

Normans Bay, A Fragment



The success of the above book has come as a pleasant surprise. Its beginnings were the result of my own fascination with this little hamlet where I live. In the country, by the sea, a road that runs out at the beach and stories from residents of parties in the old hotel, military occupation during the wars and smuggling through the ages. The more I heard, the more I wanted to know. Then I was given a disc containing more than 200 photographs and the idea of a book was formed.

But how to go about it? At our AGM of the residents' association in 2012 we had a visit from a representative of a community project, Caroline Huey, from Bexhill. I asked if a book about this unique community would be a candidate for a grant. It would, but the money ran out before we got started. However, Caroline was able to find another source and we received a cheque from the Sussex Police. It seems they use the money from the sale of unclaimed lost articles to support community projects.

So began research through stories from residents, old documents kept by residents, Pevensy Court House, Bexhill Museum and lots of reading.

I collected so much random information over the course of the first year which was all "somewhere" on my computer. I scanned in newspaper articles, old documents, postcards and photographs. I wrote little pieces taken from information I was gleaning. But my IT skills were lacking, big time! I was fine with the hard copy, but useless with the laptop. I printed a lot, organised it and then tried doing the same with the material in the electronic files. My grandson organised the files into one main file and then I created the final document.

In the end I could not use it all. We were limited to how much we could afford to have printed and I began to flag in energy and motivation.

The receipt of the Canterbury Award was a great help. I returned to the writing with renewed energy, more paper and ink, membership of the museum so that I could come and go and something more towards the printing.

This year I decided I would stop with the research and collecting and publish. What an unexpected result! We had 200 copies printed which were gone within a month. We have subsequently had a further 100 printed, of which half have already sold. Our outlets are the shop on the Normans Bay Caravan Site, the Bexhill Museum, the Information Centre in Pevensy Bay and the Camping and Caravan Site at Normans Bay.

Since its publication I have received so many compliments and even been asked to sign copies! I am aware there are great gaps and more stories and photographs which could be used. I have been asked to write Fragment Two, but declined. It has been an exciting result.

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