



Spring 2010

Royal Tunbridge Wells

CIVIC SOCIETY

Newsletter



Award
Winner

Civic Society Awards 2010

The Civic Society Awards for 2010 were presented by the President of the Society, the Marquess of Abergavenny, on April 8th.

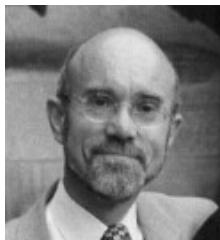
An award was given for the restoration of the Hoare Memorial (above), and a Commendation for the refurbishment of the West Station (right).

See pages 10 to 12 for other winners.



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Personally Speaking

by Chris Jones

Local History Questions... One of the results of having a Civic Society web-site, accessible to the world, is that we receive requests for information about the history of Tunbridge Wells. Some of these we can answer, some of them are beyond us. Three recent ones will give an indication of the type of enquiry, and enable me to ask whether any of our readers can help:

Grosvenor School - the honorary historian of the Reedham Old Scholars' Association is researching the history of Reedham School - an orphanage near Croydon which was opened in 1844 and originally known as the 'Asylum for Fatherless Children'. He is particularly interested in James Arliss Carter who was Headmaster there from 1879 to 1908. Before that he was schoolmaster at the Grosvenor United School - the Non-Conformist school in Tunbridge Wells in Meadow Road, and lived in Calverley Street. Any information on Mr Carter or the Grosvenor School would be appreciated.

Mount Sion - a Professor at St Andrew's is researching John Keats, and a relationship that he had in 1817 with a Mrs Isabella Jones. In 1819 she stayed at Clifden House in Mount Sion, where Frances O'Callaghan, Lady Lismore (née Ponsonby) was resident. James O'Callaghan, MP for the rotten borough of Tregony, Cornwall, was also connected with the house. Mrs Jones also had links with one Donat, or Donal O'Callaghan, who seems to have lived in Hastings. Three questions arise:

- was Clifden House part of Berkeley Place / Ashenhurst's Great House?
- what was James O'Callaghan's connection with Tunbridge Wells?
- does anybody know of a Donat (Donal) O'Callaghan?

AA Milne - a researcher writing a book on AA Milne puts two questions:

• In the 1920s, Winnie-the-Pooh will have needed repairing from time to time. Did Weekes have a toy department and did they undertake toy repairs? Alternatively, was there a "dolls' hospital" somewhere else in the town?

• The other question is rather intriguing - what happened to Milne after he died (which was in January 1956)? The DNB says he was cremated in Tunbridge Wells, but the Crematorium only opened in 1959.

If you can help with any of these, please contact me - details on p.3. **CJ**

From the Planning Scrutineers

by Gill Twells



Recent Decisions

Approved and Refused Demolition of various houses in Dunorlan Park for redevelopment approved but, the proposed redevelopment was refused ! We think this a very peculiar decision.

Approved Alterations to the house, Autumn Hill in Dunorlan Park.

Approved A proposal for a new shopfront for the former Halifax building in the High Street, for The White Company - which looks good.

Pending The proposal to enlarge the Tesco Supermarket at Pembury.

Pending The replacement of 2 public footpaths through the cinema site in the redevelopment scheme.

Refused Permission for the sale of a wider variety of goods at Wickes store in the Industrial Estate - which pleases us because we think that this area has recently become too much of a "Retail Park", resulting in the closing of so many small shops in the town centre.

Appeal Dismissed For the redevelopment of the site at 9 Park Road with new housing.

Appeal Dismissed For a new house on land adjacent to 67 Warwick Park. **GT**

'Town Hall Quit Plans'

So the Council has produced a plan for moving the Town Hall offices, with others, to the Land Registry building at Hawkenbury. We've known of their wish to move out of the listed complex in the town centre ever since the opening of the Gateway, and have questioned the Council Leader and Chief Executive about it. We are concerned at the threat to the unique complex, whose historic features are said to make it unsuitable as a town hall. We also oppose the removal of town hall activities from a central site, as we oppose any other barriers to public access to those working for us. But Hawkenbury is not as inaccessible as some of the alternatives that have been mentioned, and we support bringing public functions together. At a reported price of more than £10m why can't they be brought together at the Town Hall? **AT**

Chairman's Letter



Tunbridge Wells
March 2010

The Society is bemused by the Council's decision to press on with the demolition of the bandstand on the basis that it is unsafe.

The Council's survey did not describe it as unsafe, and it was left in public use for several months after the report was written; we have been refused permission for our expert to inspect it. The cost of demolition and reinstatement of the site were put at £28,000 last year, and we feel sure the present bandstand, strengthened in 2004, could be secured and painted for less than that.

Public opinion as expressed very clearly last year was that the structure should be restored, or failing that replaced with something similar. We discussed with the Council at that time how this could be independently funded, and the Society offered to lead an appeal.

The Council now say they want a large level performance space in front of the cafe, with space for a seated audience of several hundred, which would be incompatible with a bandstand on the present site. They have published an architect's study showing what this would mean. We question this objective.

The architect's design implies much larger formal events in Calverley Grounds than we believe are likely or legally possible; organisers of the largest current event the Mela do not object to the presence of the bandstand. The architect proposes the occasional erection of a tensile fabric roof, but this does not give Calverley Grounds the permanent landscape feature it needs, and still has in the present modest structure.

However the architect's scheme could not be implemented for at least five years. Meanwhile there is to be a comprehensive review of the use and management of the park, in which the form and location of a performance stage will be a key issue. The Society and others will be consulted on this review, and will have the chance to push again for our preferred alternative of a multi-use stage in traditional bandstand form – as adopted in many other towns, and supported by various organisations here.

We would welcome band performances in Calverley Grounds – but also

other kinds of performance, and a structure which is decorative in its own right, available for informal use and addressing an informal audience. This reflects a modern version of Tunbridge Wells' traditional spa role. Many fond memories of the present structure relate to the fact that it was a sheltered environment for children's play, meeting friends and drinking tea.

We accept the cost of restoring this now for an indefinite life would be uneconomic, and few of the components warrant preservation. If it is to be replaced alternative locations are possible, which would free more level ground for other events, as the Council wishes. But we expect the review to consider the option of preserving the present layout, with a replacement structure on the present site. In the belief that any progress on this must be the product of co-operation between the Society, the Council, and the community, we have after due deliberation withdrawn our formal objection to the demolition of the bandstand.

Members know we have recently revised our objects to remind ourselves we look forwards as well as back, and are concerned with community life and public involvement in decisions that concern them, as well as the environment. The bandstand issue is where several of these concerns meet. Public opinion was outraged by the announcement last spring, and by the claim that the decision to demolish expressed public wishes (including the Society's). One collector of 120 signatures on the Save Our Bandstand petition encountered only one refusal. Many objectors saw the loss of the bandstand as further erosion of our limited public facilities.

We don't see any case for developing a listed park as a major entertainments venue. We do advocate recreating an appropriate landscape feature, a facility in a historic spa town and an essential focus for its listed setting, an illuminated landmark at night, but also like the present a focus for informal social activity, and a range of relatively small-scale events - drama, jazz, children's shows, fashion shows, and choirs, as well as bands. This is how a community comes together, and we believe there is ample evidence that it is what the public want.

In a way this is a minor issue – there are no statutory duties or commercial contracts involved. But for that reason it is an opportunity to show our ability to co-operate in finding solutions appropriate to their environment.

Alastair Tod

Civic Voice - a new national organisation

An update from Roger Joye on the 'Civic Trust' situation

In our Summer 2009 newsletter, we reported on the demise of the Civic Trust as a result of financial difficulties, and on proposals for a permanent successor organisation to be established after an interim period during which ideas and offers of support would be canvassed. Nine months or so of great activity have now proved fruitful, and a new national organisation called Civic Voice – the name was chosen by societies and other interested parties from a shortlist of four possibles – is being launched on 17th April 2010.

Civic Voice will be registered as a charity and set up as a company limited by guarantee. It aims to develop gradually over a period of three years into quite a different body from the Civic Trust in its latter days, basing its programme on what civic societies around the country have said they want. Knowing that the subscriptions it received from societies were woefully inadequate, the old Civic Trust had sought to boost its income by running Green Flag and similar projects paid for by councils and other organisations (and having very little to do with civic societies); when these sources dried up in the face of the recession, the Civic Trust collapsed.

Not wishing to see a repeat of this

sad story, the interim body ascertained what societies wanted (a lot more) and then candidly told them it would cost a lot more. The societies acknowledged this, and it remains to be seen in the coming months if they will put their money where their mouths are.

Civic Voice's budget for 2010/11 is £180,000 which, we are told, will be spent on meetings of societies and volunteers, developing a website, events, travel and publications, as well as mounting one or two campaigns, lobbying on the highest priority issues, and offering support on strengthening the civic societies network. In three years' time the budget would need to be between £300,000 and £400,000 to meet all the aspirations expressed by civic societies, and Civic Voice aims to build up to this gradually. The last annual subscription paid by RTWCS to the Civic Trust was £170; for 2010/11 it should be £500, rising to £800 for 2011/12.

Your committee recognises the need for a national organisation to represent the interests of civic societies at national level and also to provide support in various forms to those societies. It has participated in the consultation process which has resulted in the creation of Civic Voice.

The new organisation now needs positive and active contributions from societies if it is to succeed, and

RTWCS is committed to supporting it.

Further information can be found at www.civicvoice.org.uk. **RJ**

Return of Bloom

Alastair Tod on the revival of Bloom in Tunbridge Wells

For several years Tunbridge Wells has not competed in Britain in Bloom, and outside the parks the Council's efforts have been limited to the Pantiles, the Museum triangle and outside the Town Hall. Last year's display in the Pantiles was spectacular but the rest of the town centre was bare.

In 2010 the Society is supporting the Town Forum in reviving Bloom in Royal Tunbridge Wells – not yet as a competitor in Britain in Bloom, but as a campaign to brighten our public realm and promote community participation. The Council will continue to provide flower baskets but with a wider distribution in shopping areas.

Bloom 2010 aims to spread the effect of the limited Council commitment throughout the town. It will involve schools and community organisations, and there will be competitions for best container, best front* garden and best street, among others. Trophies will be awarded. With the aid of

sponsorship, volunteers will clear up roundabouts and replant the Museum triangle. With other town organisations the Society is undertaking the replanting of a container in the Calverley precinct.

Competitions will be judged by an RHS judge in early July, and entries can be made at the Gateway up to 28th June. **AT**

*A 'front' garden is anywhere visible from the street.



Civic Society Awards 2010 (contd)



Restoration of the canopy at 8, Calverley Park. (left)

Award Winner

New house at 35 Warwick Park. (right)



Award Winner

Award Winner



Conversion of warehouse to design studios, Culverden Square. (left)

Community Contribution Awards



Lantern Procession, 2008

Community Contribution awards were given to Jon Oram of Claque Theatre for the enormous achievement of organising the Camden Road events of 2009, and to Dave Prodrick for continuing the work with the community in that area.



Camden Road - the Musical, 2009

Camden Road - the Musical, 2009

Lantern Procession, 2010



Shopfront Commendations

AE Hobbs, Mount Pleasant



Le Rendez-Vous, Camden Road



Community Contribution Awards

Community Contribution awards were also given to four shops for bringing high-quality local food to the town.

Sankey's Fishmonger, Vale Road



Peter Speaight Butchers, Chapel Place



Wood's Produce Store, Pantiles

Taywell Farm Produce Store, High St

Commendations

Commendations were given for:

- the restoration of the Whitefield Memorial (see Autumn 2009)
- the Panorama on Mount Ephraim (see Autumn 2009)
- new shops at 3 and 5 Grosvenor Road
- new development at Kentish Gardens

Arthur Shearly Cripps 1869–1952

“The-man-who-walks-like-thunder”

June Bridgeman tells the story of one man’s unlikely career

Builders and lawyers seem an unpromising family background for a man of whom his bishop said “I think I know a saint when I see one”. Arthur Shearly Cripps spent 50 years of his life as priest, poet and missionary in what is now Zimbabwe, where the Shona people called him “the-man-who-walks-like-thunder”. The British administration had less complimentary names for his long crusade against colonial land and labour exploitation in Africa.

Arthur was born in Tunbridge Wells in 1869, youngest child of William and Catherine Cripps. He grew up in Mount Calverley Lodge, a sizeable family house built by his developer grandfather, Charles Cripps, in what is now Prospect Road. His father had, in 1852, set up a flourishing legal practice that still exists today as Cripps Harries Hall. Arthur’s early years must have been anxiously watched over by his parents, for in 1867 they had lost three children to diphtheria. Two months after his birth, another sister died from whooping cough. All four are buried in Woodbury Park Cemetery.

The Cripps family had hitherto

worshipped at Holy Trinity Church, the domain of Edward Hoare, but around 1869 switched allegiance to the new St Stephen’s Mission Church in Camden Road, serving an impoverished part of St James’ parish. In the eyes of Canon Hoare and other low churchmen of the town, the “Romish” practices of St Stephen’s involving incense, candles and vestments were an abomination and



Arthur aged about 2 with his mother Catherine Cripps. She is still wearing half mourning for her dead children.

they succeeded in getting it briefly closed by the Archbishop of Canterbury. However by 1882, when William Cripps died aged 51, St Stephen's church had been reopened with a different priest and the parish of St Barnabas formed.

The Cripps family remained staunch supporters of the new St Barnabas Church, though secretly a year after her husband's death, Catherine Cripps became a Roman Catholic. Arthur's sister Edith followed suit 5 years later. His other sister, Emily, married a High Church minister she met at St Barnabas, who was bitterly opposed to Roman Catholics. Arthur, who remained on the Anglican side of the fence, was throughout his life ecumenical in approach and worked happily alongside other Christian denominations.

Encouraged by his sister Edith, Arthur started composing verses at an early age and when he was 15 had his first volume of poems privately printed at the Gazette Steam Printing Works, in the High Street. In 1887 he went up from Charterhouse School to Trinity College, Oxford – the first of his family to attend university. There, he formed a lifelong friendship with Laurence Binyon, already an up-and-coming poet. In 1890, Blackwells published *Primavera*, a slim volume of poetry which Oscar Wilde's review at the time mischievously suggested "undergraduates might read with advantage



Arthur when he went up to Oxford - boxer, rower, long distance runner as well as poet.

during lecture hours". Wilde focussed his review on three of its four authors, Laurence Binyon, Stephen Phillips and Manmohan Ghose. He remarked of the fourth only that "Mr Cripps is melodious at times".

In fact all four youthful poets went on to earn places in the *Dictionary of National Biography* and four of Arthur's poems are in the *Oxford Book of Mystical English Verse*. Besides poetry, Arthur wrote novels, articles, short stories and pamphlets. Through his work a recurring theme is his love for England's countryside, including the surroundings he remembered from his boyhood (see example on page 17).

But he also had many other interests while at Oxford. He acted in OUDS

plays, received his boxing half-blue, rowed in the Trinity first boat and (significantly for his later trekking feats in the African Veldt) was a notable long-distance runner. It had been envisaged he would join his elder brother in the Cripps law practice after graduating. However the influence of Charles Gore, charismatic Principal of Pusey House, led him instead to seek ordination. He was appointed to the comfortable Trinity living of Ford End in Essex in 1893 where he served diligently, but grew restless as it failed to satisfy his longing for a more ascetic and penitential form of ministry – what he called in one poem “tense stretchings on the rack”.

Around 1899 he read Olive Schreiner’s novel *Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland*, an attack on Cecil Rhodes and the seizure of African land by the British South Africa Company, and was fired up to become a missionary with the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. To Mashonaland he therefore set off at the end of 1900 on a salary of £16 a month. His planned two year stint was to stretch to 50 years dedicated to the Franciscan ideal of living as one of the poor. To the disdain of some of local white society and the puzzled admiration of others, he adopted the African way of life, his home a thatched hut. He gave away his possessions, including most of his clothes, to those poorer than himself,

and travelled around his huge district on foot, either walking or running, wearing boots tied up with string and repaired with metal from bully beef tins, carrying his remaining possessions in a biscuit tin. Indignant at the growing exploitation of Africans by incoming white settlers he took up the cause of African rights, starting by walking the 95 miles to Salisbury in 1903 to protest to the Anglican diocesan synod about the raising of the hut tax by the British South Africa Company. In later years his campaigning was directed with some success not just at the local church and administration but at the Colonial Office in Britain, involving MPs, the Prime Minister and the Archbishop of Canterbury.





Meanwhile he used all his own money resources and any he could secure from his family and friends, to buy two large farms and give the land rent-free to tenant Africans who had converted to Christianity. He ran a VD clinic and built schools and churches, one of which was inspired by the ruins of Great Zimbabwe, with round walls and five pillars, out of stones, mud, and grass. He called it the Church of the Five Wounds.

Despite his mother and sister's departure from Tunbridge Wells to a teaching convent in Torquay, and the infrequency of Arthur's furloughs from Africa, the Cripps remained a close-knit family linked by the hundreds of letters that passed between them. His elder brother, William Charles,

continued to prosper as lawyer and Town Clerk in his handsome mansion in Camden Park and to manage all the family financial affairs as he had done since his father's death. This was a very necessary check on Arthur's complete disregard for worldly wealth, and efforts to steer every penny he and his family had into support for his African projects. When Arthur set off for Africa from Tunbridge Wells in December 1900, big brother William wrote to their mother "We got him a comfortable carriage ... I gave him £12 (and) impressed on him that this was for his own personal use and that he would be committing a breach of trust if he expended it either on church matters or charity. He is a real good fellow- too good in fact and too impractical just at present to cope with the world". Or as his sister later put it "poor Arthur is quite mad". His behaviour never changed. Years later Muriel Spark called him "one of the most saintly men in the colony ... who frequently went cold or hungry because he had given the coat off his back or his dinner to an African".

Over the years, his sister Edith kept him supplied with books and newspapers and basic clothing. His family's letters were eagerly looked forward to by him as a lifeline among the hardships and loneliness of his life; and his haunting sense of "so little done, so much to do". It is thanks to his niece Elizabeth Roberts that so

much of this family correspondence still survives today.

The Community of the Resurrection, an Anglican order of monks founded by his Oxford mentor Charles Gore and the training ground of Trevor Huddleston and Desmond Tutu, still supports the mission he

founded. As the Shearly Cripps Children's Home, it houses some 75 of Zimbabwe's millions of AIDS orphans. A worthy memorial for a son of Tunbridge Wells, of whom his friend and admirer John Buchan said "He finds altars in waste places and refreshment in thirsty lands". **JB**

'Kent'

*Then our wild boughs wore white blossom
Under last Spring's sky
So like Kentish cherry-blossom I would stare and sigh.
Christ that likened them so, lead me.
Home to Kent will !!
From our cliff I see the dark weald
Yon spread valley dress
So from Bidboro' I saw once Kent's wide loveliness
Christ, that limnest me her picture,
My lost county bless .
Quaffing here upon the iron shale at a cold spring's brink
Rusty-rilled like Pantiles' water, I'll not flinch nor shrink.
To Kent, whose like is not in England,
Full of heart, I'll drink.*

Arthur Shearly Cripps

Three generations of the Cripps family are described in the latest publication of the Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery. *William Charles Cripps and Son: Solicitors serving Tunbridge Wells*, was written by Ruth McChesney and June Bridgeman. It is available from 01892 525578 or jbman@btinternet.com price £3 including p & p.

Dresden - a city rebuilt

Christo Skelton reports on a talk given to the Twinning Association

Dresden is the capital of Saxony in Germany and is situated in a valley on the River Elbe, near the Czech border. There has been a settlement there since the late 12th Century. It was a leading European centre of art, classical music, culture and science in the early 20th Century.

This all changed on the night of the 13th February 1945 when the British and American airforces completely destroyed large parts of the city in a fire bombing campaign. Twelve square kilometres of the city were destroyed and it is estimated that 25,000 people were killed.

On March 4th, I attended a talk given by Dr. Alan Russell, OBE of the Dresden Trust under the auspices of the Tunbridge Wells Twinning Association where he discussed the destruction and the rebuilding that has occurred in Dresden since the end of the Second World War. Also present at the talk was Masha Davis née Obolenskaya who experienced the bombing and told us “*it was the night my childhood ended*”.

Before that night in 1945, Dresden had many beautiful buildings including the *Frauenkirche* (the Church of Our Lady), the foundation stone of which was laid in 1726. In the 19th century industrialisation took place and

buildings such as *Technische Universtat* (1840) and the *Semper Oper* (1841) were completed. All were destroyed on that night of bombing.

At the end of the war, Dresden was in the Soviet sphere and so was part of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). Despite this, much building and reconstruction took place. Some of this featured Stalinist apartment blocks but also some of the historical buildings were rebuilt as they had been. In 1964 the rebuilding of the Zwinger Palace was completed and then in 1985 the Semperoper, now known as the Sächsischestaatsoper, was completed.

When I visited Dresden in the early 1990s I was amazed at how good Dresden looked and how much rebuilding had occurred. Numerous important buildings, such as the Catholic Court Church (now a cathedral), the Johanneum and Albertinum museums, and the Royal Mews were also restored during the Communist regime, though at the same time the valuable remains of other monuments were demolished. Despite certain important successes, the later exclusive devotion to industrial construction technologies and increasing economic difficulties left

the reconstruction of the City overall incomplete and unsatisfactory. Since the government of the Democratic Republic was Communist and hence atheistic. it had no intention of rebuilding all the churches. Once, though, the Berlin Wall tumbled and German re-unification took place on the 3rd October 1990, thought turned to rebuilding the true symbol of Dresden - the Lutheran *Frauenkirche* (pictured right)

During my visit there I saw the stones from the Frauenkirche all catalogued and stored for the eventual rebuilding. After much debate in the city, the foundation stone was laid in 1994 and the rebuilding was completed in 2005 - one year before the 800th anniversary of the city. The reconstruction cost •180 million and was raised from private donations including the British based Dresden Trust. The Dresdner Bank raised more than half the cost but it was the German methodical and

meticulous approach to the reconstruction that amazed me the most. As of 2010 the completed Johanneum and Albertinum will reopen after a period of restoration to their former splendour. CS

The Frauenkirche in Dresden. Built in the 1720s. Destroyed in 1945. Restored in 2005.



Review

The Local History Group Committee is currently busy with arrangements for the Kent History Conference in King Charles the Martyr on May 8th (see page 2 of the last Newsletter) but is also reviewing the group's activities and procedures. We might, for example, re-introduce the idea of holding a separate list of members - not because we wish to separate ourselves from the main Civic Society, but to be able to concentrate our attention on those members who have specifically said that they are interested in local history. We expect to be able to present our ideas in the next Newsletter.

Memories

When preparing the 1909 book I came across suggestions that eggs were a seasonal food - more available in the spring - something which I had not previously realised. A reader of the book has sent me a little poem which further illustrates the point. I wonder whether any other readers have similar memories.

Mary had a little hen
'Twas feminine and queer
It laid like smoke when eggs were cheap
But stopped when eggs were dear

Canon Hoare

On page 18 Christo Skelton describes a talk that he heard at the Twinning Association. It is a reminder that other groups offer talks that would interest our members. In October, for example, (exact date unknown) the Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery will be giving a talk on Canon Hoare.

Visit to Faversham

Our visit to Faversham, which is being organised by John Cunningham, will take place on Saturday August 14th. We will be guests of the Faversham Society. The suggested programme for the day is:

11:00 Meet at the Fleur-de-Lys Centre (the town museum) for a presentation on the history of Faversham, and a tour of the museum.

12:45 Break for lunch

13:45 Guided tour of the town by members of the Society

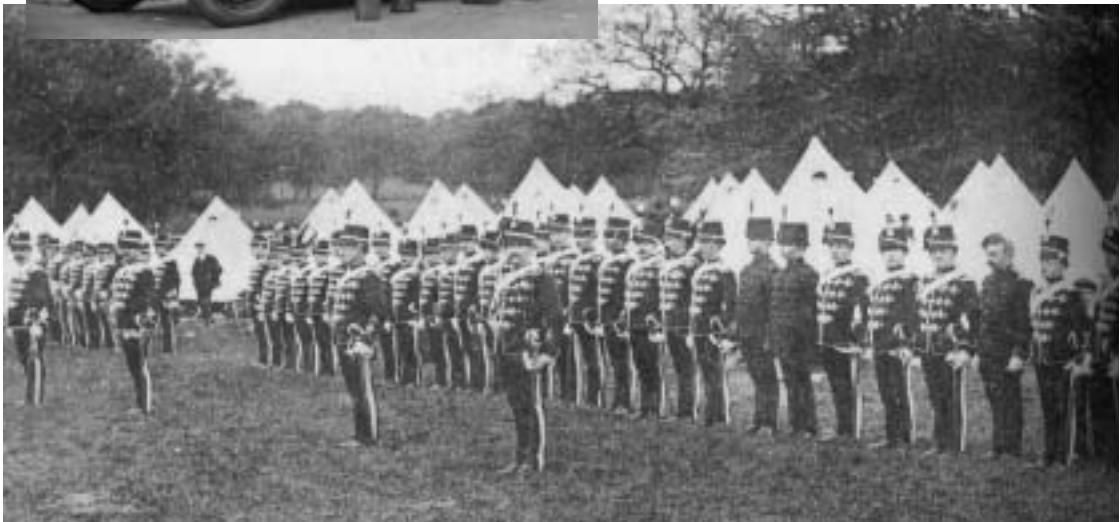
15:30 Tea and biscuits at the Fleur-de-Lys Centre

It is not easy to get to Faversham from Tunbridge Wells by train, so we are proposing to hire a coach. The combined cost of the coach and entry to the museum is likely to be £15. Further details in the next Newsletter, but in the meantime, it would be helpful if you could indicate whether you are interested.

Langton Green Through the ages



Last year was the 50th anniversary of the Langton Green Rural Society. To celebrate the event Ed Langridge produced a book of old photographs of the village. It tells a charming tale of rural life, just three miles from Tunbridge Wells. All proceeds from the book, which costs £10, go to Hospice in the Weald. Ed Langridge can be contacted on 862006.





The Summer Air was Soft and Warm

“And on these longest days we
spend
All the time trying to pretend”

Winter seems to have lasted such a long time. Not quite as long as these photos from last summer might suggest. They record the making of a Christmas advert for a certain supermarket chain which closed its branch in the town. They were taken by Richard Storkey, who died in December.

*My thanks to Fred & Rita
Scales.*



The White Stuff

Roger Joye previews forthcoming talks

At our meeting on **13th May** there will be an illustrated talk entitled **“The Sussex Downs”** given by Christopher Rudd, an experienced speaker on a range of historical and travel subjects, but for whom this one holds special fondness since he lives right on the edge of the Downs themselves. This area of rolling chalkland is unique in England, offering turfy ridgeway walks with distant views of Weald and coast, and we can expect this presentation to give us a visual feast including hidden “combe” villages with Saxon or Norman churches, flint-walled cottages and barns, and prehistoric hill forts.

10th June sees the return of Dante Vanoli, who works with the renowned architectural practice of Purcell Miller Tritton. Dante last spoke to us in 2004 on the restoration of Danson House, Bexley. This time his subject will be **“The Refurbishment of Kew Palace”** which was built in 1631 and was once the lavish country residence of George II’s family. The practice undertook the final phase of a ten-year long restoration so that the Grade 1 listed palace could be re-opened to the public - and in fact, the project enabled the rooms on the second floor, once used by the princesses and largely unchanged in 200 years, to be opened to the public for the first time. The project involved extensive repairs to masonry and joinery, but focussed on a painstaking reinstatement of the decorative scheme after meticulous research and analysis.

TWBC ‘Local Hero’ Awards

The awards recognise outstanding work by individuals or organisations who make a real difference and go the extra mile to help others.

Forms are available online at www.lovesherewelive.co.uk or pick up from Tunbridge Wells Gateway, Weald Information Centre, Assembly Hall Theatre, Trinity Theatre and local libraries.

Closing date Friday 14 May 2010.



Who keeps your community alive?
Who makes the place where you live better?

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.

For previews of the two talks, please see p 23.

May 8th (Sat)	Kent History Federation Annual Conference hosted by RTWCS Local History Group (advance booking required - see previous Newsletter or contact Chris Jones on 522025)
May 13th	'The Sussex Downs' - illustrated talk by Christopher Rudd. Royal Wells Hotel, Mount Ephraim
June 10th	'The Refurbishment of Kew Palace' - presented by architect Dante Vanoli. Royal Wells Hotel, Mount Ephraim
July 24th (Sat)	Annual Garden Party Provisional date - details in the Summer Newsletter.
Aug 14th (Sat)	Guided Tour of Faversham See page 20 for more details.

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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www.thecivicsociety.org