

BIRCHINGTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & CARNIVAL

Birchington Chamber of Commerce was formed in 1926. In those days the adult population of Birchington was under 3,000 and the number of traders about a third of the present number. It appears to have been formed when Birchington Improvement Co: was closing down; they had been responsible for maintaining Minnis Bay.

Undoubtedly the highlights of the Chamber's history were the two Carnivals held in the early 1930s in successive years. These were one-day events yielding £800 each time, raised in aid of Margate General Hospital.

As the years have gone by, the number of traders has increased threefold, but their response to local needs has slowly decreased. The cost of putting on such events has rocketed, mainly due to the huge sums needed for insurance cover nowadays. Insurance for the Carnival last year cost £1109 and we now need to add Thanet Council's new levy for use of our own open spaces, which may cost about £350 next year.

It is worth noting that the Marching Bands in our Carnival procession cost (on average) £250 per band. This year it is anticipated that 3 bands will be in the procession on Carnival Day, **SATURDAY 27th AUGUST 2005**, starting from **Minnis Bay Parade** at **3 pm** and following the usual route.

Sadly, the public have also been less supportive in latter years. Last year's Carnival Day collections only amounted to £529 (2004 was £643), so there was no money left over for the local good causes who want our help. The population of Birchington is now in the region of 18,000 and we need your support to be able to continue with the Carnival. We will have to decide whether it remains in its present format or rethink what our village requires - should it be an annual or a bi-annual event. Feedback from our residents is definitely needed! Please put your 'thinking-caps' on - and reply with your suggestions and any assistance to:-

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