

Transcript index of tape recorded by:-
Rear Admiral D.H. Hall-Thompson
Date: 1985.

Hythe in 1913-1914.

Page I.

1) Dr Davis. His house now Municipal Offices.

Stables - now CAB office. ?

Oaklands left to town on his death.

2) Horse-drawn tram to Folkestone.

3) The Pavilion, Stade St.

4) North Rd, a track with a few houses.

5) Crucifix, at junction of Barrack Hill and North Rd.

6) Honeywood Bridge at Sandling.

Page 2.

1) Royal Flying Corps stationed at Lympne Airfield, quartered at Lympne Castle

2) Hythe Cricket Ground owned by George Mackeson, owner of brewery, lived at The Dene.

He gave St. Leonard's Church a new organ.

3) Venetian Fete.

**Transcript of tape recorded by:-
Rear Admiral D.H. Hall-Thompson
Date: 1985**

(Typed verbatim from recording tape –October 2002)

Hythe in 1913-1914

I have been asked to say a few words about Hythe as I first knew it. That was about 70 years ago, say 1913/1914. My father and mother were mostly abroad and I was at school and spent my holidays with my grandmother who lived near Lympne. She built the house about 1913 but by modern standards it was fairly primitive. For instance the water all had to be hand pumped up to a tank in the roof. We had no motor car of course in those days, but made occasional visits to Hythe which was always quite a major expedition, by pony trap or on a bicycle. The pony would be put up at Dr. Davis's stables. I remember him as a grand old man, universally loved. He lived alone in the house, which is now the Municipal Offices in Stade Street, the stables being across the yard where the Citizen's Advice Bureau is now sited. He did his rounds by pony trap, and was not only a doctor but a sort of father figure in Hythe. He was a great friend of my grandmother's and a most kindly man. When he died he left Oaklands to the town. I sometimes feel that perhaps his generosity is hardly sufficiently recognised these days.

To get to Folkestone you could go by horse drawn tram, all along the seafront and then take a lift up to the Leas. It ran beside Sandgate Hill. I think that the horses were done away with after the First World War. The Pavilion at the South side of Stade Street was quite an elaborate building and the fishermen used to keep their boats pulled up on the beach nearby. So far as I can recall, North Road, was not much more than a track with a few houses. At the corner where Barrack Hill joins North Road stood a large crucifix. A large strip of land to the west side of Barrack Hill, down to London Road belonged to an old monk who cultivated a beautiful garden making it looking as much like Arles where he had come from, as possible. I expect some of the trees and shrubs that are there now were originally planted by him.

There were, of course, some motor cars about, but only a few. I recall being in one – it had to go up Barrack Hill in reverse, largely, I think because it was necessary to get the petrol to run by gravity into the carburettor. In the early days of the war, in 1914, there were wild and ridiculous rumours about. One was that we were all to be evacuated and mustered somewhere near Cranbrook, but how we were to get there I don't know. It was a sort of scorched earth policy. Another was that the Russian troops were coming to the aid of our expeditionary force who were having a very rough time in France. These troops could be seen in the trains, going to Folkestone. You could tell them, because they had snow on their boots! I went on a bicycle to see what I could see from Honeywood Bridge at Sandling. All I found was a six-horse Royal Artillery gun team in trouble. The gun was askew and the horses with their legs over the traces kicking wildly, flying hooves and cursing men! The whole outfit liable to fall on the railway line. The only salvation appeared to be the Sergeant in charge whose loud language at that age was all Greek to me.

Again, in the early days of the war, when on holiday the Royal Flying Corps stationed at Lympne Airfield were very good to me. They used to take me flying, much to the horror of my grandmother. They were quartered at Lympne Castle. I loved to visit them and hear their talk. I fear that most of them were killed, but one I know survived, his name was Bentley. He told me he had ideas for a really good motor car after the war.

Hythe Cricket Week was a great annual event but I think its heyday was mostly in the years between the wars. The ground belonged to George Mackeson who lived at The Dene and owned the brewery. The Venetian Fete had a really Venetian touch about it and it was part of the celebrations. George Mackeson was another great benefactor to Hythe. Amongst other things he gave the Church a very fine new organ. We have indeed been fortunate in Hythe.

Well I think that is about enough of my recollections, which are a bit vague. After all I have been speaking of long ago, of say some 70 years.