

TEMPERANCE HOTEL or THE PARAGON

The first business to trade from the site of the Paragon was a fishmonger named J. Stewart, who worked there in 1885-6. Whether he worked from a wooden, lean-to shelter or the present property, we have no way of knowing. However, by 1898 the building we now know of as the Paragon was owned by Mr Charles Robert Haig. He called it '**The Bella Vista Refreshment Rooms**'. For a few of years it was run as the '**Temperance Hotel**', although it is never listed as such in Kelly's Directories. We know it for a fact, because there are a few post cards showing it with that name painted on its metal canopy. People who were trying to give up alcohol were encouraged to stay here. They paid over their spending money when they arrived, in exchange for tokens, which could be spent in any shops or businesses in the village except those selling alcohol.

The house still has an ornate barge-board along its gable end. This has been renewed in recent years to match its original one. Along the east and north sides of the premises there used to be a canopy with decorative iron posts to support it, similar to the one we can still see on the corner of Paddock and Station Roads. The Paddock Road one was erected in c. 1899.

By 1906 the 'Bella Vista' had been taken over by William Thomas Standing. In 1911, we find Mr F. S. Perrin in residence, and he was listed as keeper of the 'Bella Vista', but also a Dairyman and 'Cow-keeper'. Four years later 'Easton & Willett' were in partnership as 'dairymen' from Monkton Farm Dairy, running these premises, but by **1916** only **H. T. Willett** is listed. The rapid turnover of occupants of the premises was halted at this stage, as Willett's Dairy was still there 1939 and continued right through World War Two and afterwards until **1955**.

In **1957 Weston's Dairy** had taken over the business and continued there until after 1974, when the Kelly's Directories ceased publication. Sometime a few years after this date, Steve Pursey took over the business, and at this point he discovered the remnants of the old metal canopy stacked in the cellar of the building. The original can be seen in a post card of the building dated 1910.

During the years the business was used as a dairy, there was a lean-to shed along the wall abutting Prospect Road, which accommodated the milk carts (and later the milk-floats) each night. Where the horses for the milk carts were housed in the early days is not known at present. There were open fields on the north side

of Prospect Road at the far end, for many years, so the horses may have been kept here. The lean-to can be seen on the left side of the 1910 photo. When the business became The Paragon, the first new owner had the lean-to demolished, as it was no longer of any particular use and was badly in need of renovation. The area was then converted into a small car park.

Today (December 2012) it is the Paragon Take-Away and Fish & Chip Restaurant and the business has recently come under new management




1910



1938





“Bella Vista”
TEMPERANCE HOTEL,
BIRCHINGTON.
 One minute from Station and the
 nearest Hotel to the Bay.
 Sea Views from Drawing-room
 and Bed-rooms.
Bath-room and Public
Smoking-room.
 Breakfasts, Hot Dinners and Teas
 all the year round.
SANITARY ARRANGEMENTS
CERTIFIED.
W. T. STANDING, Proprietor.