useful and cordial periodic meetings with the Leader.

We welcome all these facilities, and make use of them. The Council also facilitates our monthly scrutiny of planning applications, enabling us to express our views on a couple of hundred or more per year, and give awards to some of the most successful.

None of this would have been possible, or even perhaps understandable, in 1967, and it's worth recalling just how the world has changed. In the council office where your Chairman worked (a long way from Tunbridge Wells), the main door stood open all day and was usually unstaffed. No CCTV, no card-swiping.

Visitors who found their way to the relevant department addressed a female (always) receptionist who would summon a male (nearly always) professional or technical officer to deal with substantive queries. Phone calls from the public went straight to the professional staff, a dozen of whom in one drawing office shared a single phone. There was no meeting room, and nearly all public queries were dealt with in a few minutes in the lobby. If privacy was needed it was necessary to borrow the Council chamber, first locating the doorkeeper/mace-bearer who held the key.

All other communication from the department took the form of letters in the name of and signed by the chief officer. All decisions were taken by councillors. Council minutes were not published, except through reports in the local paper which allegedly reached 90% of homes in the town. All staff belonged body-and-soul to the Council, many of them for a lifetime. No Equal Opportunities, no Health and Safety, no job-sharing, no Freedom of Information.

We remember how things were only forty years ago when we try to assess how they are now. Besides all the media tools we now have a Gateway, lavishly equipped as the Council's front-line, and professional staff working in a Town Hall which is not normally accessible to the public, and where it is no longer possible for the Society to hold its public meetings. (The working of the Gateway is being reviewed by the Town Forum this autumn with the participation of the Society).

Email makes simple communication almost instantaneous but with staff invisible and often shared or part-time, it can be difficult for the public to reach an individual or know who they are dealing with. There is apparently no organisational chart available to us. Massive formal requirements mean the number and weight of documents produced is awe-inspiring, with consequences wasteful in time and resources, and inhibiting real public involvement and dialogue.

Not everyone believes it, but the Society tries not to be unrelentingly critical, and to recognise changing methods – not to mention the constant need for councils to save money. This is not the place for further criticism, but perhaps the above gives a basis for reflections on whether we are collectively making the best use of the advantages of 2009, and how far the Society's role fulfils the aspirations of that 1967 report. As an active local organisation we are not bystanders but a key part of the process.

We are proud of the range of the Society's activities (now fully displayed on our updated website), and the support we enjoy from the Council and other organisations in the town. We have been able to recognise this support this year by entertaining our friends at the 50th birthday party, the Jubilee Garden Party, and the Panorama reception (really we do quite a lot of other things besides having parties!).

The work of supporting our activities falls on a relatively small group – an Executive of fourteen with named responsibilities, plus a small number of other faithful helpers. This year three Executive members will stand down at the AGM in November, in particular our Secretary Pauline Everett, who has been gallantly combining Minutes and Membership. Some changes in duties will be necessary and these will be announced when known. Meanwhile we want to hear from any member who has the will and capacity for a more active role in a very lively organisation.

*Alastair Tod
22nd September*

Panorama



John Cunningham first proposed that the Society construct a memorial panorama looking over the town from Mount Ephraim back in 2002. At that time it would have celebrated the 400th anniversary of the discovery of the Wells in 1606. Things took longer than John might have

anticipated, so that when the panorama was eventually unveiled, on September 25th this year, it was to commemorate the centenary of the granting of the 'Royal' prefix by Edward VII in 1909.

Serious work started in late 2007. The first task was to select a site - more difficult than expected with the growth of trees in the last 100 years obscuring the view. Bryan Senior designed the stainless steel plaque, including an outline drawing of the buildings visible from the site, and a map identifying the principal parts of the town. Richard Still provided a short summary of the history of the town.

Gill Twells designed the plinth. Initially this was to be a wall, built of local sandstone, but within the last few months it was decided that a simple boulder would be more appropriate. The West Hoathly quarry was chosen and a suitable stone was found. Unfortunately this was found to have a flaw, and an alternative design based on two boulders was adopted instead. It was Alan Legg of TWBC who suggested adding a third smaller stone.

Richard Still acted as project manager throughout, a role which involved confirming the funding, agreeing the design, getting the agreement of the Council and the Commons Conservators, and sourcing the materials. Gill



The Marquess of Abergavenny at the unveiling

The Society's project team: Gill Twells, Richard Still and Bryan Senior



Unveiled

Twells handled the planning application.

In a speech at the Royal Wells Inn following the unveiling, Richard acknowledged the co-operation of TWBC - for their share in the funding, for design advice from Brian Hayward and later Alan Legg, and for agreeing to take on future responsibility for the structure. He also thanked those bodies who helped

with the funding: Targetfollow, who own the Common, and who underwrote the project; AXA-PPP, major employers in the town; and the Friends of the Common.

Finally we must thank the Marquess of Abergavenny, who formally unveiled the panorama. In his speech he made reference to the ten generations of his family who have walked on the Common, and foresaw some future Nevill, parking his space rocket, and jet-packing down with his children to enjoy the same view. **CJ**

David Scully and Alan Legg of TWBC flanking Paul Walker of Olympic Signs



Alastair Tod assists the Marquess at the unveiling

Bryan Senior, John Cunningham, Alastair Tod and Gill Twells select a suitable stone



Frogs, Cars and Conservatories

Alastair Tod wants the Council to act against small changes that cumulatively damage the appearance of the town

It's said that frogs when boiled can't decide to jump out of the pan until too late. In Tunbridge Wells recently a process of small changes has altered the climate. We only become aware how warm it is when we see side by side images of our town as it was and as it is now.

A current opportunity to compare past and present comes with the publication by the Society of a collection of panoramic (and other) views taken during the last century.

The rate of change could accelerate with relaxation of the planning rules affecting private houses last year; similar relaxation affecting commercial property is in the pipeline. The effect is that, even in the conservation area, many minor steps now often fall outside planning control. Among them are the conversion of front gardens for parking, the erection of satellite dishes, and some quite substantial house extensions and conservatories. The effect is serious for us, with a very large conservation area where the great majority of properties are not protected by listing.

Plastic windows are another example. The law permits replacing

timber with plastic without consent if the replacement is 'similar in appearance' to the original. We argue that this is rarely the case, even where plastic windows and doors are based, as they rarely are, on the same engineering principles. The profiles are flatter and the glazing brought forward, giving a characteristically blank appearance. But 'similar in appearance' is subjective, and often requires a ruling by a planning officer in the same way as a planning consent.

The definition of what requires planning consent is extremely complex and usually contains an element of judgement. The Society finds this unsatisfactory, among other reasons, because we believe that without needing to pay for professional advice the individual should know his rights. The recent changes have not (as advertised) made the situation any less complex, and the rules on house extensions for example require applying a rigmarole of heights and distances.

Responding to this, the Society joined the Town Forum in arguing with the Council for an extension of their planning powers to cover the most vexed areas, such as front garden

parking. At present, even in the conservation area, converting a front garden for parking *private* vehicles is permitted, as long as it does not involve *excavation*, demolition of a *building*, removal of a *tree*, or creating an impermeable surface. Consent is required (from the Highway Authority) for a *new* crossing of the footway, but this seems to be readily given (or ignored).

It is apparent how many areas of potential dispute this one issue presents, and the actual result can be clearly seen at the northern end of Mt Ephraim, York Road, parts of Upper Grosvenor Road, and Beulah Road. The loss of street boundaries and greenery and the crossing of the footway damage the street scene and create hazards for pedestrians, even if the pavement is not obstructed.

The Council can make a direction to bring specified changes, otherwise permitted, within planning control. Of course this does not amount to banning them, but gives the planners power to decide where and how they are done.

The Society and the Town Forum jointly urged them to do this for front garden parking in the conservation area. We twice presented our case to a Committee which endorsed the move. Their recommendation was sent to Cabinet with an officers' report to the effect that Ministerial consent would be difficult to get, that the Council

could be exposed to challenge and liable to pay compensation, and that a pilot study would be needed, to be carried out by consultants at a price of £10,000. The officers suggested inviting the Society and the Town Forum to help survey two named areas of the town to make a case for extending powers.

Cabinet agreed this with the qualification that actually doing it would be decided by the relevant Cabinet members subject to resources. We have questioned the need for a pilot, and therefore for consultants, but reiterated our support and offered to discuss how to help this forward.

The Council's position is hard to understand. The risk of legal challenge already exists. The situation is anomalous, wasteful of officers' time and erratic in effect. Within the conservation area ministerial consent is not needed. There is no compensation for the loss of rights (only for abortive expenditure when the control is first brought in). The additional work involved seems likely to be about 1-2 cases a week (cases which may already come to the Council to determine whether consent is needed), at a time when applications are down by about 40%.

What we do understand, as frogs, is that the time has come to jump. **AT**

The Burtons and St. Leonard's



Members of the Civic Society visited St Leonard's in August as guests of the Burtons' St Leonard's Society

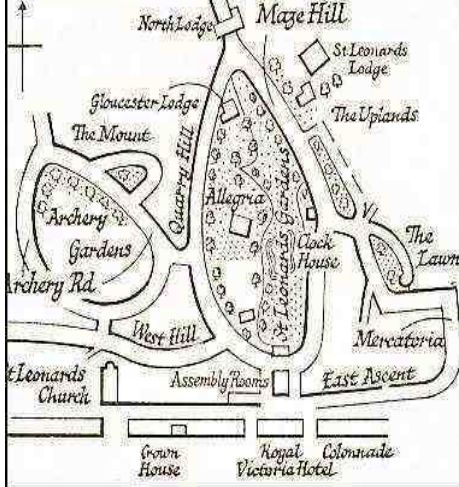
If you only know St Leonard's as the westward extension of Hastings, and have never got beyond the art deco bulk of the Marine Court flats, you may not realise the similarities between this sea-side town and parts of Tunbridge Wells; similarities that are not surprising given that the town was developed at the same time as the Calverley estate, and designed by members of the same family.

James Burton (his name was originally Haliburton) was a builder and property developer of Scottish descent. Born in 1761 and apprenticed as a surveyor, he was already in business in his twenties, building factories and bridewells (prisons), but

mainly houses. Between 1792 and 1816 he built over 1,750 of them in the area between Russell Sq and King's Cross. Part of this was the Skinners' Estate (which explains some of the street names: Judd, Tonbridge, Bidborough and Speldhurst). Was it a coincidence that in 1804 he bought the Quarry Hill estate near Tonbridge and built Mabledon? He owned it until 1828, investing, with his son William, in the gunpowder mills at Leigh. During that period he was also involved in the development of Regent's Park and Regent's Street, building a further 380 houses there. His financial support for John Nash led to Nash employing another of Burton's



The Assembly Rooms, linked to the hotel by tunnel.



sons, Decimus, as an architect.

It is not known what triggered his interest in the development of a seaside resort, and indeed whether he was specifically looking for such a site when he came across St Leonards, a deserted spot with low cliffs, much frequented by smugglers. Sea-side holidays had been popularised by George III (to the detriment of Tunbridge Wells), and there were other schemes in the 1820s, by Thomas Kemp in Brighton for example, and Robert Cruickshank near Gosport.

Burton acquired the land in 1828, and the initial development was essentially complete by 1832. This comprised a hotel and two grand

terraces facing the sea, with baths and shops in front of them, and public rooms for balls and receptions behind. Behind that a steep, wooded valley provided a private garden for secluded villas. There was also provision for the necessary services: a market (the Mercatoria) and laundries (the Lavatoria).

The links between St Leonard's and the Calverley development are intriguing. The foundation stone of the first building in St Leonard's was laid by the son of John Ward, owner of the Calverley estate. It seems likely that there was also a Tunbridge Wells connection in the visit of Princess Victoria to St Leonard's in the winter

Classical features in St Leonard's:

- Greek Doric columns along West Marina
- Ionic capital on the north portico of the Royal Victoria Hotel
- Corinthian capital on the south elevation of the Royal Victoria Hotel



of 1834. Her visit secured the success of the enterprise.

James Burton died in 1837, but members of his family remained involved in the town. His son Alfred dominated its affairs until his death in 1877. There are suggestions, but no documentary evidence, that Decimus Burton assisted in the design of some of the earlier buildings - James is not highly regarded as an architect. There is no doubt, however, that he was responsible for later developments to both east and west of the gardens.

Elizabeth Nathaniels, in a lecture during our visit, contrasted the 'classical rigour' of the buildings along the coastline (see previous page) with the romanticism of the gardens (on this page). They have the feel of the residential parks of Tunbridge Wells.

Two of Decimus Burton's developments were The Lawn and The



Uplands. These were occupied almost exclusively by women. Again this is very similar to parts of Tunbridge Wells. Perhaps these were the source of complaints in 1843 about 'the exposure of the person of the Bathers' using the gentlemen's bathing machines; and a later notice requesting Gentlemen to bathe in drawers, with a penalty of £5 for not complying.

From 1832 St Leonard's was managed by a group of locally elected Improvement Commissioners (similar to Tunbridge Wells). In 1875 it was amalgamated with Hastings. **CJ**



The Lawn, by Decimus
Burton, c 1834



Clock House, by James
Burton, c 1828

Welcoming the 'Tigers'

The people of Tunbridge Wells turned out on a drizzly day in July to honour the men of the 1st Bn, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (the PWRR or 'Tigers'), on their return from active service in Iraq and Afghanistan. Medals were presented and the troops, led by the PWRR band (see front cover), paraded through the upper town.

The PWRR is our 'local' regiment. Regiments were formally linked to counties in 1881 following the army reforms of Edward Cardwell. Our local regiment was The Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment), based in Maidstone. The Royal West Kents saw service in both world wars, notably at

Kohima during the 1944 Burmese campaign. Cuts in manpower after the war led to a merger with The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment) in 1961. Further consolidation in 1966 brought amalgamation with The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment (itself an merger of West and East Surrey regiments), The Royal Sussex Regiment, and The Middlesex Regiment. Finally, in 1992, came a merger with The Royal Hampshire Regiment, the original 'Tigers'.

So 'local' is something of a relative term, but we can still acknowledge the bravery of those who risk life and limb in our name. **CJ**



Restoration of the Whitefield Monument



Bryan Senior, having secured the restoration of the Gower Fountain in 2007, turned his attention to the Whitefield Monument on Mount Ephraim. In this article he explains the background.

The Whitefield Monument is a low, stone structure, in the gardens by the entrance to the Kent & Sussex Hospital. Its inscription reads:

Near this spot stood and preached that eminent servant of God, George Whitfield, at the opening of the original Chapel, built by Selina Countess of Huntingdon, July 23rd 1769



George Whitefield

George Whitefield (pronounced ‘Whitfield’, 1714-1770) was the most charismatic open-air preacher of his day, gathering audiences of up to 20,000. A leading early Methodist, he represented the ‘determinist’ (ie Calvinist) wing of the movement, whereas John Wesley stood for the

‘free will’ (or Arminian) tendency.

Whitefield travelled widely on both sides of the Atlantic, working indefatigably for the cause. Though critics objected to his forthrightness of manner and the ‘enthusiasm’ of his beliefs, these factors helped to make him a popular and compelling orator. Benjamin Franklin spoke of ‘his great powers of realising his subject ... and a fascinating voice of great compass, audible at immense distances’.

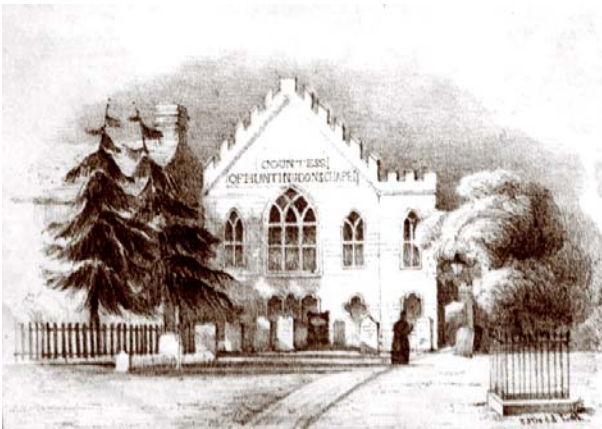
Selina, Countess of Huntingdon (1707 - 1791) was dismayed by the conservatism of the official church, and used her considerable wealth to support the new Evangelicals. Since some, like Whitefield, who had been her chaplain since 1748, were barred



Selina, Countess of Huntingdon

from Establishment pulpits, she founded her own chapels. The one on Mount Ephraim was opened in 1769 with a sermon by Whitefield from Genesis 28 v.17: “This is none other than the house of God and this is the gate of Heaven”. By 1791 there were over sixty of these chapels, linked in “The Countess of Huntingdon’s Connexion”. The denomination still exists, the nearest chapel to us is at Bell’s Yew Green.

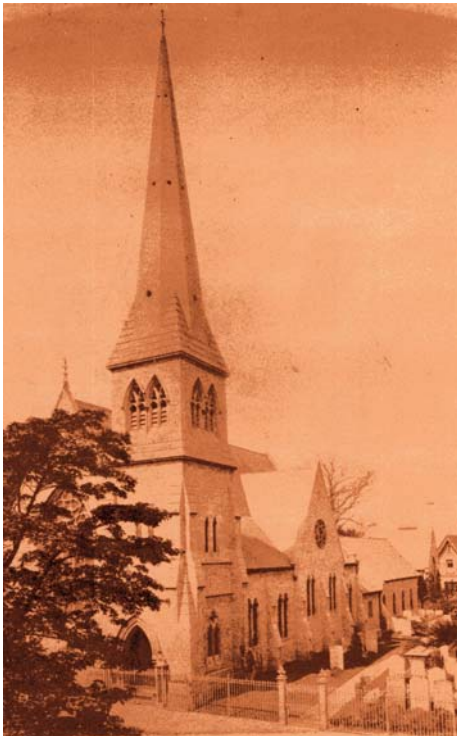
The Mount Ephraim chapel (see right) was built in the grounds of Culverden House, which the Countess had leased in 1764. As with the house,



The original chapel

it stood some 45 yards back from what was then Culverden Road. The structure, originally of wood, was enlarged in the 1850s and ‘60s, but by then it was felt that larger premises were needed. So, between 1865 and 1867, Emmanuel Church (left) was built (architects: Wimble & Taylor). (The Church History of 1941 claims that the foundation stone was laid on 2nd May 1867, and that the church opened on 24th October - an achievement surely requiring help from Above.)

The old chapel was used as a schoolroom until around 1869, when it was pulled down. The present monument must have been erected at this point. It bears the names ‘SCHOLES’, ie Jabez Scholes (1798 - 1875), the stonemason responsible for the Congregational Church (formerly Habitat), and tombs in Woodbury Park Cemetery. (Its style is curiously similar to the 1855 ‘Postbox Number One’ at Ludgate Circus in London (over-page).)



Emmanuel Church



The location today, by the front wall of the hospital gardens, is recent, probably late 1970s. Emmanuel Church closed in 1969 and was demolished in 1974, to allow better access to the hospital. As part of the work, fifty seven bodies were exhumed from the churchyard and re-buried in Tunbridge Wells cemetery. A plaque commemorating the church was added to the



monument, which was re-dedicated on 28th Nov 1981, by the Rev Ronald MacNab of the United Reform Church across the road (right).

The Monument was Grade II listed in June 2000. The current restoration was organised by the Civic Society in partnership with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. Funding came from the Council, with contributions from the Society, Bell’s Yew Green Chapel and congregation, and the Countess of Huntingdon’s Connexion Trust.

The adjacent ground has been cleared and turfed by the hospital; the missing ball-finial has been replaced; the stonework and paving repaired and cleaned; and approach steps created (designed by the present writer). The contractors were Heritage Stone Restoration Co of Sidcup. **BS**

The restored Whitefield Monument



In Richard Cobb's *Still Life* he tells of his father's preference for the muscular Christianity preached at St Mary's, Speldhurst, over the gentlemanly services at King Charles; a preference which involved the family making a muddy six-mile round-trip each Sunday. The young Richard considered it one of his father's 'more bizarre enthusiasms'. Yet one hundred years earlier, St Mary's was the parish church for a large part of Tunbridge Wells, and many a resident of Mount Ephraim made that same journey every week.

A new book by Guy Hitchings explains the history of the church. The present building is the fourth on that site; the first one pre-dated the village. The second was destroyed by lightning in 1791. Its replacement was not a success. By the 1860s it had dry rot in the floor, an insecure roof, and an 'impoverished appearance'. In 1871 the parish spent £13,000 on a new building designed by John Oldrid Scott, who later designed the Hoare Memorial.

The glory of this fourth church is its stained glass, installed between 1871 and 1905. The glass was produced by four different workshops, but most of it is from Morris & Co, to designs by Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris himself. Mr Hutchings describes each of the windows in detail: an explanation of the saint or biblical scene portrayed; the background to its dedication; and a description of the process by which it was created. All surprisingly interesting. Burne-Jones (originally just Ned Jones) was paid £10, £12 or £15 for the original black and white designs, depending upon their size. Morris would then decide upon the colours, and the position of the lead lines (comes I think they are called). The designs were often re-used, but many of those in St Mary's were original. Mr Hutchings has tracked down many of the original drawings and used them in the book.

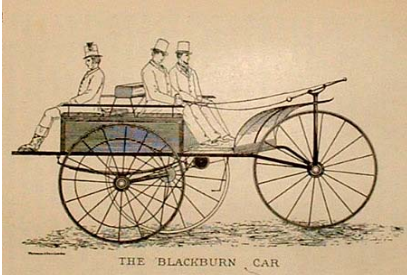
So, on the next sunny day, I suggest that you get yourself to Speldhurst, buy the book (it's only £3), and spend the next hour studying the windows. You need to read the book in the church. The original black and white designs are interesting, but you really need to see the windows in full colour to properly appreciate them. **CJ**

St Mary the Virgin. An original design by Burne-Jones, later used in 36 other churches. Dedicated by the Revd. John Worthington Bliss, to his only child, Constance Mina, who died in infancy.



Sources for Local Historians

A fairly obvious source for local historians is the Local History Collection in the Reference Library. A useful introduction to this is Sue Brown's bibliography "Researching Royal Tunbridge Wells" of 2003. This identifies over four hundred publications. The entries are ordered by subject: Architecture,



Biography, Church History, and so on. The section on Transport includes an 1896 book on the history of carriages which provided material for the article in the Spring Newsletter on the local motor industry. It also includes the design, left, of a steam-powered carriage from 1878. The designer, a Mr Blackburn, lived in Tunbridge Wells.

The Library has more than just publications - there is a useful collection of historical maps; census records and old newspapers on microfilm; and cuttings from local newspapers, stored in those cabinets to the right of the information desk.

There is much more in back rooms and basements; standard reference works, for example, like Crockford's Clerical Directory, Army and Navy Lists, The Times History of the War (1914-18, in 22 volumes), and a bound copy of The Gentleman's Magazine (from 1731 to 1818, with an index). Perhaps more interesting is the material specific to Tunbridge Wells - the minutes of a Bachelors' Club which existed from 1884 to 1886 at 93 Calverley Road; and the scrap-books of Robert Vaughan Gower, from 1913 to 1945. The problem is knowing what is available, and where to find it. The most accessible material is that used by family historians. As well as the censuses, parish registers, and the street directories (from 1886 for the town, but earlier for the county), there are lists of residents and visitors to the town, copied from the pages of the Gazette (1850s to 1880s), and the collection of house sale catalogues from Bracketts, from 1878 to 1947 (indexed by road and house name).

A recent development has been the transfer of information from the card indexes to computer. There are three indexes on spreadsheets, the largest, the Name index, has over 7,000 entries. The benefit of these is that they are searchable by any word within the detailed records, not just the Name.

The most important piece of advice however is simply to telephone in advance (01892 522352) as some items need to be retrieved from storage. Staff on the desk can take details and get back to the enquirer if it is going to take some time to find what they need.

Britain's Oldest Garages?

John Minnis has written a report for English Heritage on Sir David Salomons' Motor Stables at Broomhill. It is available for free download from their web site by typing <http://research.english-heritage.org.uk/?14723> and then selecting 'Minnis, J', in the drop-down author box. Salomons is well known for having organised the first motor show in England at Tunbridge Wells in 1895 and may be considered as the man who brought the motor car to England. Less well known is that



his motor stables still survive, built on to the side of his private theatre. He intended them to be an exemplar to other motorists and included a description in his chapter on 'The Motor Stable and its Management' in Alfred Harmsworth's *Motors and Motor-driving* (1903), one of the most popular of early motoring books. Their exact date is not known but they were complete by 1903, when the description was published. They are in remarkably original condition with many of the features described in 1903 still present: the dressing room for the 'mechanician', the inspection pits and even some early signage.

The Broadwater Sign



In the Spring 2008 Newsletter, we asked readers whether they could explain an enamelled sign with the name Broadwater. It looked like something from a railway station or bus stop. Frank Chapman asked the same question in the Courier some months later. We now have an answer, and it is nothing to do with railways or buses. 'Broadwater Ltd' was a company producing pre-cast concrete farm buildings. It had an office in Dudley Road in the late 1950s, and a site in Lamberts Road (North Farm) throughout the 1960s. Why was it called Broadwater? Well it may have been associated with an earlier company called Burton Holt (Chelsea) which made concrete buildings and was based in Broadwater Lane.

Garden Party 2009



At Eridge Park, by kind permission of the Marquess and Marchioness of Abergavenny. Our thanks to Frances Avery, Gill Twells, and Charmian Clissold-Jones; and to all the other helpers.



Thursday 8th October - Richard Filmer: "Hops and Hop-picking"

We welcome Richard Filmer back for a third illustrated talk. The hop has been known in Britain for many centuries but only seriously cultivated here since the beginning of the 16th century, and according to tradition the first commercially planted hop-gardens were in Kent. Richard will cover the history of the hop itself, as well as the traditional tools, skills, oasts, growers and pickers involved in the industry.

Thursday 12th November - Annual General Meeting

After the formal business of the AGM, we will hold a panel discussion, and invite questions from members to be put to a panel comprising: Chris Thomas, chairman of the Town Forum; John Davies, chairman of KCC, though attending here in his role as a local county councillor; a representative of the Civic Society, and a representative of the Local History Group.

Friday 11th December - Dennis Chambers: "Some Kent Ghosts - their haunts and stories"

Dennis Chambers is a leading speaker, broadcaster and writer on the supernatural, and Kent can claim to be the most haunted county in the land. Although most cases have been cited in the many books written on the subject, there are still stories to be told which are rarely, if ever, aired outside his talks. He sincerely believes in the reality of his subject, but this is a light-hearted presentation in which he aims to inform and entertain us.

Royal Centenary Concert

Although it is very short notice, members may be interested in the Royal Centenary Concert which is to be held at the Assembly Hall at 3pm on Sunday 11th October, as part of the Tunbridge Wells International Music Festival. One of the world's finest oboists, Nicholas Daniel, will perform Vaughan Williams' Oboe Concerto with the highly-acclaimed City of London Sinfonia. The programme will also include:



Royal Centenary Celebration Concert

SUNDAY 11TH OCTOBER
3pm
Assembly Hall Theatre

- Copland: *Appalachian Spring*
- A special tribute by local secondary school choirs with music by: Mozart, Handel, Humperdinck and Karl Jenkins.
- Haydn: *Farewell Symphony*

Telephone 530613 for tickets or book online at: www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk.

Royal Tunbridge Wells
Civic Society
Forthcoming Events

Meetings start at 7.45 on the second Thursday in the month (unless otherwise stated). The location can vary, so please check the details below. Please remember to bring your membership card. Visitors are welcome.

Oct 8th	Hops and Hop-picking - an illustrated talk by Richard Filmer. Royal Wells Hotel
Nov 12th	Annual General Meeting - see below for the agenda. Followed by a Panel Discussion including Chris Thomas of the Town Forum, and John Davies, Chairman of KCC. Royal Wells Hotel
Dec 11th (Fri)	Some Kent Ghosts - their haunts and stories A presentation by Dennis Chambers. Christmas meeting - there will be refreshments after the talk. Camden Centre

Agenda of the Annual General Meeting

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the previous AGM held at the Town Hall on 13th Nov 2008
3. Matters arising from the minutes, not covered elsewhere on the agenda
4. Chairman's report and address
5. Elections - Vice-Presidents, Committee members*, Officers*
6. Annual accounts and report - Roger Joye, Treasurer
7. Report on the Local History Group - John Cunningham, LHG Chairman
8. Date of next Annual General Meeting
9. Close of Annual General Meeting

*Nominations, signed and seconded, must be received by the Secretary (address on page 3) by Thursday 29th October.

The views expressed in this Newsletter are those of the named author or of the editor and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Society.
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