

MINNIS BAY - A Mini HISTORY

in the 1970s

This was the title of a talk given by Alfred T. Walker and Miss M. Haig in the Kearns Hall last Friday evening.

Mr Walker took the audience back to the time when Minnis Bay was called Gore End and was a busy port - a "Non-Corporate Limb of the Cinque Port of Dover". Among other things, he showed us slides of maps, demonstrating how far the sea has eaten into the coast since the Middle Ages and illustrations of some of the relics from the Bronze Age and early Roman times which have been found embedded in the chalk and are now in the Museum at Quex Park.

He then brought us forward to the 1930s, for the laying of the foundation stone of St Thomas's Church, with full Masonic ceremonial in 1932.

His last section was a series of slides of Minnis taken from the top of All Saints steeple in 1968, when the spire was reshingled.

Miss Haig told how Minnis Bay, as it was later called, was put on the map as a seaside resort in the 1880s by the Birchington Bay Company. She showed us slides of the Bay in the past, made in most cases from glass plates taken in the 1890s onwards. These were taken by the late Miss Queenie Lawes. They included pictures of the farm that used to stand where the parades of shops now stand.

She followed this with views of the original Bay Church, built in 1885 by her father Mr Haig. This was built of wood left over from the great Exhibition Building erected by Arthur Rayden (the leading name in the Birchington Bay Company) and which once stood in the Dip. There were views of this building and the damage done to it and the rest of the Bay in the great storm of 1897. This was the storm in which the Margate Surf Boat was wrecked and the dramatic statue erected by the Nayland Rock. There was one of a bathing machine on the beach and seen later, after the storm, on its side in the Dip. She also included ones showing the bathing tents which were still in use in the 1920s.

There was a collection at the end of the talks in aid of the Christian Aid fund, which raised £16 50p.

Author of notes is unknown, possibly Miss Isard