



BIRCHINGTON HERITAGE TRUST

Preserving the past for the future

Newsletter

Spring 2024
Issue 84

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

Welcome to the Spring 2024 edition of the Trust's Newsletter. See Noticeboard for headline news.

NOTICEBOARD

Forthcoming Events

- Thursday 30 May 2024 - Celebrating 50 years: The story of "The Centre" – Neville Hudson
 - Thursday 27 June 2024 - The Trust's AGM. Notice is on page 4 of this Newsletter
- Both events will be at The Centre, Alpha Road. Doors open at 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm start
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Our collection and archives

Colin Bridge and Bob Hinge have begun the task of reviewing our archives and weeding out any duplicates and items that we no longer need to retain. A record of the saved items will then be compiled before it can be digitised.

We have also started working through and recording our plans, drawings and maps. A donated replacement "plan chest" will make it easier to find these items in future.

Out and about

The "*Leisure Showcase*" at The Centre on 27 April was a great success. The Trust's stand attracted much interest and sales generated over £100. Thanks go to the Birchington Leisure Forum for organising such a successful event.

Subscriptions

A reminder that annual subscriptions were due on 1 May. £10 for single; £15 for two adults at the same address. Payment can be made by card or cash at the Museum or by bank transfer to Lloyds Bank (Sort Code 30-98-90, Account 15393060). Please remember to change your Standing Order if paying by that method. Thanks for your continued support!

In this edition, Alexandra Gilbert reviews the talk given on 29 February whilst Bob Hinge poses the question "Where is the Parish of Birchington?"

On the last page you will find Notice of the Trust's Annual General Meeting on 27 June. Please consider being nominated as a Trustee (see separate form enclosed). If you could spare a few hours a month to volunteer in the Museum or help out at events, please get in touch.

Finally, please remember that you can still opt for a paper copy of the Newsletter to be delivered to you.

Rod Giddins (Editor)

Email: birchingtonhtsec@gmail.com

For membership and general enquiries please email Bob Hinge at birchington.ht@gmail.com

Thanet Archaeological Landscape Mapping Project

Report of a talk given on Thursday 29th February 2024

We were delighted to welcome Victoria Hosegood and Dr Paul Cuming from the Heritage Conservation Team of Kent County Council (KCC) to give us our talk in February. Despite absolutely foul weather our speakers came from Maidstone still arriving with happy faces, and we had a large audience of people who made a special effort to attend.

Paul opened the evening with an introduction about the work of the Heritage Conservation Team, then handed over to Victoria who is carrying out most of the work on the Thanet Archaeological Landscape Mapping Project. This important 3-year project started in March 2023 and is funded by Historic England with contributions from KCC and Thanet District Council.

Victoria took us through all the different types of archaeological information about Thanet that are currently available. Her huge task is to pull all of these sources of information together into a comprehensive compendium. This will then enrich the understanding of the complete archaeological character of the whole district. As so many unresearched archaeological sites lie in Thanet's open areas these are otherwise at risk of being lost, before being identified, by the large developments being approved in the district.

Following the talk, several of the audience asked engaging questions of both speakers, and Paul confirmed that volunteer groups like the Trust are very much in their sights as they know many people in Thanet will have information that they lack, and they want to find out what we know. Similarly, they want to tell as many people as they can about what they are doing so they can be encouraged to be users of the final information, for example in the production of Parish histories. They both asked to return to give us a talk once the project is completed when they can tell us more about our area in detail - a request which was accepted enthusiastically.



Medieval site at Thanet Earth under excavation (taken from Newsletter No. 2)

Since the talk, the second project newsletter (March 2024) has been released and was circulated to Trust Members. This (and the first edition from October 2023) are available on line at <https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/history-and-heritage/thanet-archaeological-landscape-mapping-project> where you can also find out more about the project, or email heritage@kent.gov.uk , or call 03000 41 50 18.

Alexandra Gilbert

Where is the Parish of Birchington?

by Bob Hinge

Ask this question, and you will get slightly different answers depending on whether you ask the PCC (Parochial Church Council) or the Parish Council.

The PCC answer

Until 1871 Birchington was part of the Parish of Monkton; All Saints had a curate who served under the Vicar of Monkton. In 1871, a few years after the coming of the railway when Birchington was growing rapidly, Birchington was set up as a Parish in its own right. Acol was also detached from Monkton, but not having a church of its own, became for church purposes a part of Birchington parish. Acol parish was large, extending from the current village to Woodchurch (where its church was in medieval days) and then, surprisingly, right to the sea at West Bay. If in the 1870's you had taken the main road from Birchington to Margate, then between King Ethelbert school and the golf clubhouse you would have been crossing Acol!

In 1884 the ecclesiastical parish of St Saviour Westgate was set up, incorporating parts of the parishes of Birchington with Acol, Minster and Garlinge. The parish of Birchington with Acol was thus reduced to the borders it still has today.

The Parish Council answer

In 1894 the Isle of Thanet Rural District Council was set up, including all the Thanet Villages, but not the Boroughs of Margate and Ramsgate nor the Urban District of Broadstairs. Birchington, the remaining part of Acol, and Westgate (a new Civil Parish, covering the same area as St Saviour) were all separate parishes in the Rural District.

In 1935 the Isle of Thanet Rural District was abolished. Most of the parishes were taken over by the three towns – Margate gained Northdown and Garlinge as well as Birchington and Westgate. Acol, however, together with Minster, Monkton and St Nicholas joined the Eastry Rural District. Acol was further reduced in this move – the northern edge, including a tongue jutting into Quex Park, was transferred to Margate.

In 1974 local government was completely reorganised, and the three towns and four village parishes were merged into Thanet District. Thanet Councillors were elected by wards – Birchington had two of them – and although they were roughly within the old parish boundary there were some alterations to fit in with housing built since 1894.

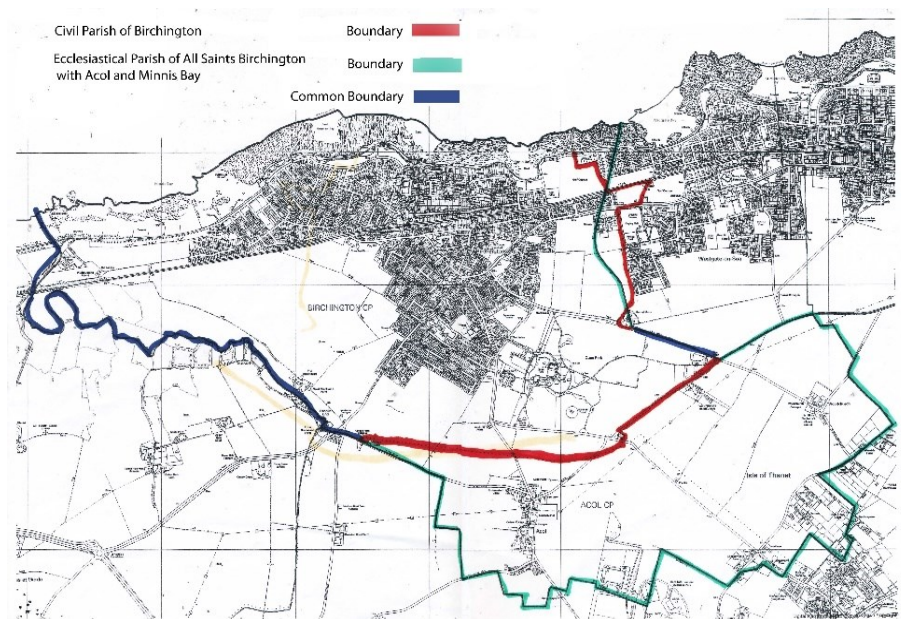
In 1986 Birchington broke away from Margate, and the Civil Parish was set up including the two wards.

So, what's the difference?

See the map overleaf. The main difference is that the ecclesiastical parish includes Acol, which is a separate civil parish under Thanet District Council. Also the eastern boundary is slightly different. For example, the whole of Queen Bertha's Avenue is in the civil parish, but about a third of it is in the ecclesiastical parish of St Saviour. And on Westgate seafront the boundary stone between All Saints and St Saviour's parishes is in front of a house a long way from the end of the line, whereas all the houses east of the golf course are in Westgate civil parish. See the photo overleaf.

Continued over....

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The Stone on a front lawn

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE BIRCHINGTON HERITAGE TRUST

NOTICE IS GIVEN that the 2024 AGM will be held at The Centre, Alpha Road, Birchington on Thursday 27 June 2024 at 7.30pm. Doors open at 7.00pm.

The Agenda will be emailed to all paid-up Trust Members on 12 June 2024 (or delivered by hand if a member has previously requested a paper copy).

The Nomination Form for the appointment of Trustees, including any proposed Resolution, is enclosed and must be returned either by email to the address below or delivered to the Museum to be received no later than 5pm on 9 June 2024.

Advisory note: The Trust currently has six Trustees but up to 15 can be elected. We are actively seeking new Trustees including a Programme Secretary and a Treasurer. If you are interested in standing for election or would like to know more about these roles please get in touch. Please remember that the AGM is your opportunity to ask questions and submit ideas for the future.

Any correspondence about the AGM etc. should be sent to Rod Giddins c/o the Museum OR emailed to birchingtonhtsec@gmail.com as soon as possible.