

LORD MAYOR'S DAY CARNIVAL AT BIRCHINGTON NOVEMBER 11TH 1895

The annual carnivals held at Birchington in honour of the Lord Mayor's day – although celebrated for convenience on Monday instead of Saturday last – was, without doubt, the biggest concern yet, turned out by the Birchington "Original" Carnival Society. It is estimated that there were no less than 50 horses in the procession – besides donkeys.

The Society can boast among its patrons the name of the local M.P., as well as most of the gentfolk of the neighbourhood, and therefore considers itself an institution of no mean order. An immense number of visitors were attracted to the village on Monday evening; the scene was altogether a very animated one, and by the last down train to Margate some 400 or more passengers were booked from Birchington Station, the carriages being most uncomfortably packed.

The procession was a very lengthy affair and contained some items both amusing and interesting. It was headed by half a dozen mounted "cow-boys," who were looked after by a smart Gordon Highlander (who seemed to possess an unlimited supply of fireworks), and this individual – no less a personage than "the chairman" – was honoured by the attendance of the **village brass band** as a bodyguard; it may be at once said that **Mr. Wallis' band** did good service throughout the carnival. Among the prominent features of the turn out must be mentioned **the local Fire Engine and Brigade**, the manual being lavishly decorated for the occasion with flowers (the work of Mr. E. Knott). The Brigade were accompanied by the "Dark Town Brigade," a novelty from Ramsgate, made up of a model engine and brigade in old fashioned fireman's garb. During the tour round the village this item of the procession created much amusement by halting in front of the New Inn, and after fixing a ladder and lifeline, ascending to the roof of the house and rescuing a dummy man who had mysteriously found his way to this elevated position. (It might be here mentioned in parenthesis that the two brigades were afterwards sumptuously entertained by the hostess to a cold spread, but whether this was in recognition of the aforesaid heroic deed, did not transpire.)

Three prizes were offered by the committee to stimulate the inventive genius of the villagers, in response to which there was some keen competition, which resulted in awarding the first prize to Mr. J. Johncock for his fully-manned – if that term may be applied to sailors of three years of age and upwards – model of Lord Dunraven's yacht "Valkyrie III"; this was a clever get-up and attracted much attention. The second prize was awarded to Mr. G. Pointer, jun., and party, for their bricklayers' representation; on this trolley several of the craft were busy building a chimney, and by the time the "show" had reached its rendezvous the chimney pot was duly planted, the smoke from which indicated that the newly erected shaft had been put into immediate use. Mr. Warner secured third prize for his plough show – a couple of these indispensable implements being drawn through the village placarded, "Funeral, 9.30, all invited" (an allusion, the uninitiated were informed, to the cessation of the **annual ploughing match**).

Another attractive item was a realistic representation of the steam tug "Aid" bearing the "Bradford" lifeboat to sea – an ingenious invention of Mr. Tritton, which was brought out by the committee. Other features included Mr. Johncock's Britannia car gaily adorned with banners; a capital model of the SS. "Marguerite" on a tricycle (the work of Mr. Hutchings); an "harmonic meeting" (consisting of five minstrels in working order, seated in a comfortable landau); a numerous company of lady cyclists in various costumes riding the **Birchington "Seabreeze"**, marshalled with attentive gallantry by Mr. G. Cousins in the character of "Farmer Hayseed"; a strange get-up (which, however, was well patronized) was that of a public house

bar, complete with barrel, pump, beer and barman (Mr. Fright being entrusted with the privilege of dispensing gratuitously the contents of an 18 gallon cask, given by Messrs. Thomson and Wotton) to the first thirsty comers. The really pretty "Lord Mayor's" coach was again lent by Mr. Raydon for the carnival, and upon the arrival of the procession in the Square the usual function of electing the "Mayor of Birchington" was gone through, Mr. Wing being re-elected to the office amid the plaudits of the "aldermen, councillors, and burgesses" there assembled. An immense inscription was put up on the Powell Arms expressing "thanks to our subscribers." And after the carnivalists had amused themselves to their hearts' content, the affair broke up without mishap.