

VERA HOLTON

In a letter to the local free paper, Birchington Post, of 26 May 1995, Vera asked for a correction to be noted. The name of the road Holton Close had been misnamed in a previous article as 'Norton Close'. She then went on:

'This close is named after the Holton family, hairdressers in Station Road from 1904 until 1981. Victor Holton attended to the hair of Lord Carson and Sir Charles Gill.

Also included in the clientele were Ivor Novello, Haddon Chambers, Gladys Cooper, Betty Balfour, Frederick Lonsdale and Jack Warner. Last, but not least, was Sidney Fox, the Margate murderer, who often walked along the coastal road to Birchington.'

Lord Carson – a lawyer, who lived at Cleve. Son, Edward – an MP

Sir Charles Gill –

Ivor Novello – 1893-1951, Welsh composer, playwright & actor 'Keep the home fires burning', film star in 1920's-1930's, in Hitchcock's 'The Lodger' 1920, Composed 'The Dancing Years' 1930, 'Perchance to Dream' 1945, 'Lilac-time' c. 1948.

In a note Vera had written "Ivor Novello used to come into my family's Barber's shop for a shave each morning, while he was staying at the Beresford Hotel in the 1920s. He was always very grumpy and moody at this hour of the day and not all like the vivacious stage artist that people saw of an evening or in the cinema!

Charles Haddon Chambers – 1860-1921, Australian playwright, born in New South Wales, settled in England in 1882. His plays included 'One of them' 1886, 'The Open Gate' 1887, also 'Captain Swift', 'The Tyranny of Tears' and 'the Impossible Woman'.

Gladys Cooper – 1889-1971, a 'post card' beauty at the turn of the century, musical comedy actress and singer, 'Importance of Being Ernest', married Herbert Buckmaster (children Joan and John), then Sir Neville Pearson (child Sally, who married Robert Hardy)

Betty Balfour – born c. 1900, was on the stage by the age of 12 and in films by 1920 – worked at Elstree Studios, in a contest in 1924, she won the 'Most Popular Actress' and the 'Best Actress' Awards. She was 5' 2" with golden hair and blue eyes.

Frederick Lonsdale – 1881-1954, playwright and librettist – wrote the libretto for 'Maid of the Mountains'. He was the father of Angela Fox, the daughter of Mrs Worthington. Dr and Mrs Worthington lived at 199 Canterbury Road, Birchington, where Freddie was a frequent visitor. Edward Fox is his grandson and looks uncannily like his grandfather.

Jack Warner – 1890-1981, Film, radio and Television star – 'The Blue Lamp', 'Meet the Huggetts', 'Dixon of Dock Green' (ran for 21 years ending in December 1976, by which time Jack was 80!), OBE in 1965, Autobiography, 'Jack of All Trades' 1975.

Sidney Fox – On 29th October 1929 he murdered his mother at the Hotel Metropol in Margate, by asphyxiating her and then setting fire to her room, hoping it would look like an accident. Her body was exhumed from Great Fransham, Norfolk, on Nov. 9th, discovering she had not inhaled any smoke. He was hanged on Tuesday, 8th April 1930.