


The first museum
ever dedicated
to the history
and legacy of
the Huguenots
in Great Britain...



HUGUENOT
HERITAGE CENTRE

ROCHESTER, KENT

...thus greatly
expanding our
knowledge of the
contribution the
Huguenots made
to British history
and providing
lessons for today's
diverse society.



*The Flight of the Huguenots,
in the Huguenot Chapel,
Canterbury Cathedral.*



The story so far

95 High Street, Rochester, Kent.

In 2010 the Directors (Trustees) of the 295 year old Huguenot-founded French Hospital in Rochester High Street, were presented with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. This was afforded by Medway Council which gave them the opportunity to purchase the two storey building (pictured above) which would allow, not only an increase in the number of flats for people of Huguenot descent from 59 to 63, but also the establishment of the first Huguenot Heritage Centre in the UK.

The building stretches from the High Street to the line of the Roman Wall; from its fine, art deco-style rooms at the front through to more functional facilities. It also lies opposite and very close to the proposed, new railway station and within a very short walk of the Cathedral and Castle. This offer fulfilled the wish of the Directors to increase the number of almshouse flats, creating secure state-of-the-art facilities for the storage of Huguenot family archives, books and historical material of great significance, in an air conditioned and temperature controlled environment. Importantly it also provides new spaces and an existing 96 seat theatre for creating the first ever museum and education centre covering the extraordinary role played by French Protestant immigrants to this country.

To take full advantage of the large number of visitors to Rochester, the French Hospital has leased back the ground floor to Medway Council for the next 20 years, so that it can continue to provide the existing Visitor Information Centre and café for its 320,000 visitors per annum.

The past and the future

Successful integration of immigrants into a community is a skill. There is much that can be learnt today to the country's benefit from the practices and initiatives of both the Huguenot immigrants and their welcoming nation. The Huguenot Heritage Centre will be the first and only visitor centre in Britain focussed specifically on this sizeable immigrant population; demonstrating the positive benefits well-managed immigration can bring to Britain and providing a useful comparator with later influxes of immigrants.

To achieve these aims a dedicated Huguenot Heritage Centre Committee is working on the plans for conversion of the building and the raising of the money to complete this exciting project.

The Huguenot Heritage Centre will provide

- A major focus and source of pride for those of Huguenot descent, with an important opportunity to learn about their heritage and, if desired, to have the opportunity to safeguard their artefacts and papers in the long-term.
- Greater accessibility to the collections and archives for the public, researchers and heritage professionals.
- An expansion of public knowledge about an important part of the history of modern Britain as well as the history of Huguenots and their descendants.
- An improved physical access and condition of display of precious heritage artefacts which will also be better conserved, as well as being digitised.
- Educational courses and research facilities, which will be available with the collections and archives for teachers, students, community groups and individuals. Subjects covered will include important elements of British history, genealogy, family history, immigration, persecution, tolerance and the skills and trades brought to Britain by the Huguenots; and the lessons which can be learnt from these.
- A new opportunity for personal development and growth through volunteering.



Four new flats for the French Hospital Almshouses

To satisfy the increasing need for additional sheltered accommodation for those of Huguenot descent and to reduce its waiting list of some 100 applicants for the French Hospital, four new flats will also be included in the conversion. These well insulated, lift accessible flats with good views across the River Medway and surrounding countryside, will be compliant with the Almshouse Association guidelines and contain a living room, two bedrooms, kitchen and a bathroom.

The projects to be funded and the approximate costs

95 High Street Rochester	Purchase of Building & adjoining land*	£1.15 million
Huguenot Heritage Centre	Initial Capital Development	£1.51 million
French Hospital	Additional almshouse accommodation	£0.75 million
Development	Ongoing development of the Huguenot Heritage Centre and for additional almshouse support	£1.50 million
Total		£4.91 million

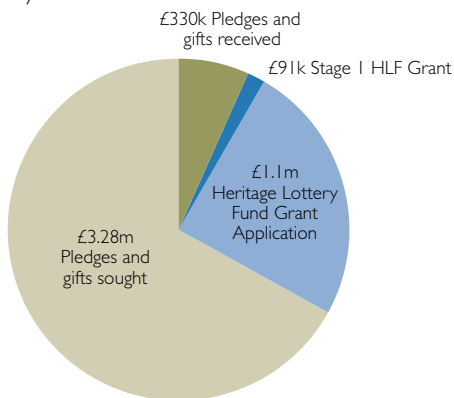
* The building and land was purchased in December 2010 by the French Hospital using a secured loan from Lloyds TSB for £1.2 million. Unrestricted funds will be prioritised to cover the matched funding required for any Heritage Lottery Fund grant.

The target financially

The total target for the campaign is approximately £5 million. Already over £330,000 has been received in pledges and cash; a sum which includes £250,000 from the French Hospital itself. In addition a Stage I grant of approximately £91,000 has been received from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

A breakdown of the projects and their costs

Funds will be sought from those of Huguenot descent and others interested in the history of the Huguenots and their immigration into the United Kingdom, as well as those specifically interested in the welfare of the elderly.



Funds are being sought from:

- Individuals
- Businesses
- Grant-making Trusts and Foundations
- Grant-making organisations, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund which has approved a Stage I development grant of approximately £91,000. A further application for £1.1 million is being made.

A background profile of the French Hospital

The French Hospital, known by generations of residents as La Providence, was founded in London in 1718 as a charity, offering sanctuary to poor French Protestants or Huguenots as they are known. It has had several subsequent locations and currently maintains 59 self-contained, sheltered flats in the ancient Roman City of Rochester in Kent. On the same site, it owns a highly regarded collection of paintings, engravings, furniture, silverware, clocks, books, archival records and other items illustrating the culture and history of the Huguenots.

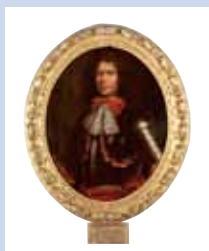
However, the collection is neither readily accessible by the public, nor is it professionally displayed in a museum gallery setting.

Fundraising campaign

The French Hospital is governed by a board of nearly 40 Directors (Trustees) including a Governor, Deputy Governor, Treasurer and Secretary. The Board has begun a fundraising campaign for the recent purchase of 95 High Street, the development of a Huguenot Heritage Centre and additional almshouse sheltered accommodation.

For more information and how to fulfil these aims, please visit www.huguenotheritagecentre.org.uk/ or write to us at the address below.

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Kent ME1 1NB
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<http://www.huguenotheritagecentre.org.uk/>



Jacques de Gastigny, whose £500 bequest in 1708 to a 'pest-house' under the responsibility of a French Protestant committee, led to the formation of the French Hospital ten years later.



Ballot box, mid 18th Century, stained oak with two drawers inscribed 'YEA' and 'NAY'.



Bible. French version, Geneva, c 1588-90. According to family tradition, during a search of the Fasquest family home by the Dragonade this bible was concealed by being baked in a loaf of bread. The family lived on Drome. The title page has been removed to protect the identity of the printer.



Sterling silver tankard makers mark SL in monogram, London 1685/6, presented to the French Hospital in 1893 by Sir William Peek.