Fountain and Horse Troughs in Birchington Square

In 1886, at a meeting of Ratepayers, it was unanimously decided to place a **lamp** in the centre of The Square – a memorial of the Queen's Jubilee.

2 months later – at another meeting – no one voted for the lamp, but preferred a **drinking fountain.** Therefore a small request for a 'funds proposal' was dropped.

1900 - The Parish Council (Birchington had its first Parish Council in 1894), Major William Morrison Bell's brother offered to erect a drinking fountain with a trough in the Square as a monument to him. He was thanked and it was agreed to ask parishioners their opinion – a card vote was organised.

511 cards issued - 330 in favour - 15 against - 166 not returned

At the next Council meeting (3 months later) a long, animated and acrimonious discussion ensued. Two Councillors – Pointer and Pemble - were uncompromisingly hostile. Pointer said there never was an erection in the Square in his time or his father's lifetime. If it was erected, it would have to have policeman to regulate the traffic. It would be dangerous to cross the Square – especially for the mothers taking the children to school.

Pemble agreed. But still the resolution was passed in favour of accepting the offer. Designs were submitted – the County Council and Rural District Council were asked for sanctions for its erection. The R.D.C. stated the fountain would be a danger to traffic. The C.C. was not too pleased really.

The following March, Mr Bell withdrew his offer because of "village wrangle" and because some 'cantankerous person' could take steps to have it removed. He gave the money to the Royal Sea Bathing Hospital instead.

The present fountain was erected in 1909. It was the gift of Alderman Grant in memory of his wife, who had died only a short while before. He can be seen in the photograph of the opening ceremony, along with the Rev Serres and the school children etc. A bouquet on that occasion was presented by Miss Bowles – who had the second drink out of the fountain.