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BIRCHINGTON IN THE 1840s

by Janet Robinson - (part 2)

In 1841 the Charity School was being housed in a barn at the rear of 191 Canterbury Road. Other local children received a basic education in the local Dame Schools. In 1845, land in Park Lane was conveyed from John Powell of Quex Park to the Vicar and Churchwardens for the building of a National School, which was opened in 1849.



Park Lane School 1950 c. demolished 1972

Thomas Pointer's memoirs tell of his schooling. "And now I must pass on to my schooldays. The first school I went to was kept by an old lady by the name of Darby, the widow of a smuggler, who lived in a cottage at the west end of the churchyard, and used to take in young children to keep them out of their mothers' way for a few hours. She could not learn them much for she did not now much herself. And then when I was old enough to learn to spell and read and write I went to a house, no.2 Brunswick Row, where a coastguard lived, by the name of Davis, whose wife kept a school, and there I learnt to read and write, and I soon made progress. I stayed there until I was old enough to go to the Village School. The master's name was Thomas Sidders. His wife and daughter used to teach the girls, and here I remained until I left school. My parents paid 6d per week for me until there was a vacancy for me in the Charity School, which was in the same building and conducted by the same master, who received his salary from the trustees of the late Ann Gertruy Crispe of Quex Park, who left in her will provision for twelve boys and girls to be educated free for three years and each one



to receive a bible when they left school. I do not seem to remember if I stayed the whole three years, at all events I did not get the bible."

In September 1848, a property auction was held in Birchington, which included the following: -

A good substantial and well-accustomed Public House, called "The New Inn", with stables and other outbuildings used therewith, now in the occupation of Mr. Augustus Pointer, as under-tenant to Mr. Cramp, brewer, of Ramsgate. The tenants are under notice to quit at Michaelmas next.

It is believed that a licensed property has stood on this site since the late 1600s. It was the only inn around the Square with adequate stabling for a good number of horses. In the mid 1800s, a new frontage with a raised parapet was added. The building has changed its name many times over the years, and a few years ago it closed as an inn and was converted into flats and Strawberry Fields Coffee Shop.

A local hobby seems to have been the shooting or trapping of rare birds, a newspaper article of February 1848 states that a rough-legged buzzard had been shot in St. Nicholas marshes and a fine specimen of the Bohemian Natwing has been shot at Margate and two others at Birchington.



*Birchington
All Saints
Church
and
Canterbury Rd
c. 1840*

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BIRCHINGTON'S POPULATION 1891 - 1961

Notes gathered by Alfred T Walker – Parish Archivist

Population Statistics

Date given on 3rd May, 1965

Date of Census for Birchington

1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1951	1961
1,822	2,128	2,275	3,503	3,756	5,081	6,362

Date of Census for Acol

1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1951	1961
365	225	247	270	312	204	200

Note: In the 1951 and 1961 Census Reports, Birchington is described as a Ward, and Acol as a Civil Parish. The 1951 Census also gives Birchington with Acol (Ecclesiastical Parish) 5,346.

Birchington's Population

From "The Parish Chest" by W. E. Tate, 1946, published by Cambridge University.

"It is clear however that such questions as the stability or migration of population, the size of families, and the influence of thereon of periods of economic depression, occupations, mortality statistics, the effects of inbreeding, and the extent to which the population has been made up of families which may fairly be styled hereditary paupers, can be studied only by use of the registers".

No reliable statistics until the decennial censuses from 1801 onwards.

Dr. Cox's method, a great favourite and apparently as reliable as any, total the Baptisms for ten consecutive years, strike a yearly average and multiply by thirty. This is said to give an estimate generally within 10 per cent either way of the truth.

A more modern method, based on the fact pointed out by Dr. Brownlee in "Public Health" Vol. XXIX July 1916, that throughout the 17th century and the early years of the 18th the death rate was fairly constant at about 32 per 1000, or roughly one in thirty-one, is to multiply the mean annual number of deaths by thirty-one.

It is less safe to attempt to base calculations upon the marriage entries.

Possible population after allowing a deduction for Acol, or Woodchurch. Where number of houses known as in 1565 have allowed 5 persons per house. I estimate that until 1800 Acol had a population of no more than 200 or less. (These figures probably too high up to 1801 – probably much less).

Circa	Population		
1540	250		
1550	250		
1560	unknown		
1565	unknown	were	42 houses
1570	250		
1580	300		
1590	300		
1600	400		
1610	375		
1620	450		
1630	475		
1640	500	(1637 Plague year	64 deaths)
1650	500		
1660	450		
1670	400	(see Chimney Tax A/C 1673-4)	
		between 300 to 400 population	70 houses
1680	375		
1690	300		
1701	250		
1710	275		
1720	300		
1730	250		
1740	250		
1750	200		
1760	250		
1770	350		
1780	375		
1790	400		
1800	450		
1801	537 (Census)	100 houses	
1811	614	117 houses	
1821	700 plus	121 houses	
1831	843	150 houses	
1841	874	167 houses	
1851	885	181 houses	
1861	813	(Note - Railway came 1863)	
1871	1152		
1881	1393		
1891	1822		
1901	2128	447 houses	
1911	2275		
1921	3503		
Woodchurch / Acol (Ville) – Acreage for the parish 1,434			
Circa	Population	Circa	Population
1801	145	1871	263
1811	163	1881	297
1821	212	1891	365
1831	292	1901	341
1841	233	1911	247 (estimated)
1851	254	1921	270 (estimated)
1861	260		



Seasons Greetings

The Birchington Heritage Trust Committee wish our readership a Merry Christmas and healthy and a prosperous New Year.

We look forward to seeing you when visiting our Museum or during any of our events which will be held in 2018. Better still, bring along a friend as well, which will help spread the word about all our volunteers' hard work.

The pantomime season will soon be upon us. They are purely an English tradition dating back to the 1800s and are a musical drama/fairy tale with comedy, double entendres and lots of audience participation, performed over Christmas and the New Year.

Loved by children and indeed adults alike, the format is essentially the same whatever the pantomime. There will be a Principal Boy played by a girl and a Dame played by a man. There will be a boy/girl romance together with a Wicked Stepmother/Witch and a Fairy Godmother to ensure a happy ending.

Many famous stars have played in pantomime from Cilla Black as the Principal Boy in 'Jack & the Beanstalk' to Les Dawson as the Dame in 'Dick Whittington'. Even our own Queen (then Princess Elizabeth) and Princess Margaret performed in 'Aladdin' at Windsor Castle in 1943.



HM The Queen & Princess Margaret

All Saints Guild of Players was formed in 1936 in Church House by the Vicar of All Saints, the Rev Granville Sharp together with his churchwardens, the main aim being the production of religious drama in Church House. In 1945 The Guild performed the first pantomime 'Cinderella' with the Vicar playing the Dame. In 1964 All Saints was dropped from the name, since then they have been Birchington Guild of Players.



Guild of Players Aladdin Panto c. 1955



Guild of Players Aladdin Panto c. 1965

Amongst the pantomimes the Guild have put on over the years have been 'Babes in the Wood' (1947 & 1956), 'Sinbad the Sailor' (1957), 'Dick Whittington' (1959), 'Robinson Crusoe' (1949 & 1960) and many others.

In 1971 the Guild took their pantomime to Margate Winter Gardens and played to packed houses every Christmas for the next 13 years, in such productions as 'Puss in Boots' (1975), 'Sleeping Beauty' (1976) and 'Red Riding Hood' (1962 & 1978) and have produced well over 70 pantomimes.



Guild of Players 'Jack & the Beanstalk' - 1969

The Guild's pantomime tradition continues today with 'Aladdin' being their production this coming February 2018 in the Village Centre.



Guild of Players Dick Whittington c.1961

Janet Denyer

Thursday 23rd November 2017**Talk by Imogen Corrigan
'The Goose is Getting Fat!'**

Talk by Imogen Corrigan on 'The Goose is Getting Fat!' on the history of Christmas traditions, what's behind the wassail and why do we kiss under the Mistletoe?

Imogen lectures extensively on Anglo-Saxon and Medieval History so we look forward to a most interesting evening.

After the talk you are invited to socialize and enjoy a free glass of wine/fruit juice and a mince pie.

Entry is free to members.
Visitors are welcome,
a donation will be appreciated.

On sale will be:-

Our Birchington Calendar £5,
Birchington local history books and
Birchington pictures, some of which are by
local artist, Charlie Smart.
Any of these will make an
ideal Christmas gift.

Events for 2018

- 22nd March Talk on 'A Stroll Down Alpha Road'
by Janet & John Robinson
Talk on 'The Shelters'
by Birchington Sea-shelters
& Amenities Group
- 26th April 'Quiz Night' with Ann & Doug Holmes
- 31st May AGM + Short Talks
'Pugilism in Birchington' - Colin Winstone
'Washed Up Birchington' - Luke Warburton
- 28th June Talk on 'Earlier Village Centres'
by Jennie Burgess
Talk on 'The Present Village Centre'
by Neville Hudson
- 26th July Horse Racing
- 27th September Talk on 'Doodlebugs & Rockets'
by Bob Ogley
- 25th October 'Quiz Night'
with Ann & Doug Holmes
- 29th November Talk on 'Bover on the Hover'
by Brian Laverick Smith

**7.00 for 7.30pm at
The Centre, Birchington.
The Bar will be available**

BHT Talks and Activities**Event 21st September 2017**

We had a very interesting talk from Susan Johnson of Quex relating to the female line of the Powell Cottons from the 18th century and the influence they had on the development of the Quex Estate.

With almost 60 people attending on 21st September it shows how much the people of Birchington still value Quex and this is in no small way due to the continuing enthusiasm of Susan.

Birchington's Alphabet

DOG ACRE - This small green at the bottom of Station Road belonged to the church and its free use was part of the wages of the dog whipper. At a time when dogs used to attend church with their masters, sitting under their seats, the whipper was employed to round up and eject any misbehaving dog, and any strays in the churchyard. He had use of the land for cultivating or grazing animals.

EAST END FARM - East End Farm stood on the corner of Epple Road and Canterbury Road. The land belonging to the farm lay on both sides of the road, and included East End Villas, and land now occupied by Anne Close, Edward Drive and Marilyn Crescent, as well as part of what became Spurgeon's Homes. It was bought by Thanet Council in the late 1960s when they planned to make a dual carriageway through the village. The old farmhouse was demolished but the road plan was cancelled and the area left derelict for many years before development.

ELLIFF'S HOUSE - 296-298 Canterbury Road are a pair of houses in a dip just past Mill Lane and the advertising boards. They stand on the site of an old lime kiln. They were built in Flemish bond sometime between 1872 and 1896. In the 1980s number 296 was enlarged by adding a garage and upper storey.

EPPLE BAY - This seems to be a Saxon name and on early maps is written as Epald Bay. We have records of coal being landed here by barge in 1829 at a landing stage. A coastguard station stood at the bay for many years, the officers house, which stands at the bottom of Epple Road, was built in 1880. In the early 1800s the bay was a popular spot for the illegal sport of bare knuckle fighting.

EPPLE ROAD - The small terrace of houses in Epple Road were built in 1848 with brick on the side facing the roadway and flint to the rear and ends. The Canterbury Road end of the road was part of East End Farm.

FIRST HOUSES - The terrace that became known as 'The First Houses' stands at the sea end of Minnis Road, on the eastern side, and were built at the end of the 1800s. Today they are numbered 152-158. They were four separate properties built for the express purpose of allowing the owners or occupiers to let out rooms to visitors who came to 'take the waters' at Minnis Bay. They have elegant balconies set to catch the afternoon sunshine and to watch the sunsets over Reculver and the bay.

Janet Robinson