

Newsletter

Summer 2021



From the Chairman (retired!) - Ian Tittley

Things are changing at the museum not least my stepping down as Chairman, but I won't be saying 'Con Te Partirò' [apologies to Andrea Bocelli] more 'Auf Wiedersehen'. Yes, after seven years I recently stood down from the Board of Trustees. Seven years seems to have rushed by beginning with workshops and meetings in 2014 to set up the Trust, take over the museum, get it up and running for opening in July 2015. I seem to have gone out with a wimper with the museum having been closed for most of the year or so from March 2020, although there has been lots to do behind-the-scenes. The museum's success couldn't have happened without the excellent teamwork of the Board members, the enthusiastic support of our volunteers, and at present sufficient funds to employ Clare, our Museum Administrator. So, in 2021 Herne Bay still has a museum in contrast to the grim days of 2012-13 when closure was on the cards. Evidence shows that our sustained commitment is valued by the community and the town's visitors.

Since I last wrote, the museum reopened on May 22nd. We're starting gradually with a single shift two days per week but with the hope of gradually increasing opening days and times as Covid-19 becomes less prevalent, and more volunteers become available. However, as I write, the news is that Canterbury district is suffering badly from the Indian variant of Covid-19 and we will have to take this on board with running the museum. As this new variant appears to be affecting young people in particular, for the time being there will not be a children's area on the first floor, and neither will there be in-house events and activities for families which we usually put on during the summer holiday.

The museum is looking spick and span, thank you to those who have worked hard to make it more presentable. What a difference, and in my opinion improvement, the reopening of the windows in the special exhibitions/activities room makes with light streaming in (through UV filters I hasten to add); we are awaiting installation of blinds to allow the projection of images

and lower light levels, if needed. We are anticipating restoration and redecoration of the front of the museum this year, hopefully sooner rather than later. We have made a start at tidying our storage areas, with the room with the ladders and tables completely spring-cleaned, and a start made on the containers in the back yard. This has involved disposal, and the condensing of past exhibitions so that the many photographs and other flat material can be stored in folders in collection storage boxes. We have been given permission by CCC to sell some unwanted objects raising funds for collections management and development. Events and activities are not 'off the menu' this summer, as mentioned not in the museum, but outside on Herne Bay's sea shores from Hampton to Reculver; most of these will coincide with the Herne Bay festival. There will also be temporary exhibitions to coincide with the town's jazz and cartoon festivals.

I will continue to be around but taking on a lower profile, focusing my time and energy on improving the state of our collections, with outside events, and later in the year with rebuilding the community group relationships that we initiated during the winter before last so as to strengthen our case when making grant applications.

We still need help with front of house so that we can open the museum on more days and for longer. Also, next year there will be further changes to the Board of Trustees, meaning we are looking to welcome new members to the Board; perhaps you might be interested? In the meantime I've handed the reins over to Alan Porter and wish him and the Board all the very best.

- Ian Tittley

Exhibitions and Events for the Summer

EXHIBITIONS



GACE00243 by Giles, ©University of Kent.

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Saturday 10 July to Saturday 7 August

The Giles Family Holiday at Home

In 2020 the popular Giles family celebrated its 75th birthday. From the start the Daily Express family enjoyed many holidays together and days out. In a year when we are all encouraged to take a staycation, our exhibition The Giles Family Holidays at Home explores some of the joys of the British seaside holiday - whatever the weather.

The exhibition is part of the 2021 Herne Bay Cartoon Festival, supported by Herne Bay Festival, Canterbury City Council, The British Cartoon Archive and The University of Kent.

Saturday 14 August to Saturday 11 September

Jazz in Herne Bay: History & Contemporary Works

This exhibition is part of the 2021 Herne Bay Jazz and Swing Festival

We are very pleased to be participating in Herne Bay Festival again this year

TAKEAWAY ACTIVITIES

Ongoing throughout Herne Bay Festival, drop into the museum to collect

Look Up photo quiz – collect our quiz sheet from the Seaside Museum and take a walk around Herne Bay to see if you can spot all the architectural features listed.

Craft activity pack – collect a craft pack from the Seaside Museum and make Amy Johnson's plane, Jason or a dragonfly.



SEASHORE EVENTS



FRIDAY 13 August, 9.30am – 10.15am and 10.30am -11.15am
Seashore Scavenge at Hampton nr Herne Bay [Event for children]

You have 45 minutes on the beach to find as many things on the list as possible.

Wear sensible clothing and footwear. Bring a bag or bucket per person for your finds, and a pen/pencil.

Numbers limited to 15 children per session, children must be accompanied by an adult.

Meet at the shelter on Hampton Pier Avenue nr Hampton Pier 9.25am and 10.25am

SATURDAY 14 August, 10.30am – 12 noon

Seashore Safari at Reculver [Event for families]

Ian Tittley will lead our expedition.

Meet at the car park by King Ethelbert Pub 10.15am

Numbers limited

SUNDAY 15 August, 11am – 12.30pm

Teach on the Beach [Event for children]

Meet on the beach opposite The Ship pub at 10.55am

Numbers limited to 15 children, children must be accompanied by an adult.



WEDNESDAY 18 August, 2.30pm - 3.15pm and 3.30pm – 4.15pm

Seashore Scavenge at Hampton nr Herne Bay [Event for children]

You have 45 minutes on the beach to find as many things on the list as possible.

Wear sensible clothing and footwear. Bring a bag or bucket per person for your finds, and a pen/pencil.

Numbers limited to 15 children per session, children must be accompanied by an adult.

Meet at the shelter on Hampton Pier Avenue nr Hampton Pier 2.25pm and 3.25pm

SATURDAY 28 August, 10.15 - 11.45am

Seashore Safari at Reculver [Event for families]

Ian Tittley will lead our expedition.

Meet at the car park by King Ethelbert Pub 10.15am

Numbers limited

Please email seasidemuseumevents@gmail.com to book your place on any of these events



 **canterbury**
city council

History of 12 William Street, Herne Bay from 1891-1918

BY DOUGLAS, TRUSTEE

Have you ever studied an old black and white postcard of a local landmark and marvelled at how much a place has changed over time or sometimes fortunately remained unaltered? As a relative newcomer to Herne Bay, I'm really enjoying making new discoveries about the town's social and architectural history. Recently my attention turned to The Seaside Museum Herne Bay. Not just because of the Museum's collection of artefacts relating the history of Herne Bay, but for the building itself.

I wanted to find out more about the history of 12 William Street. How old was the building and what was the building used for and more importantly who lived there?

According to all accounts, 12 William Street was built during the Georgian era (1714-1830) and by my calculations that's over three centuries, of coming-and-goings at 12 William Street. I might not be able to write it up all in one go, so I thought I would concentrate on the last quarter of the Victorian era for this newsletter.

I thought a good place to start would be the 1911 census, as the only piece of information I had to go-on was the address of the museum. The first person we meet is Miss Emma Smith Wilkinson, born in Canterbury, Kent in 1836.

Emma is listed as the head, aged 76 and single. Her occupation is Lodging House Keeper and no. 12 has nine rooms. Emma is the only person listed on her 1911 census return for Miss Wilkinson's lodging house. A couple of questions came to mind. Why was Emma the only listed as living there? Could it have been change over day and how many other lodging houses were there in Herne Bay during this period?

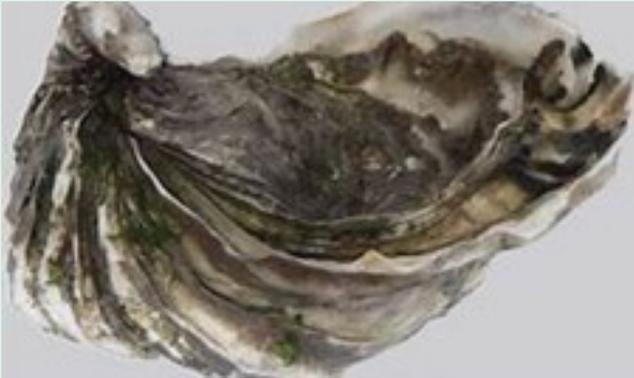


In the first half of the 19th century, the term 'common lodging house' was a form of cheap accommodation in which 'inhabitants were lodged together in one or more rooms in common with the rest of the lodgers, who were not members of the same family'. It was in 1851, the Common Lodging Houses Act came into force and gave boroughs the power to supervise public health regarding common lodging houses for the poor. If we jump back to the 1891 census, Miss Emma Wilkinson is listed as the 'head', single, aged 55, occupation Lodging housekeeper. In this census, Emma has two other people staying with her on the particular evening the census was taken. Sarah Wilkinson, sister, single, aged 77, her occupation is also lodging house keeper. There's one other person, Edward Bates, lodger. There's a question mark in his marital status box. He's aged 31 and his occupation is 'graves assistant'. He was born in Canterbury. From an initial glance at the archive records, Miss Emma Wilkinson is the proprietor of 12 William Street from 1891 to 1918, when she would have been 83. There's much more information I would like to share with you about the history of 12 William Street, but I'll have to save it for the next Museum newsletter. Over to you. What do you remember about history of no.12 and its past use? Did you ever go shopping at Kent Galleries or Kent Coast Stores? And what do you think Miss Wilkinson's Lodging House looked like? Please write in or email the Museum. I look forward to hearing your stories of 12 William Street Herne Bay.

A Shell From Hell!

BY IAN, HONORARY CURATOR

If this title sounds dramatic, well it is! In the last Newsletter we considered the impact of the Slipper Limpet on our coast and our oyster beds. In this article we will turn our attention to oysters and look at how another non-native species is impacting our coast and its potential to change the nature of Herne Bay's sea shore. Our story starts with the oyster fishery of North Kent which stretched from the Thames and Medway estuaries east to the former Wantsum Channel. From Roman times the Native Oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) was farmed on our coast with around eighty million harvested at Whitstable at the peak of the oyster industry in the mid-19th century. By the end of that century the fishery was in serious decline due to the loss of fishery skills, over-fishing and pollution.



Pacific Oyster



Oyster trestles



Pacific Oyster in the Waddenzee, Netherlands

To counter the demise of the native fishery a non-native oyster species was introduced to the UK, the Pacific Oyster (*Magellana gigas*). While it originated from Pacific waters around Japan, animals were also brought from introduced populations to Pacific America and Portugal. The first population arrived in the 1890s, and subsequent populations in the 1920s to the Blackwater Estuary in Essex (remember the Slipper Limpet story?). More spat arrived from the 1960s with the expansion of the oyster industry. The Pacific Oyster is also known as the 'Rock Oyster' and 'Portuguese Oyster', and is now farmed throughout Britain. Their shells are ribbed, have a sharp wavy margin, and are brownish-white in colour with purple streaks. Unlike the Native Oyster which is farmed on the subtidal sea-bed, the Pacific Oyster grows between high and low tide levels and is usually cultivated in sacks attached to trestles as seen at Whitstable. Pacific oysters grow to a much larger size than the native species, have more 'meat' and reach maturity more quickly. They are now more commonly sold than the Native Oyster.

Storms have caused the sacks of Pacific Oyster to split open and the oysters to be spread far and wide and settle. It was thought not to be able to breed in British waters as sea temperature was too cold, but, due to climate change and increased sea temperature the Pacific Oyster can spawn with a single female able to produce over 50 million eggs; the developing larvae are planktonic and consequently can disperse widely. This has happened along our Herne Bay and North Kent coast. Does it matter? Yes, it does because Pacific oysters can develop in such large numbers that they change the nature of the sea-shore.



Herne Bay pier base with oyster settlement

They like a firm substratum to grow on such as sea walls and breakwaters, and also cobbles and stones; they can grow on each other and spread out to form an aggregation. In the Netherlands Waddenzee these may cover entirely many miles of sea-shore, on Sheppey fairly large areas, and at Herne Bay patches but which may be at the point of spreading more widely; they occur abundantly on the concrete bases of the pier supports. When forming a bed the shells grow upright and their sharp edges can inflict a nasty cut if trodden on.



'Coastbusters' at work

Do we want our sea-shore covered by this 'invader'? The consensus of opinion is no. To this end teams of volunteer 'Coastbusters' have been attempting to clear them from the shores of North Kent and Thanet; at Herne Bay they have been removed from the shore and pier at Hampton, and from the breakwater and pier supports in central Herne Bay, altogether tens of thousands! Sadly, it is too late to be an eradication programme but a containment activity; I have recorded new colonisation at Hampton and Herne Bay and the question of the future impact remains open.

This summer's Seaside Museum events will be on Herne Bay's sea-shores and there will be opportunity to look at Pacific Oyster settlement at first hand. We also have specimens of the various oyster shells and species in our collection presenting an opportunity to put together a display on the oyster story at Herne Bay.

Museum Opening Hours

The museum is currently open on Thursdays and Saturdays, 11am to 2pm
We will be adding Fridays to our opening hours from 15 July.



Come and Volunteer With Us

Fancy getting involved with the museum? Why not come and volunteer with us. We are currently looking for people who can help out with Front of House when we are able to reopen. Please email hernebaymuseumtrust@gmail.com if you'd like to find out more.