



Charity No. 1099250

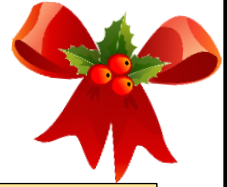
## BIRCHINGTON HERITAGE TRUST

*Preserving the past for the future*

### Newsletter

[www.birchingtonheritage.org.uk](http://www.birchingtonheritage.org.uk)

& on Facebook



Issue No. 86

Autumn 2024

Welcome to the Autumn Edition of the Trust's Newsletter.

#### NOTICEBOARD - EVENTS

The Heritage Open Day Map event held at Church House on 8 September proved a great success with over 150 visitors braving the torrential downpours to come and see a wide range of maps. A booklet on "Tithes" accompanied the exhibition and is for sale at the museum. Sincere thanks go to Luke Warburton and Alexandra Gilbert for organising the event, as well as our Trustees and the team at Church House who helped out on the day.

---

**Thursday 28 November:** 7.30 pm at The Centre, Alpha Road, Birchington

*A seasonal celebration in music, words and song presented by the Thanet Clarinet Quartet.*

Tickets for this event cost just £10 and are available from the museum. Mince pies and nibbles will be provided. All profits from the evening will be used to support the Trust and your museum so please bring family and friends too! *More information about the Thanet Clarinet Quartet is on page 4.*

---

**Saturday 30 November: Book Sale:** 0930 -1300 hours - at the museum, Burley Gallery, Birchington Library.

Books, prints and publications plus our excellent new 2025 calendar (just £6) will be on sale. Please drop in and see us. You may find an unusual gift for Christmas.



---

**27 February 2025 – "Oh Yes It Is!" – the story of Pantomime** with Linda McCann.

7.30 pm at The Centre, Alpha Road, Birchington.

---

In this edition we focus on "Remembrance" on pages 2 and 3. There's more about the Thanet Clarinet Quartet on page 4 where we also continue our series on the Birchington Alphabet as we conclude "M" and move to "N".

If you would like to contribute an article, volunteer or join our Committee, please get in touch.

*On behalf of the Trust, may I thank you for your continued support and wish you a wonderful Festive Season and good wishes for 2025.*

Rod Giddins (Editor)

Email: [birchingtonhtsec@gmail.com](mailto:birchingtonhtsec@gmail.com)

General enquiries and membership: [birchington.ht@gmail.com](mailto:birchington.ht@gmail.com)

## Remembrance

During both World Wars, Birchington, like many other towns and villages in Kent, played a significant role. In World War II, it was affected by air raids due to its proximity to the coast and the strategic importance of the nearby ports and airfields.



*Shuttered windows, All Saint's Church*

The village's War Memorial is outside All Saint's Church. Dedicated to those who fell in World War I, it comprises a Latin stone cross, with a Tudor Rose on one side and the badge of the Prince of Wales on the other side. The cross is mounted on a base with four panels, upon three broad surrounding steps of different sizes. Two stone plaques are fixed to the wall next to the cross, in remembrance of those who fell during World War II.



These plaques contain 33 names and were dedicated on 9 November 1952. The Memorial is a Grade II listed structure and is within Birchington's Conservation Area.

78 million people worldwide were killed in World War II. Since 1945 a further 20 million have lost their lives in conflicts around the world.

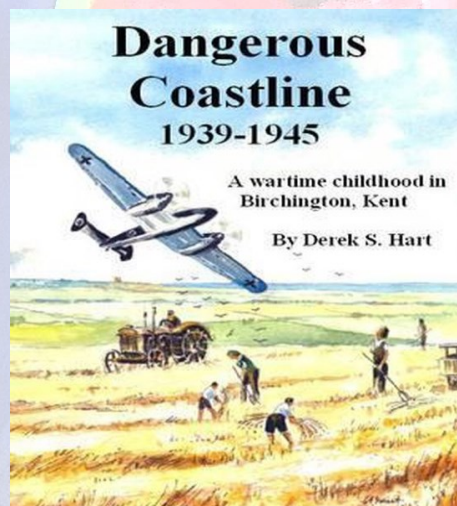
*"We will remember them"*



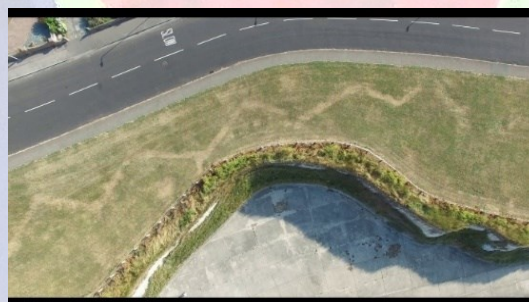
Another form of Remembrance. These beautiful glass statues were part of an exhibition in Kirkcudbright, Scotland that I visited in May 2024. (R Giddins)

\*\*\*\*\*

The Trust's archives contain a wealth of information about the First and Second World Wars. Derek Hart's book "*Dangerous Coastline*" – on sale at the museum - provides a fascinating insight into what it was like to be a child in the village during World War II.



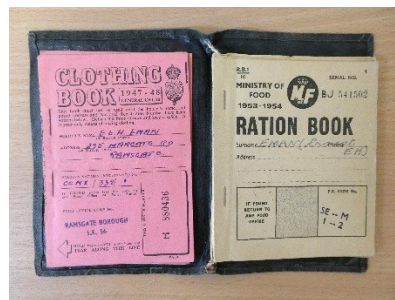
There are still remnants of trenches in the village from World War II. These zig-zag trenches (*below*) are on the grass between the cliff edge and Cliff Road; best viewed from above via drone footage.



**Wartime memorabilia  
from our collection**



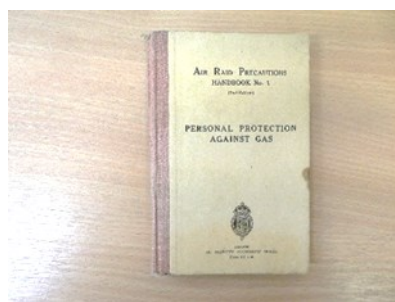
The Trust's collection includes memorabilia from both World Wars. Items have been donated over many years. They paint a picture of wartime, but also the post-war years when rationing was still in force. Here is a selection.



*Ration Book cover containing two clothing coupon books from 1945-46 and two Ration Books from 1953-54.*



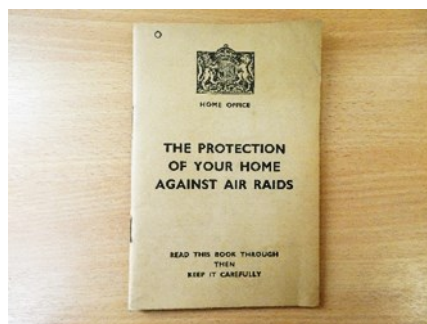
*Programme for Concert and One-Act Play for Birchington and Acol War Relief Fund on 1 October 1914*



*Air Raid Precautions Handbook No. 1 (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) - Personal Protection Against Gas*



*Two Identity Cards, green with black print. Date stamped 1948. Unused Motor fuel Ration Book and two Ration Books*



*Guidance booklet -The Protection of Your Home Against Air Raids*



*Various Ration Books from 1956 including 17 page Fuel Ration Book for motor cycle over 250cc and 13 page booklet for motor car 1501-2200 cc*



*Instructions for American Servicemen in Britain 1942*

For more information or to research our archives, please visit the museum (Mon, Thurs, Sat. 0930-1230) when our volunteers will be happy to help.



*A seasonal celebration in music, words and song*

*Presented by the Thanet Clarinet Quartet*

**28 November 2024 at 7.30 pm**  
**The Centre, Alpha Road, Birchington**  
**Tickets £10 each, from the museum**

The Thanet Clarinet Quartet first played in a series of concerts at Radnor Park Church in Folkestone in 2006. Since then they have played regularly in local venues in Thanet including the Bay URC Church, St. Nicholas-at-Wade Parish Church and Quex Barn. The Quartet has provided several seasonal programmes for the Birchington Heritage Trust over the years. Currently the line-up includes Malcolm McMillan, a veteran of Sadlers' Wells Royal Ballet Orchestra, the Northern Sinfonia and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, also contributing skills of composing and arranging. Ian Rogers plays regularly with the British Clarinet Ensemble as well as conducting the Ionian Clarinet Choir and the East Kent Clarinet Band. Colin Bridge is a founder member of the Chalumeaux Clarinet Quartet and currently playing in the Thanet Light Orchestra. Finally, providing the bass line for the ensemble, is Eduard Heyning, a graduate of the Prins Claus Conservatorium of Groningen in the Netherlands; he now lives locally and combines playing with research into ancient music.



We are looking forward to a light-hearted evening of seasonal music and song with some foot-tapping music and a look at some of the less usual of our traditional customs enjoyed over the centuries at this time of year.

*Colin Bridge*

### Birchington Alphabet "M"

MOUNT LAVINA COURT

This plot at 195 Canterbury Road, first had a house on it in the late 1800's called The Lodge. In 1931, its name changed to Malvern House and by 1935 it was Mount Lavinia Private Hotel. It was used by the Army during the Second World War and by 1961 it was the Westgate-on-Sea Working Men's Social Club. The old house was demolished and, in about 1988, a block of flats was built and named Mount Lavina. Who forgot the second "i"?

*[Note: Mount Lavinia is a suburb of Colombo, Sri Lanka)*

### Birchington Alphabet "N"

NARES, Owen

Owen Ramsay Nares (1888-1943) was an English stage and film actor starring in 25 silent films and later as a supporting actor in 14 talkies. In 1925 his biography *Myself, and Some Others: Pure Egotism* was published. He was a close friend and frequent guest of Dame Gladys Cooper DBE (1888-1971), a famous English actress. He joined her on many holidays in Birchington during the 1920's.

Whilst touring Army training camps in Wales, he visited Brecon, and the *Shoulder of Mutton* (now the *Sarah Siddons*) public house, the birthplace of actress Sarah Siddons. While touring the room where Siddons was born, Nares had a heart attack and died shortly afterwards, aged 54, on 30 July 1943.

*(Research by Alexandra Gilbert)*

*[Note: The name "Sarah Siddons" can be found on preserved Metropolitan Railway electric locomotive No. 12, built in 1922/23. Currently kept at a London Underground depot, it is in working order.]*

*..and finally, many thanks to Katharine Hook for her brilliant talk on Gin, Sloe Gin and Chocolate on 26 September. An entertaining and enjoyable evening. It would be nice to see more members and friends at future events.*