

Rose (Rosie) Grigsby

Rosie has lived in Hythe for 58 years. She was born in Deptford on 29/01/1930. She married Reuben (Rube) Grigsby in 1952. Member of the Hythe Bowling Club. Researched the bowling green history back to the 16th century.

Interview 22nd April 2024, Hythe, Kent. Interviewed by Lynda Ryan and Iris Pearce on behalf of the Hythe Local History Group (HLHG). (Part transcribed verbatim)



Rosie Grigsby April 2024

I was born Rose Bullard on January the 29th 1930. I was born in Deptford, South-East London, in a tiny street with Victorian terraced houses and it had a commercial railway line running through that was built on a 10-foot high wall and carried goods from Deptford Victualling Yard to the Rotherhithe docks about a mile away. The wall was a great area for playing ball games and we were completely safe we spent hours just outdoors playing with the neighbouring children. We had a dog Rex, a cat Arthur, and a canary, family pets.

World War II evacuation

I went to Deptford Park Infant School at the age of three and stayed there until war broke out and was evacuated together with my older sister Sheila and my brother Len to Eastbourne. During the war period, I was moved to other locations for various reasons and went to many different schools, mainly grammar, as I had passed the traditional scholarship exam at the age of 11. I finished schooling in Scotland just before the war ended and gained the Scottish Leaving Certificate. That's about it.

End of War

Returning home to London in 1945 I went to work at the Phoenix Assurance Company Head Office in the city until I married in 1952 when I was required to leave as the office did not employ married women. The married women who replaced the enlisted men during the war had to leave when the men returned to work after the war.

Marriage, work & retirement

After marrying Rube I worked for the First National City Bank of New York in the city operating an accounting machine and doing currency conversions and reconciliation, not leaving each day until the figures balanced to the penny, but it was great. We used to see many American VIPs and shipping magnates, Onassis married Jackie Kennedy, Stavros Niarchos was another, and even one or two film stars used to come to the bank. I worked there for four years until my son Robin was born.



In Hythe, I worked in the benefit office. Reuben was doing the drawings; he was training to be a civil engineer when I married him. He qualified in about 1958 something like that, just after our boys were born. He went to a brand new, well, it was just a field, Belvedere Power Station, then we went to Somerset, Hinkley Point Power Station, and then there was another one close by, Berkeley Power Station. While we were here after 15 years, he was transferred up to Heysham in Lancashire for four years. It was supposed to be four years, as I put in there, and when that finished, we didn't sell our house. We kept it on and used to come home every six weeks to see if everything was alright and then go back up. Yes, our roots were here after 15 years. I mean, what's not to like?

So what happened after going up to Lancashire? He got bowel cancer and so he resigned sick and retired at the age of 58. Then we came home. I was lucky because I was working in the civil service then but I got a transfer up North, near Lancashire at Morecambe Job Centre which was wonderful, I loved it. We then returned to New Romney and Hythe together where I shared both posts as the officer in charge. Reuben was terribly depressed about his cancer he just couldn't cope with it. Even though the doctor said that he was fine and that they had removed 15 inches of his bowel and it was fine, he wasn't really convinced.



Dungeness :Power Station

For about three years he was miserable, and I was getting fed up. Then he was asked to go back to Dungeness to do a repair job there, and he changed overnight because he felt needed. He was fine from then onwards.

Hythe Bowling Club

We joined the bowling Club, which was very interesting, and we both thoroughly enjoyed it there.

When did you join that? I joined in 1989. Rube could have joined but that was before he was going back to work. When I joined the bowling club, there was a waiting list for the women. The men could join if they were suitable, as long as they didn't spoil the green.



However, the women had to take a test and be interviewed by the men before they could be accepted.

Until 2000, ladies were allowed to attend the AGMs as lady observers but not allowed to speak at all. but just allowed to go there and listen. I'm afraid it was me who put in a motion to say could the ladies please have equal status in this club, it didn't get passed for about two years. Anyway, the girls that joined now would find it very hard to believe because we couldn't speak at management meetings. The ladies' secretary had to write a letter to the management committee to ask for any favours that we desired or whether we could use an extra rink or how many rinks we could use on certain days and so forth. But I mean it was all very sociable and pleasant because all the ladies just accepted their lot and said the men know best so I had to keep quiet.

Rosie was asked, "Has that changed now?" She responded, "Yes, I'm afraid the position is reversed now. I think the ladies have got more to say than the men. It was still a very happy club, but you know we just had to comply with the regulations. Did Rube join after you? He joined a year after me, and he was very sort of nonchalant about it until he was asked to supervise the new building.

Yes, because a lady member who died left £10,000 to the club which gave them the idea of having a new clubhouse. So, later on when we got the money, they asked Rube if he'd help with the layout. So is there any evidence that he did that? No, he was just standing in for somebody else who wasn't



available at the time. However, later on, when they decided to add the men's changing room and the ladies' changing room to it, he designed them. They built on the right-hand end of the building from Rube's design. Did he get a little plaque? No, but the whole building did from the Hythe Civic Society. There is a plaque there.



Characters of Hythe

But the other interesting thing to do with Hythe, I don't know whether you remember Chris Capon, he was a very well-known mayor. He'd been the local postman, used to go around on his bike so he was well known and he was the last mayor for the Hythe Borough as it always was. I don't know why it lost that title but it did and he was a bit upset about it and he donated a lovely cup to Hythe to commemorate Hythe Borough. It was called the Hythe Borough Trophy and every year the ladies played against the men down there for that trophy. For years, the men always won because there were so many more men than women, there used to be a bit of aggro about it as well because we felt it was unfair. However, nowadays it's just fun.

Chris Capon was a Hythe Councillor and a Kent County Councillor as well. He was a big character in Hythe.

Were there any other characters you knew of Hythe? I hadn't thought about that there was George. He was eccentric. Come summer or winter he always wore shorts. Fairly tubby little man and he had a very plummy voice but he was always unemployed because he wasn't an average-looking guy. Nobody wanted to employ him. Working in the benefit office I used to see a lot of him. He was a nice guy.

There was Tony Marston who owned the Stade Court Hotel and Anne Marston who lived at the mill.

Changes

There's been quite a few changes in the town. For instance, where the Co-op store used to be there are now four shops and we've lost the banks and we have more charity shops and coffee shops but it's still good.



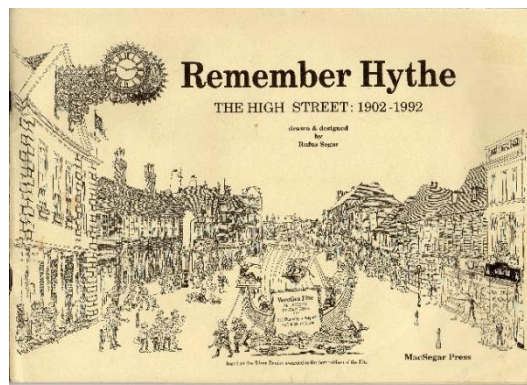
The canal area is still the same as is the beach area but otherwise, it's fine. But the Portex manufacturers closing was a blow to the local workers, especially mums who used to find conducive part-time work there. Even in the evening when their husbands were at home, they could leave the kids safely and go to work so that was a blow.



Rosie's sister Sheila and Rufus Segar

After school Sheila trained to be a nurse and became a staff nurse. She left and went to live with our cousin Joan where she met Rufus they were all anarchists so my sister became an anarchist. Rufus was an artist and then they married. He went to prison because he was called up for national service and it wasn't that he was a conscientious objector but he refused to be ordered to kill anybody. He would not ever kill so he went to prison for three months when they were married and she was quite proud of that because he stuck to his guns.

Then my sister came down here and she decided that we ought to, in our old age, look after each other but after a few years her oldest son got married and had another son and the lure was to go to be near her grandchild which was wonderful so she moved away to Pershore and then had a granddaughter as well but she still only has one grandson and one granddaughter. Yes, but Rufus went on to do much more artwork in Pershore and did some wonderful work there. He did a wonderful similar thing to Hythe only much more complicated for Hungerford and to celebrate their 2000th anniversary and that was wonderful amongst others.



1987 Hurricane

We were actually on holiday in Cyprus at the time, and you know, we were horrified to hear about it. Cyprus was okay. We used to go every year until we decided to go to America with the Grigsby's out there. This friend told us that trees were down along here, we lost quite a few trees, and the back fence was all blown down. But the amazing thing was, our shrubs all stood on end, straight, all the branches just normal looking came down, they were all absolutely straight and upstanding where the wind had straightened them. They eventually recovered well, and everything did. We couldn't believe it. We have a felt roof; it held fast, thank goodness.

Hythe

Do you remember Mackeson's? No, that had just closed before we came. Yes, the Small School of Arms, military, yeah, the school of Arms. oh, Dougie Maber yes, he was Major Maber: he ran the School of Arms. Well, he was at the bowling club when I joined. He was a wonderful man; he was like the Pied Piper of Hamlyn with children. He started up a junior club, and they listened to every word he said. He used to come in and say good morning children say good morning to Dougie and they'd go good morning Dougie and just do whatever he said he was just wonderful with them.

"When I was at the job centre, I had to go to various places for marketing purposes. I was taken all over the Lydd camp, which was very interesting. They had simulated villages being attacked and showed how they defended them. It was quite fascinating.

Hythe has been our roots We've lived here for a total of 58 years, and it's virtually crime-free. We feel safe walking around here, as we're not worried about being attacked or mugged. We consider ourselves very lucky."

I mean, even though there are lots of new developments, it's still an amazing place to live. It's interesting to see how they find places to build. Where there used to be one house, there's now a huge block of flats, and where Seabrook Hotel was, they are building an enormous development. The hoardings on the princess parade have been taken down. Yes, I saw it coming down last week, and it has made such a big difference. Let's hope they stay down forever.

Were you here when they were planning to build the marina? Oh, yes, that was a big project, wasn't it? But it didn't materialise. I'm pretty sure it was Marston's idea. I thought they believed it just wasn't suitable. It's a shame, in a way. I always think it's a pity that the canal isn't more commercialised with houseboats and such. Well, there's a cycle path.

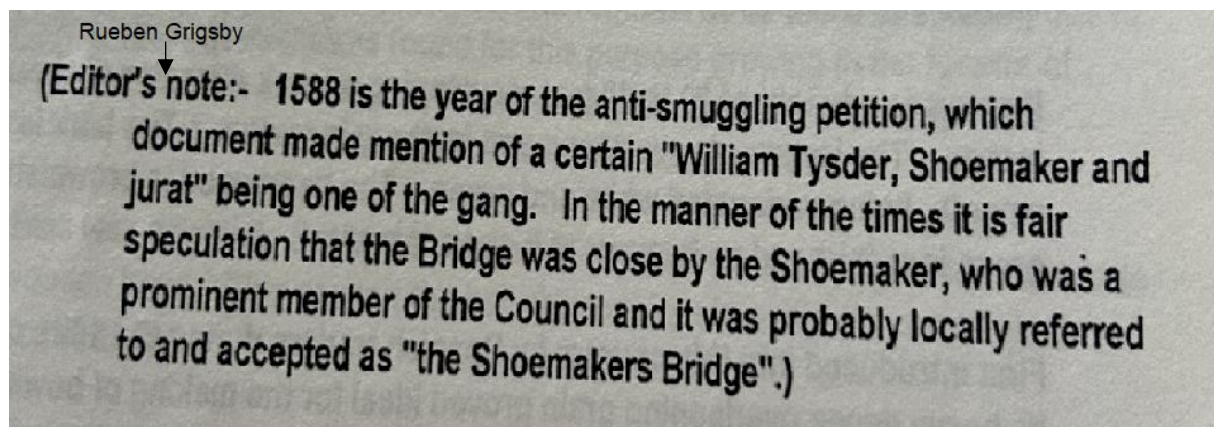
Hythe Assembly Book Minutes

In 1588, Daniel Langdon was allocated a piece of land, approximately one-third of an acre, on the right side of the path leading to the bowling green from Shoemaker's Bridge. Although the exact location of the bowling green is not known, we do know the approximate location of Shoemaker's Bridge, which is off

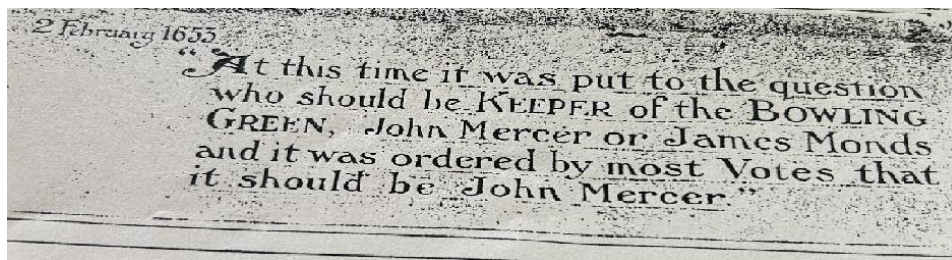
It's possible that the slightly. Shoemaker's the tin hut is now, and Shoemaker's Terrace or in an old census form. was located from



Stade Street from the main road. canal has changed the landscape Square used to be located where the triangular area was known as something similar, as indicated Therefore, the bowling green Shoemaker's Bridge.



John Mercer should be appointed. Most voices ordered it they always said voices because you said”
I or no “ not votes.



At that time, Richard Greenland came to the town hall. The meetings took place in the parvis above the church, which they called the town hall. He desired his freedom, and the mayor told him that he must either pay one pound, one shilling, and thruppence or submit himself to the court to be free. Mr. Greenland submitted himself to the court and then it was put to a vote whether he should pay for his freedom with five shillings, six and eight pence, ten shillings, or a pound. It was resolved by most voices that he should pay but ten shillings for his freedom. Then he was sent for up and when he came was told by Mr Mayor how favourably the house had dealt with him in putting him to pay but ten shillings for his freedom which is but half of the fall due. Now scarce that whereupon he said that the said Richard Greenland rejected it and went away saying if he must pay so much, he would go away a great deal freer than he came so he turned it down. He was disgusted to pay ten shillings. I thought it was lovely in the minutes from the Hythe Assembly book part of the minutes of the meeting they're wonderful.

In the year 1613, John Selling was executed for murdering his wife and stepson. He was charged and sentenced to death. For setting up the gallows and carrying a ladder to the gallows fourpence. To the hangman for the doing the execution ten shillings. To the Sexton of Hythe for tolling the passing bell and making his grave, two shillings and a rope four shillings. John Selling and Susan Sutton were married in 1613, they were only married for a couple of months before he murdered her. He was buried in Lympe and they were buried at the same time on the 15th of December. He must have been trialled very quickly and all his goods were confiscated and sold as they did for murderers.

How can you access that information? You'd have to go to Maidstone. These were kept in Hythe in a vault in Hythe library where I had access to the actual manuscripts, but I did take photocopies of things(I don't think I've got them here).



I did it for the Bowling Club for all these lovely extra things. I found the content relevant to the Bowling Club wonderful, and I loved their style of writing. The syntax of their sentences was so different from ours. Any old spelling would do in those days. There was another complaint about the railing on the bowling green and complaints about shenanigans involving smuggling and other activities in Hythe. Yes, that was good, but I've only got that information from the government's domestic papers. The date was during Queen Elizabeth 1st's reign, in 1588, which was interesting. Complaining about what people were doing, well, the mayor and jurats actually, they were taking liberties and keeping the other commoners down.

Conclude

Is there anything else you want to say?

I don't know, dear, because I'm all out of order. Let me just stop there.

I married Reuben Grigsby in March 1952 at Deptford St Luke's Church. I was married to Reuben for 71 years, and he only died last August (2023).

We had two boys, and from that, I've got six grandchildren - only one grandson - and eight great-grandchildren. The youngest now is three. Oh, and they are really delightful, all of them. I don't see enough of them, but it's lovely when I do.



Thank you very much, Rosie. You have been absolutely wonderful.

Thank you. I left some things out, but I added some unexpected things.