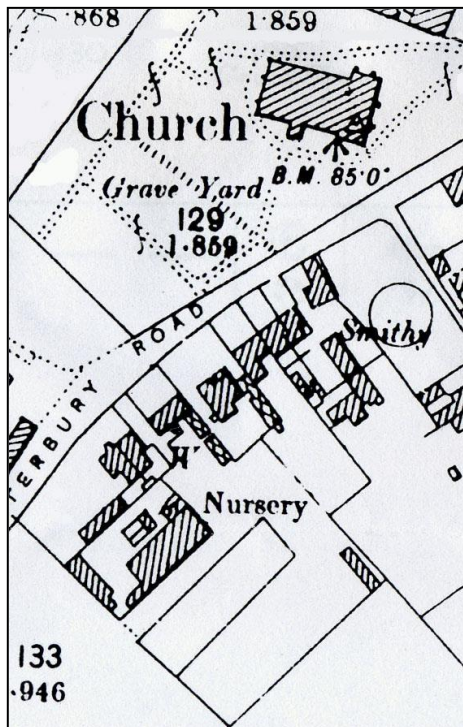


'Gasworks' in Gas Alley, Birchington

Keble's Gazette – 1887



“A Dangerous Spot –

“We have been asked to draw attention to the dangerous condition of the site of the old **gas works** at Birchington, which have not been used for some time. The ruins of the old gasometer are at present the resort of all the juveniles of the village, who nightly amuse themselves by climbing up the ironwork surrounding the tank, which contains about six feet of water and is only protected by iron bars about six feet apart. There is also a danger of young children tumbling into the water on the outside of the tank. There is not even a gate to keep the children out of the premises, and it is to be hoped, in diffidence to the feelings of the neighbouring tenants, some protection will be provided at once rather than wait until an accident occurs.”

GAS WORKS in BIRCHINGTON

From Keble's Gazette of 25th February 1882

“A Public Meeting of the inhabitants of Birchington is to be held at the Westcliff Hotel (later renamed The Bungalow Hotel) to take into consideration the removal of the Gas Works, to the proposed site near the Birchington Railway Station.”

“It was eventually decided to oppose the move.”

Comment in 2014

The 'gasworks' at Birchington is a misnomer, as there was only ever a gasholder on the site. The gas was generated at the 'Westgate and Birchington Gasworks' situated on the south side of Westgate. It was then piped to Birchington's small gasholder.. The funding for this venture was provided by Arthur Rayden in 1885, a London stockbroker who lived in Minnis Bay. He also provided the Exhibition Building in the Dip at Minnis Bay in 1885, which he built to help raise much needed funds to reduce the mortgage on The Institute, bought in 1878 (our first Village Centre). However, he had also invested heavily in farmland in the Bay, which he was trying to sell in large plots, for the building of terraces, hotels, a church and a pier, a development to vie with the new town of Westgate.

It is not known when the gasholder was installed, nor exactly when it was decommissioned.

Jennie Burgess, Trust Archivist