

## Choosing Day

Brightlingsea's Deputy, as the Mayor of Sandwich's representative in this Liberty, is annually charged truly to obey and execute all lawful commandments from him. The Deputy's Choosing takes place each year on the first Monday in December at All Saints Church, Brightlingsea. At 11am, as the bells stop tolling and a procession of Cinque Port dignitaries arrive in church, a short religious service begins.

This is followed by a ceremony for the election of the Deputy and the Recognition of New Inhabitants who, on swearing an oath of loyalty to the Deputy, are declared 'Recognised Inhabitants'. Residence in Brightlingsea for a year and a day is the New Inhabitants only necessary qualification and those of Brightlingsea birth or those who 'had the good sense to have married a Brightlingsea girl' are given their Freedom without payment. 'Foreigners' are fined eleven pennies (that's 11d old money) for the privilege. Other monies paid to the Treasurer during the ceremony are four shillings (that's 4/- old money) each from six Assistants and the Deputy. An item of expenditure during the Deputy's reign is that of the town's payment of ten shillings (that's 10/- old money) in lieu of Ship Service, previously supplied by the men of Brightlingsea. This payment has become known as ship-money and is presented to the Mayor of Sandwich during the Deputy's visit to the Mother Port at the time of his Confirmation of Office.

Choosing Day in the Ringing Room at All Saints Church on 5 December 1927. The number of men present became so large that the proceedings were transferred to the green immediately before the Lych-gate. From around this time, subsequent Choosing Day ceremonies were held within the body of the church.

A W Norfolk being elected Deputy for 1927/28. Dr Edward Percival Dicken, Keeper of the Records is seen reading the minutes, with treasurer Harry Chamberlain on his left. In the chair is the retiring Deputy Charles Brasted, with the senior Assistant Reverend F A Grosvenor Smyth on his right. It was on this occasion that the Cinque Port Liberty Sports Shield was first presented for annual competition between local schools.