



Preserving the past for the future

Newsletter

Winter 2022
Issue 75

www.birchingtonheritage.org.uk & on Facebook Charity No. 1099250

Items for the Newsletter are always welcome. If you have something of interest, maybe childhood memories of Birchington, the school or teachers, or when you first came to live here, things you like about the area, things you don't perhaps. Items can be emailed to me, keep any photos to accompany your article separate from the written text. If you are not online, no problem just leave the items at the museum with the volunteers on duty for my attention. *John Robinson.*

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<u>Future Events</u>	Thursday 24th February 2022	'Victorian Holidaymaking' Felicity Stafford
	Thursday 31st March 2022	'Quiz Night' Doug & Ann Holmes
	Thursday 28th April 2022	'Beyond the Call' John Drewry

THEN & NOW Canterbury Road



This idyllic scene, (top left) shows a country lane leading to All Saints Parish Church; the village pond is on the right with a couple of locals resting on the rustic fence. A top hatted gent, (could it be the local doctor on his rounds?) is in a pony and trap. It was photographed around 1882. That same road today is Canterbury Road, part of the A28 a major route into town.

The road was widened in the mid 1930s, very little in the way of mechanical aids was used, picks and shovels was the order of the day. No special working apparel either, just flat caps, and jackets. *John Robinson*

Richard K. Roads of Chobham, Surrey has kindly donated Deeds and Documents for our Archives relating to 67 Station Road, Birchington. They date from 1904 when they were in the name of the Rev. and Mrs Chancellor, then transferred to G.H. Pettman.. In 1925 there is a Deed in the name of F.N. Holton and by 1935 in the names of Mr and Miss V. Holton.



The business was established by F.N. Holton as a tobacconist, and sweet shop, with a hairdressers at the back, which was later run by his son Victor. His daughter Vera ran the shop. The connection to Richard Roads, born in 1937, is that Vera was his 'Aunt', and he spent holidays in the flat above the shop. He remembers the troops being in the village. Later these premises formed part of S.G. Court, Chemist, and remains so today.

Vera kept a diary from 1940 saying the business was nearly 'broke' as families were being evacuated, and men were away in the services. Few traders remained and supplies were very scarce. At that time a haircut was 8d and a shave 4d. When the troops arrived cigarettes were in demand as were haircuts, so Victor decided to charge them at a reduced rate of 6d for a haircut and 3d for a shave.

The photo shows the Holton family with Vera Holton on the right, taken to celebrate 'Empire Day'.

Road Bridge: Station Approach / Lyell Road

John Robinson

The brick built hump bridge was ready for use around 1870, just a few years after the direct railway line from London was completed in 1863. Even back then locals voiced their view that the width was 'too narrow'.

The Parish Council raised the issue with KCC who in turn held negotiations with the railway company, but talks led to stalemate in 1898. In 2006 the access roads to the bridge improved slightly to aid the view of traffic ahead, but the width remains the same as it was in 1870.

Those on foot had to cross the narrow bridge with the traffic, which was not an ideal situation. Although a footbridge was talked about for decades, it was not until December 1968 that Cllr. Dawson told residents that a footbridge would be in position within six months. In actual fact the footbridge was not opened until May 1971, a hundred years after the building of the road bridge.



The photograph was taken in 1966, five years before the footbridge was belatedly added. The trees shown on the right had to be removed to make room for the footbridge. Others have replaced them since, which include two birch trees.

The construction of the steel footbridge was put out to tender, a £4000 offer was awarded to South Coast Welders Ltd., for the supply and erection on prepared foundations. The footbridge has now been there for 50 years.

CRISPE PARK

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Crispe Park is located on the north side of Canterbury Road, opposite the Birch Hill Estate. The land it occupies was once part of the Birchington Hall estate, on the opposite side of the road. This view, painted in 1800, shows the house, viewed from the parkland. The building is thought to date from about 1560. The Friend family held the house and land for several generations, and later the Gray family lived there.

In 1921 Birchington Hall and its estate were purchased by Spurgeon's Orphanage. The old house was used as a Baby Home from about 1954 until 1966, when a new purpose-built home was opened. This second picture, dated 1966, shows the modernised house, with the land across the road being used as farm land.



The old Hall was demolished in 1970, and when the Spurgeon's Homes closed in 1978, the main parcel of land was sold to Sterling Homes, and developed into housing. The field on the north side of the road was sold separately to Thanet District Council, and after some debate it was agreed to designate it as open parkland for Birchington. The Parish Council organised the fitting out of the area, and ran a competition to decide on a name for the new park. The winner was a local school child, who came up with the name 'Crispe Park'. Seeing that the land had never had any connection with the Crispe family of Quex Park, it might have been more appropriate to have named it 'Friend's Park' or Gray Park, or even 'Spurgeon's Park', in honour of its history.

The new park was opened on the 18th May 1985 at 3pm. The Birchington Silver Band provided musical entertainment, and there was a display of maypole dancing by local school children. Margate Army Cadets gave a drill demonstration, and members of Birchington Art Group displayed a collection of their work. A bronze commemoration plaque was unveiled, and this is still in place, towards the edge of the parkland, on the Canterbury Road side.



CRISPE PARK

This Park was opened by

The Chairman of Thanet District Council

Councillor B.R. White B.E.M.

on the 18th May 1985.

These grounds were acquired by

the Thanet District Council for use as parkland.

The trees, shrubs, plants, park furniture and equipment

were made possible by generous donations

from residents, local associations, and business organisations of Birchington.

The North side of Crispe Park, where it backs on to Neame Road and the top of Wilbrough Road, includes the Neame Woods, named after an important land owner and farmer in this part of the village, and is one of the few wooded areas left in Thanet.



If you have never visited this park, do go and have a look. It is well kept by the Parish Council, with several benches, and a good play area for the children, plus a couple of adult keep-fit pieces of apparatus. Entrances are on Canterbury Road, Neame Road, and Wilbrough Road.

Information mainly from articles by Jennie Burgess. Pictures from BHT picture gallery, and John Robinson. Compiled by Janet Robinson.

1936 PROPERTY OWNERS

One of our members, James Brazier, has kindly donated a collection of 48 property owners' registration cards to the museum. These cards were sent to property owners in March 1936, for them to fill in the details of any houses, shops, etc. which they owned in the district. They had to enter the type of building, its address, if they owned other property in the same area, then sign it and give their home address.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT		Series.....
REGISTRATION OF OWNERS.		Rec'd 31.3.36
I am the Owner(s) of the undermentioned We are Property and request you to Register My/Our Names in that respect:		Ackn'd 31.3.36
		Office Use Only.
Nature of Property	<i>Church House</i>	
Situation	<i>Canterbury Rd. Birchington</i>	
Have you other Property within Margate Planning Area No. 2?	<i>Parochial Church Council (Signed) P. Cockburn P. Cockburn (Address) Birchington from sea.</i>	
(If so, please enter particulars on additional Cards).	<i>The sea Apple Bay Road (Date) Birchington</i>	
30 MAR 1936		

The cards make interesting reading. The sample shown here was completed by Mr Cockburn, the Hon. Sec. of the Parochial Church Council, and lists the property as Church House, Canterbury Road. He also filled in another card for the Church for a part share of the allotments in Canterbury Road.

Mr. Rodwell, secretary for the Trustees of Stockwell Orphanage, Clapham Road, London, listed Spurgeon's Seaside Home, Birchington Hall, and the Homestead Farm adjoining, also the meadow opposite being part of Homestead farm (see previous article).

Horse Shoe Cottage, Canterbury Road, is listed as a dwelling house owned and occupied by C. Kennett, who also owned Anvil Villa, and a forge and yard in Gas Lane.

R. Partridge gave his main address as being in Bromley, Kent, but also had a home, 'Blink Bonnie', in Minnis Road, where he also owned another three dwelling houses, six lock-up shops, and builders' workshops with flats over.

The completed cards had to be returned to the Town Clerk in Grosvenor Place, Margate.

The registration cards we have been given mainly cover Canterbury Road, Cross Road, and Apple Bay Road, and a few odd cards from other roads. If you live in any of these areas it might be interesting to check if we have anything for your address. *Thank you, James, for your donation*