

Smugglers present



The Rotters Opera

written by
Carole Hayman

Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



Adjoined to to-morrow at 10 o'clock.

EIGHTH DAY.

October 13th, 1880.

GEORGE FITTALL sworn and examined.

7902. (Mr. Holl.) What are you?—A labouring man.
7903. Where do you live?—Church Street, Upper Walmer.
7904. Did you receive any money at the election?—
Yes, 3s.
7905. From whom was that?—William Minter, of the "Drum" Inn.

7906. Was that for your vote?—Yes.
7907. To vote for the Liberals?—
Goldsmid.
7908. And you did?—Yes, from my head.
7909. Did you receive any other money
—No, not one farthing.

FREDERICK FISHER sworn and examined.

7910. (Mr. Holl.) What are you?—A labouring man.
7911. Where do you live?—At Walmer—Church Street, Upper Walmer.
7912. How much did you receive at the election?—3s.
7913. Was that from William Minter?—Yes.

7914. Have you voted?—
7915. For the Liberals?—Yes.
7916. And you voted?—Yes.
7917. Did you receive

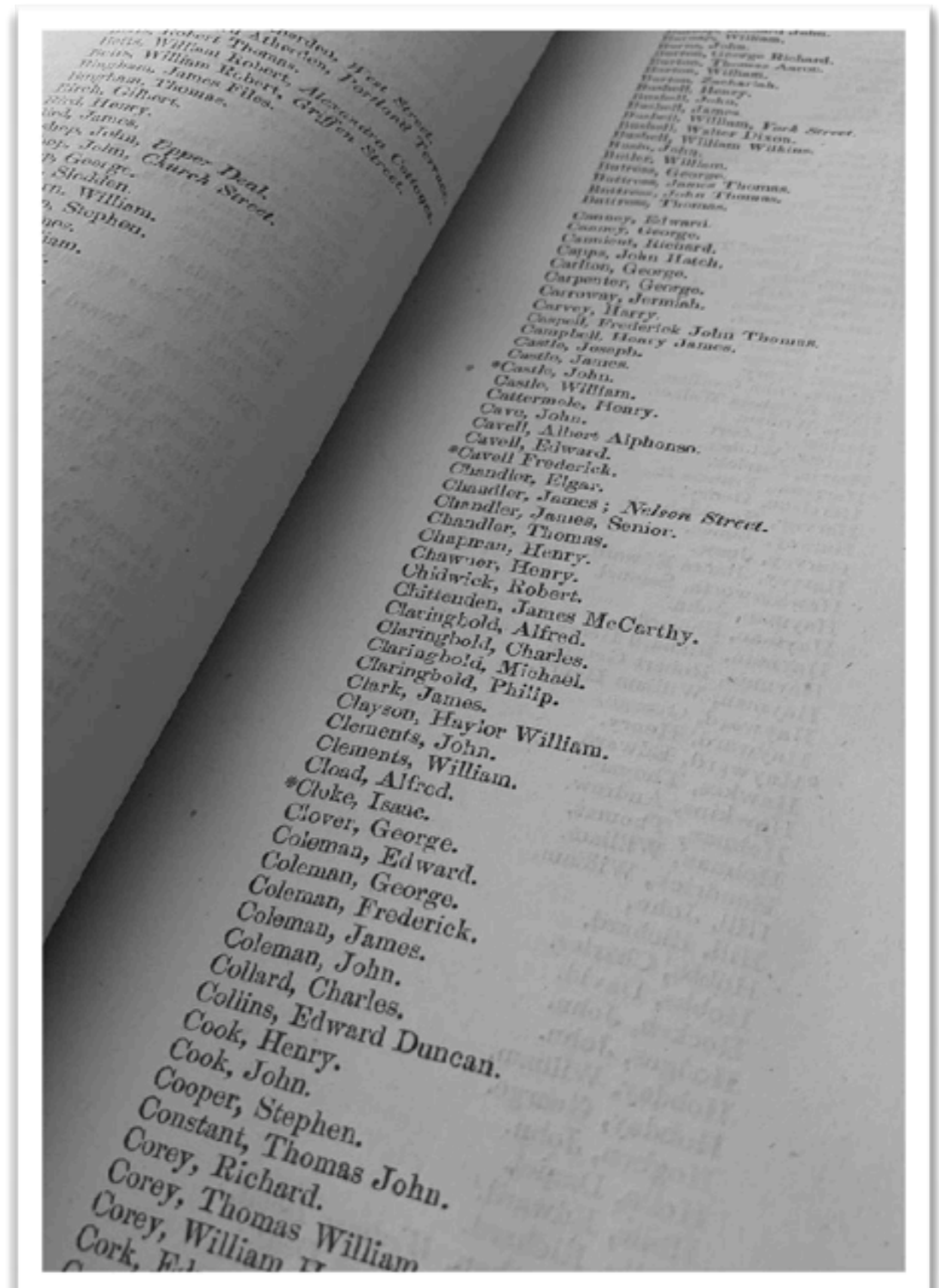
JAMES RALPH

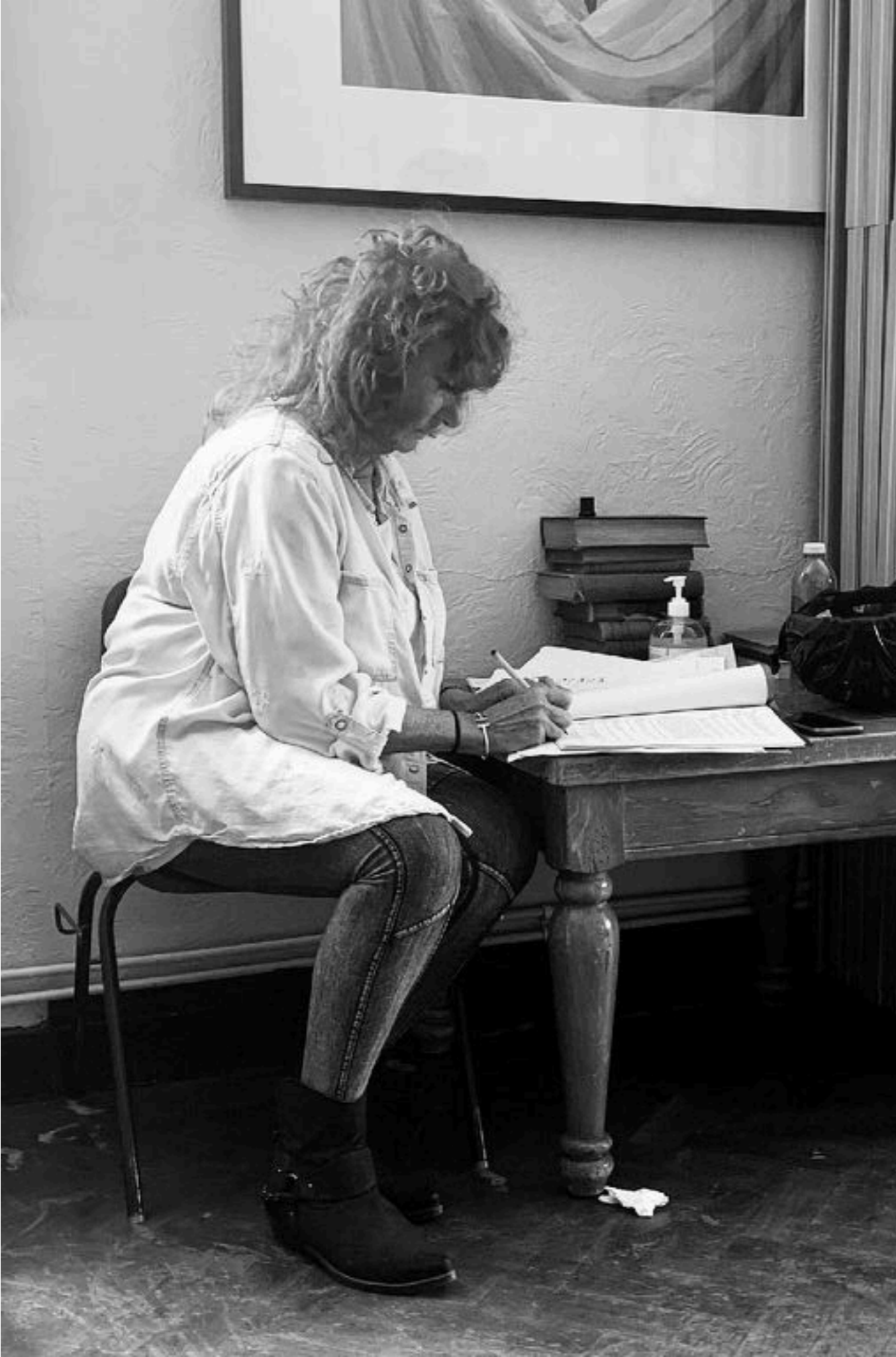
R The Plot

When the Conservative parliamentary candidate arrives in Deal with a big bag of gold to fight the 1880 by-election, expect fun, fraudulence (and flags) to follow...

‘DEAL is a most villainous place. It is full of filthy-looking people. Great desolation of abomination has been going on here.’

William Cobbett, 1823





Background

In the 5 General Elections held in the Parliamentary Borough of Sandwich prior to 1880, the two seats to be contested were won by the Liberal candidates.

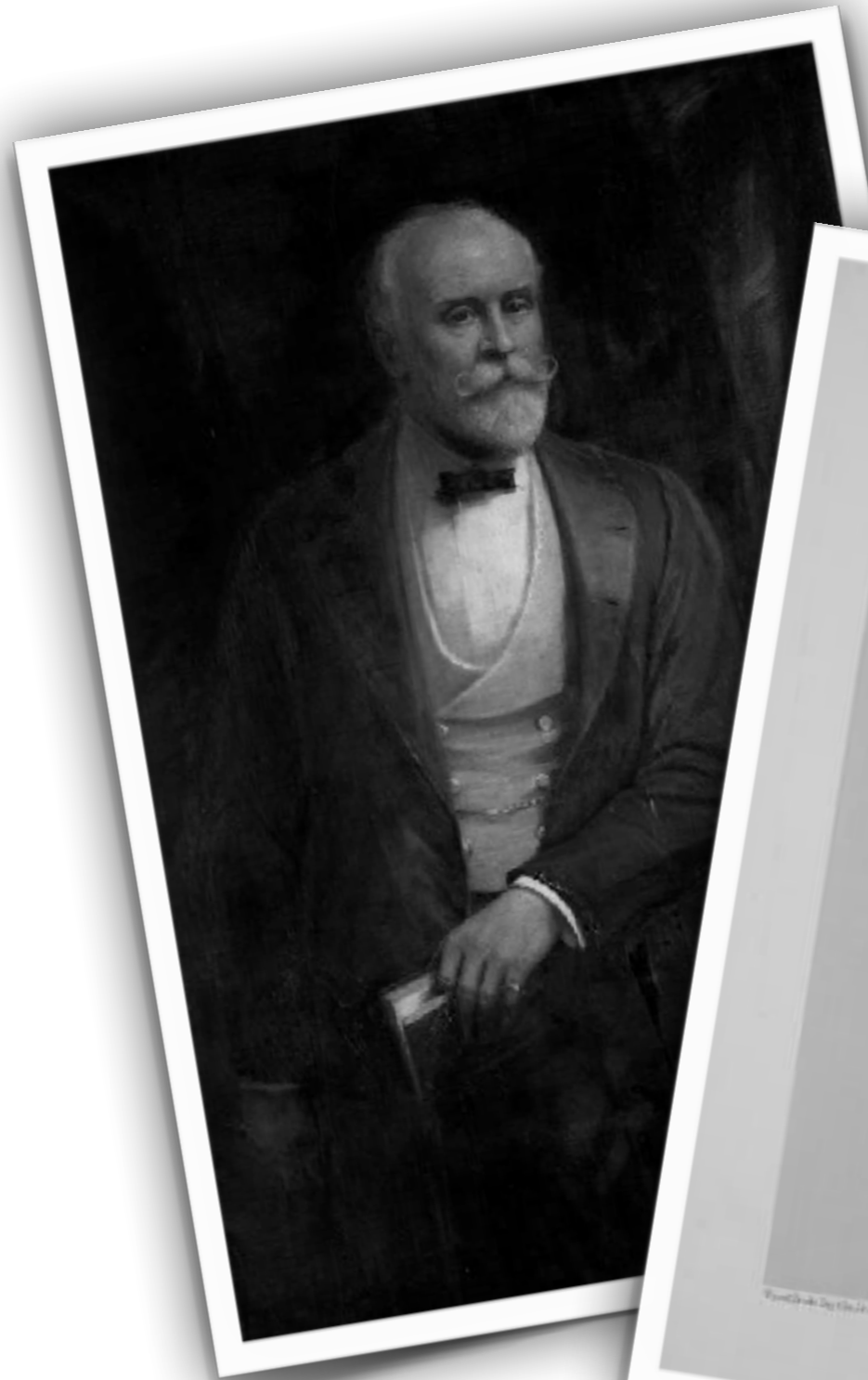
In 1880, they were returned unopposed when the Conservatives decided it was pointless to contest. However a vacancy arose shortly after when one Member accepted a peerage and a By-Election ensued.

Assured of success, the selected Conservative Candidate, Mr Crompton Roberts immediately came to Deal to begin canvassing with a big bag of gold!

Terrified by the likely costs, the Liberals took a week to find a willing candidate leaving Sir Julian Goldsmid left to play catchup.

The extent of the bribery and creativity shown in the various inducements bestowed on electors by both parties for their vote was almost unparalleled!

Election corruption is nothing new!



The Writer and the Composer

Carole Hayman is a writer, producer and presenter. As an Associate Director of the Royal Court Theatre she directed many world premieres. Hits include Ladies of Letters - 12 series on radio and 3 on TV, the Refuge with Sue Townsend and Rides, the BBC's first all female drama.

Felix Cross is an internationally renowned composer, director and producer. Formerly Artistic Director of the Nitro / Black Theatre Co-op, producing the annual Nitrobeat festival at the London's Southbank Centre. He was awarded an MBE for services to Musical Theatre in 2012.



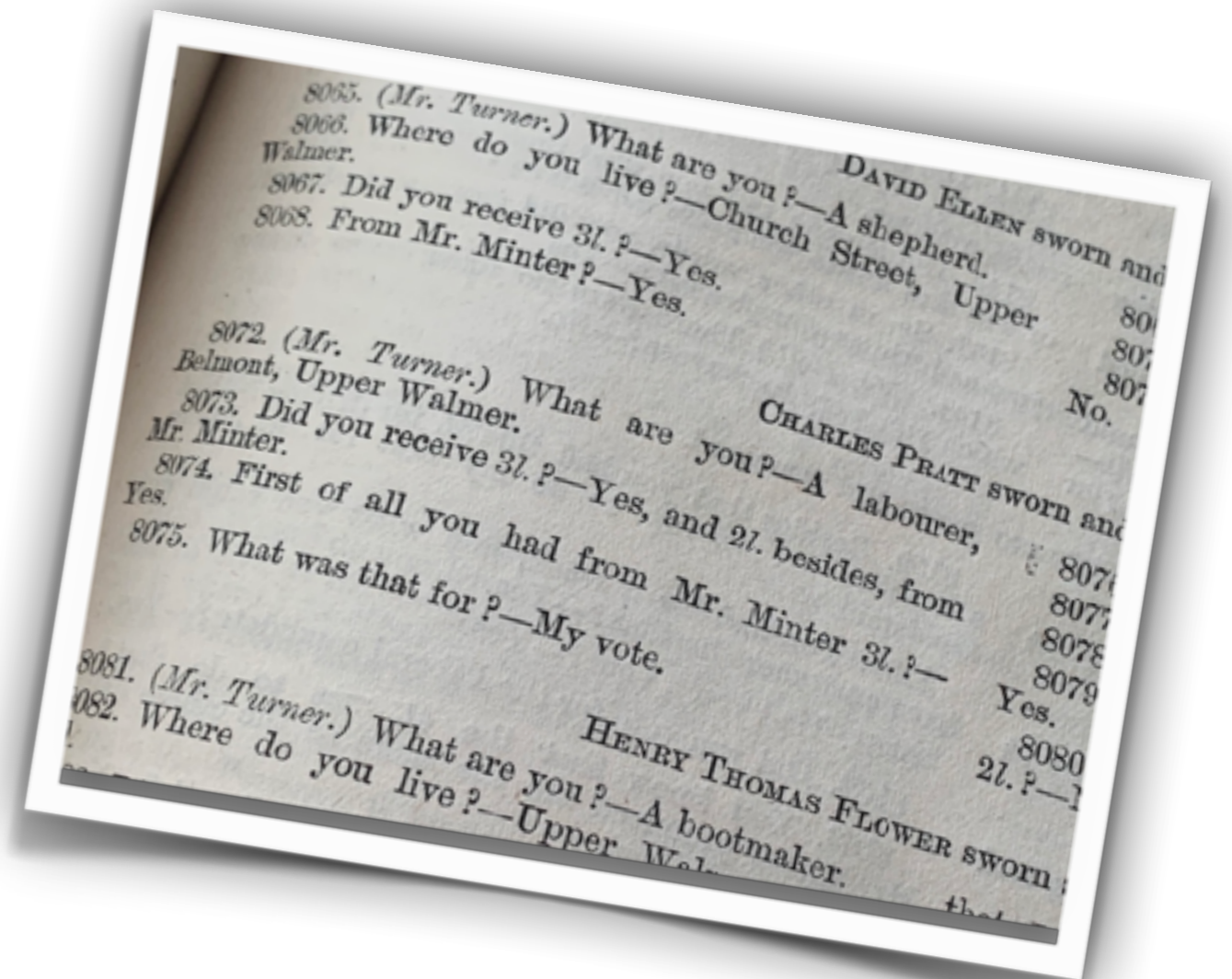
Schools

The Commissioners Report which sparked our interest in dramatising the events of 1880, is a lengthy verbatim account of the three week trial that took place to investigate the extent of the corruption.

In its 396 pages, it contains over 22,000 lines of testimony between the presiding judges and the witnesses who appeared before them. Many of those called to testify are recognisable names – the ancestors of families still living in Sandwich, Deal and Walmer today.

The majority of the testimonies begin with the testifier confirming their address and occupation. In short, the document contains a fascinating and accurate social snapshot of the towns and their inhabitants in the late 19th century.

How wonderful to be able to read the actual words your great, great grandfather may have spoken!



Thanks to funding from Dover District Council's Community Grants Funding we are now able to capture this information electronically and create a searchable resource which future generations can interrogate.

Want to be involved?

Research and development has thus far been possible thanks to grants from Arts Council England and Dover District Council's Community Fund.

We are currently in the process of making a further Arts Council grant application and looking for supporters and funding to develop it further.

If you would like to help us mount a full production then please get in touch with us via our website to discuss how you can help.

Our website gives more detail about the project and we would love to hear from you.

<https://therottersopera.uk>



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