

## KEELMEN

Keelmen were hired by "fitters" or "hostmen" on a yearly bond. The bond was the same as a contract would be today. The fitters were officially members of the company of "Hostmen". They owned the keels and they showed little sympathy for the keelmen. At any one time there were about 350 keelmen working for fitters and each keelman had other keelmen working on his boat.

Keelmen needed to develop incredible muscular strength and they had to live by a certain set of rules before they could call themselves a keel man.

The keelmen took a very serious view of anybody who broke their rules and anyone found guilty of crimes such as swearing, fighting, breaking the Sabbath, could be fined or even expelled from the Keelmen's Society.

They held meetings at the Jack Tar or the Unicorn pubs which were attended by lots of the people of Sandgate. Weddings and christenings were held at All Saints church.



All Saints' Church