

AGM Report from the Archives – January 2025

First the Good News...

Welcome to Hazel – our new volunteer. Hazel has been cataloguing our collection of “Bygone Kent” magazines, and updating the Sandgate Timeline Project. We hope to be able to sell duplicate copies of BK.

Donations this year include a map of about 1875 showing the plans by the South Eastern Railway to extend the line at Seabrook along the coast to Folkestone. This would have caused major upheaval to Sandgate with many houses demolished, and the line going straight through Sandgate Castle. One of our projects is to produce a map and illustration of what Sandgate would have looked like had the railway gone ahead.

Another major donation was in the form of a Brass Fireman’s helmet and a ladder of the type used by the Sandgate Volunteer Fire brigade from the family of Ken and Margaret Gorrie.

Other items have been offered but up to now, we have had to say no, because we have no wall space left on which to display them. Pictures, books and other artifacts are no use unless they are available to view or inspect.

Now the Not-So-Good News

We have tried on many occasions to “reach out” to the members and enthuse them about the Archives and what we do. However, the response to these attempts, Archive reports, exhibitions and quizzes, has been minimal. The monthly quizzes resulted in zero response and when they were ceased, no-one enquired why or what the answers were to the last one.

During the year we lost a valuable source of information. The Archive not only preserves information of Sandgate’s past years, but also tries to collate the everyday changes to Sandgate. To this end, our visitors of a Saturday morning contributed no end of useful information which could be added to the Archive.

“So-and-So has bought that rundown old place at No ? - probably doesn’t realise that it is listed.”

“So-and-So has moved because of the neighbours – the shop is now empty...”

Now that Saturdays have moved to the ‘cycle shop, we get a lot less information.

Now for the Really Bad News

On February the 1st, John Barrett announced “I have decided to make today my last day at the Archives, out of protest at the underhand and wanton vandalism perpetrated in the Reading Room.” This refers to the fact that heaters have been screwed to the wooden panelling in the reading room despite us being told that they would be free-standing or fixed to the floor. The panelling has remained virtually unspoilt since the Fire Station was opened in 1884. Even when the reading room was the village library, the bookshelves were free-standing and not fixed to the walls.

John has been a stalwart member of the Archive Team for a couple of years, being our IT Guru, the scanner of over 2,000 slides, Jocelyn Brooke expert and a good friend. The Sandgate Archive is not only the documents, pictures and books, but the whole building - a highly visible part of Sandgate’s history.

Peter Chamberlain and the Archive Team
Annie, Hazel, Ruth, Peter, and, of course, Roxy.

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