

GEORGE COUSINS

George Cousins came to Birchington in about 1880 as a builder and among other properties, he erected the five large houses at the top of Minnis Road with 'observatories' on the top. He lived in the first one, which has the tiled roof over the observatory. He then branched out into designing a lady's bicycle, with the dropped cross bar and the raised handlebars. His factory was called the Sea Breezes Cycle Factory, which now houses the western half of Christie's Wine Bar.

Unfortunately he didn't get the patent for his Lady's bicycle design properly registered and it was quickly taken up by other, sharper competitors. So he then added the eastern end onto his factory building and started an estate agents, because he realised that with the arrival of the railway, land and properties were going to be big business from then onwards. This proved correct and his venture went from strength to strength. He became a Parish Councilor when the first Birchington Parish Council was first formed in 1898 and became their first chairman that year. He held this position for the next ten years, until his death on Aug 19th 1908 aged 64, while still in office. George was also an excellent photographer - we have two very good examples of his work.

He and his wife Sarah had a son, George Sebastian (died 1935) who married Florence (died 1955).

We have a photo of him in his three-wheeled vehicle with his wife and mechanic (George Walker)