

## **HISTORY OF FRIENDS OF LYDD** **(CUSTODIANS OF LYDD TOWN MUSEUM)**

This group was formed in 1972 to oppose the building of a Community Hall on our precious Rype which, at that time, had not been designated a protected Village Green (Lydd as you may know is a Town but these open spaces are called 'Village greens'). The residents of Lydd were adamant that no building should be erected on their Rype so they contested the application to build and formed the Association called "Friends of The Rype".. After some considerable time 'The Friends' were successful in their objections and the application to build was turned down.

Following on from this success the association decided to change their name to Friends of Lydd and so it remains to this day. In 1976 Lydd Town Council decided to hold an exhibition of artefacts of the area and our members were asked if they could kindly loan any suitable articles to the Council for this 'one off' exhibition. This proved to be a great success, following which those who loaned the articles were requested to collect them; however, many did not want the articles back and these were stored temporarily in the Guild Hall.

In January 1978 The Friends of Lydd acquired the Old Fire Station – a very run down property which needed a lot of work carried out to enable it to be used as a museum. The hard work put in by the members of Friends of Lydd was phenomenal – they were all working people and carried out the repairs either on a Wednesday afternoon (early closing day) or at week-ends. All windows, with the exception of the front doors, were to be blocked, leaking roof and guttering to be attended to etc., etc. This was all carried out between January and July 1978 and the official opening as a Museum took place on the first Saturday in July after the school had closed for the summer holidays.

At that time the museum opened on Wednesday afternoons, Saturdays and Sundays through the summer. This was later extended to Lydd Club Day in June and then Whit week-end. Naturally as it got to be known that this Museum covered articles from the Marsh area only many more contributions were made to add to our collection so much so that we had to rent a room from the Guildhall to cater for the over-spill of items donated.

As time progressed and those who started the museum reached retirement it was decided to open the museum for a longer period and commenced with manning from 2.30 until 5 pm every day through the summer school holidays. This has eventually been extended to opening at the Bank Holiday week-ends (Saturday, Sunday and Monday) Easter, May Day and Spring plus weekends from mid-September until end October. These dates have proved to be manageable for our volunteers but as time goes on we are all a lot older and more help is required for manning on the opening dates. The Museum is run entirely by volunteers and free entry to our exhibits but we always appreciate those who leave donations to help with the upkeep which, as you can imagine, increases yearly, especially the rent we have to pay for the Old Fire Station to K.C.C.

To provide manning we have meetings monthly in Hardy Hall, Skinner Road, Lydd on 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday each month at 7.30 pm when we engage speakers to give talks and at times slides or films covering their subject. These talks are varied and of interest to the majority of members and we do encourage visitors to our meetings for a small fee to help cover the costs and in the hope of enrolling new members. Our subscription at the moment is £5 per year per member and, providing we keep our numbers up, this will continue for the foreseeable future

Please visit our website [www.lyddtownmuseum.co.uk](http://www.lyddtownmuseum.co.uk) or if you wish to contact us you may do so by e-mail [lyddtownmuseum@btinternet.com](mailto:lyddtownmuseum@btinternet.com)