



# The Bayle

## Folkestone

### Your Welcome Booklet

Welcome to the Bayle, the oldest part of Folkestone. It has a 'Village' feel to it and grew around the church of St Mary and St Eanswythe.

We have a diverse cultural community respecting various beliefs, attitudes and values. Some of our nationalities are from America, Australia, Britain, Czech Republic, France, Guyana, India, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden, and many more.

You can discover more about The Bayle on our website:

[www.thebayle.org](http://www.thebayle.org)

### St Eanswythe

Eanswythe was a Saxon princess (born c614) the daughter of King Eadbald, the King of Kent. She was offered marriage but refused and convinced her father the King to give her a plot of land on the Bayle.

She is believed to have built the Country's first religious house for women. Some bones were found in the church in 1885 and after investigation by Queen's University, Belfast, they were confirmed to be those of a young woman in her late teens / early twenties.

St Eanswythe's Relics are securely stored in a reliquary near the altar of the church. They are believed to be the only saint's relics to be found in a church, dedicated to the saint herself, in England.

### The Church of Saint Mary and Saint Eanswythe

The current church dates from the 13C and has been a site of Christian worship for over 800 years. Part of the church was rebuilt in 1855 following a storm in 1705 which destroyed most of the medieval nave structure.

Reverend David Railton M.C. was the curate of St Mary and St Eanswythe from 1914 and shortly afterwards went to support the troops on the Western Front and became chaplain to the 2nd Battalion, The Honourable Artillery Company.

Whilst in France he saw a rough cross on a grave in a garden and noticed the words 'An Unknown British Soldier'.

In 1920 he wrote to the Dean of Westminster suggesting a permanent memorial to the fallen of the Great War who had no known grave. King George V and the Government of the day were reluctant initially but were eventually persuaded otherwise.

On the 11th November 1920 the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey was unveiled (you can find more information in the church). Opening times may vary and all dogs must be kept on a lead in the churchyard.

### St Eanswythe's CE Primary School

The school was established in 1878 initially as a boy's school. It opened on its present site in 1901. It has received Outstanding Ofsted inspection reviews and is ranked in the top 16% of primary schools in the country by attainment.

### The Priory

During the 17th Century John Dixwell MP lived here. He was one of the 59 signatories (along with Oliver Cromwell) who signed King Charles I death warrant in 1649.

The landscape painter John Constable (b.1776) placed two of his sons in the gentleman's school within the priory. In the late 1800's Colonel Napier Sturt and his wife Mary moved from Dorset to Folkestone. Mary bought the Priory and several other buildings except for the British Lion. The couple were great friends of King Edward VII who visited them frequently and in secret.

Down in the basement of the Priory the supposed King's lavatory is still there with an extra wide door to accommodate the King's robust figure and believed to be the first flushing toilet in Folkestone at that time.

### Public Houses

The BRITISH LION has been established since 1460. A delicious traditional menu is offered at lunchtimes and evenings at reasonable prices.

Charles Dickens frequented the pub and 'The Dickens Room' is named after him. He stayed in Albion Villas, catching the boat to France to visit two of his sons who were at boarding school in Boulogne.

The GUILDHALL is a friendly pub with a single bar and a 'sun trap' beer garden – it was built in the mid 19th Century.

The pub was originally named 'The Globe' and was used by officers stationed in the nearby Battery. Many years previously the site was used as a work shed and stables.

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## **The Battery**

The Battery occupies the site of the original town Bayle, built to protect the coastline and later for the defence of the harbour. It has a long-rumoured history dating back to King Eadwald's Earthen Fort in the 7th C.

It was first identified in 1698 as No 26 Bayle Fort, carrying 4 guns. In 1759 the land was taken from Viscount Folkestone for the erection of a Battery and Officers' quarters and was still in use during The Napoleonic Wars.

There were further developments over the years by the Ordinance Dept and Coastguard. Lord Radnor had an idea to build a hospital, but in 1888 the Battery was sold to Mrs. Napier Sturt of the Priory. She, with her gardener, developed the magnificent gardens that remain to this day. She did, however, purchase all the beds for the newly built Royal Victoria Hospital in Radnor Park Road.

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## **Bayle Pond & Garden**

Originally the pond covered the entire area until it was drained in 1961 and transformed into the garden and pond we can see today. An endangered species of Great Crested Newts can be spotted – if you are lucky. Dogs are not permitted in the garden.

## **Shangri-La**

This imposing house overlooking the harbour was built in 1894. In 1923 it became a hotel but is now a private residence. There was a belief held for many years that the building was operated by the German Consulate during the 2nd World War owing to the 'Eagle' at the top of the building. This is now disputed as the 'Eagle' has been identified as a 'Griffin' and was made by a Polish sculptor Szymanowicz who also created the Pigs Heads during the 1880's.

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## **The Pigs Heads**

The two heads were sculpted by the same Polish sculptor on Bayle Street. This was the focal point of the local Pork butchers remembered by many as Tom Taylors. The abattoir was situated half way down the Bail steps. The cobbled streets of the Old High Street were important to allow the blood to flow down and away to the sea.

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## **Glendale**

The history of this site goes back over 500 years. In the late 1500's there was a medieval house, owned by Captain John Ward who was three times the Mayor of Folkestone and Captain of Sandgate Castle in 1572. He fought alongside Henry VIII and was a friend of Queen Elizabeth I, who visited Captain John at this house c1573.

In the 1700's it was the site of the King's warehouse where all recovered contraband was stored, having been brought ashore illegally by the local smuggling gangs. The house was demolished in 1916. Some years later a printing works was built on this site.

When the printing works were demolished, archaeologists wanted to conduct a dig before Glendale was constructed. In the bone-bed, running from the Battery to the dig they found numerous bones but specifically a hippopotamus leg bone. The bone is currently on display in the Folkestone Museum.

## **Bayle Court**

The current block of flats was built in 1958/9, on the site of the Mission House which was home of the Clewer Sisters nuns, who ministered to the needy around Folkestone from the 1860s.

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## **Bayle Residents Association**

The Association was founded in 1972 and continues to play an important role for our community to provide a pro-active forum for local issues, events and is run by a dedicated voluntary committee who meet monthly. Our AGM is held annually in the local school and all BRA members are invited. Go to the website [www.thebayle.org](http://www.thebayle.org) for more information.

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## **Bayle in Bloom**

The Bayle is recognised for the floral display of the 'Bayle in Bloom' which is supported by the local Council. The creative flower arrangements lift the spirits of residents and visitors alike, thanks to many hours of continuous hard work of a few residents. This has been proven to be the number 1 priority according to a Bayle Residents Association survey.

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## **Defibrillator**

There is a defibrillator situated on the Bayle Pond railings opposite the Guildhall Pub. This was installed in 2024. This resource is available to all, provided a call has been made to the emergency services as a code is required to access the machine.

*With grateful thanks to Eamonn Rooney, Richard Cross, Andrew Buchanan, Ben Madin, Ian Gordon, Chris Andrews, Mark Andrews, Hasu Patel and Marketa Patelova.*

*Narrated by Ann Gaston*