

# **BIRCHINGTON HERITAGE TRUST**

This article written in 2013 for the Birchington Parish Council booklet  
Jennie Burgess

The initial idea for the group came in 2000 from Derek Raven after Jennie Burgess put on a display in Birchington Library. A public meeting was called and was attended by 150 interested people. At the following meeting, four Trustees: Derek Raven, Jennie Burgess, Neville Hudson and Rosalynde Cossey were chosen and a Committee was formed. Birchington Heritage Trust, as it became known, was created in May 2002.

Its aims were, and still are: "to investigate, document and publicise Birchington's past and to preserve what is best about it for the future." It was to be run by the residents of the village, although others were welcome to the four public meetings to be held each year. There were also to be social events and a newsletter, the first of which appeared in August, 2002, edited by Pat Orpwood, whilst Ted Tranter designed the logo.

The Social Committee organised dances, quiz nights and musical events, while there were a number of exhibitions in the burley Gallery, including one to commemorate the Coronation, held in 2003, and others, including "Birchington by the Sea" and "The Victorians", as well as a variety of talks on matters to do with Birchington such as "The Tower Bungalows" and "Rossetti". Walks were undertaken around Birchington and booklets for them produced. Martin's (now McColl's) allowed the trust to display exhibitions in their side window and these proved very successful right up to this year (2013). After three years of fundraising the Museum opened in 2005 in Room 4 of the Village Centre.

It began with Jennie's collection, based partly on her research for her M.A. and is has developed greatly over the last few years. It is now open Monday, Thursday and Saturday mornings from 9.30 until 12.30.

BHT's first publication, written by Derek Hart and edited by Jennie Burgess, came out in 2004 and has now had a second edition published. Meanwhile, Jennie has produced two volumes of Kaleidoscope with fascinating glimpses of Birchington's past, along with several other booklets.

The sale of publications and prints, many donated by Charlie Smart, has helped raise the money needed to run the Museum, as have the Social events. Membership has remained fairly constant at about 250, but they would be delighted to have new members. Membership is currently £7.50 for a single person and £12.50 for a couple.