

Whitfield, Dover

G/Th / AM 65

Annals of the Union: Précis of the minutes

In July 1835, T. Emptage, his wife and 2 children applied for relief from the newly formed Union.

On July 10th 1835, Birchington was to pay £40 for its share of the running of the Union. At this date, the building was still under construction and not usable for occupation.

Some of the applicants to the Workhouse asked to be given assistance to emigrate to the United States or to Canada. Their fair would be paid, they would be given a certain amount of provision for the journey and each person was given £1. 10s expenses to help them in their new venture.

By March 1836 the new Workhouse was able to receive the occupants of St Peter's Workhouse, which was ordered to be closed. Gradually each community received its instructions to shift their paupers into the new buildings at Minster and set about closing their own properties.

A Schoolmaster and Schoolmistress were appointed to teach the children who were accepted into the workhouse.

In 1852, H. P. Powell-Cotton was appointed to be the Guardian for the following year for Birchington, with Edward S. Lendon in that capacity for Acol.

By 1853 the salary for the schoolmaster was £34 8s and the schoolmistress was £20.

March 17th – “It was resolved that Ann Postgate be placed in solitary confinement on bread and water from the present time until six in the evening, for insolence to the chairman.”

Many of the young lads from the workhouse were apprenticed to service at sea. Some had been given the chance to sample what the life was like first, before deciding that that was what they wanted to do.

Feb. 1854 – a group of 8 young men in the workhouse asked the Chaplain if he could arrange for evening classes for them to attend. The Board agreed and were prepared to provide the necessary books. The school master was prepared to give the instruction they required.

April 1854 – Guardians elected for the ensuing year consisted of -
 Acol – E S Lendon
 Birchington – Ambrose Collard etc. etc.

Aug 1854 – the Board appointed Miss Donaldson as the new Infant Schoolmistress.

Between 1854-57 the Vicar of Minster included the children of the workhouse in his annual children's treat which he organised for the children who attended his Sunday Schools each week. The Guardians were happy for this to continue.

13th September 1857, Mr and Mrs Burgess were appointed the new Schoolmaster and Mistress for the next 6 months. They were to be inspected at that time to see if they were able to continue in their offices.

G / Th / AM 68

1885 – 1898

May 1886 – Mrs S. A. Homer was appointed Laundry Superintendent at a salary of £20 per annum, with rations and washing in the Workhouse.

June 1886 – “A Memorial (memo) they had received from the parish of Birchington to be allowed to send another representative to this Board's meetings in addition to Mr Rayden.” It was pointed out that Stonar was also joined with Birchington for representation and were not using their seat, so an extra person could be added to Birchington without reference to any outside body. They also realised that the Westgate Ward could be joined to the Birchington one for the same purpose.

March 1887 – Concerning dietary stipulations –

“that the Board recommended a reduction in the quantity of suet in the meats, sultan and suet puddings, that the quantity of oatmeal used in the making of porridge be reduced, that children up to the age of 9 be allowed 2 oz of bread at 10 am, that children between the ages of 2 and 5 be allowed 6 oz of suet & meat pudding instead of 8 oz, and that 1 oz of bread be not taken from the adult inmates' rations during the summer months.” They did not consider vegetables to be solid food.

April 1887 – Election of guardians –

Acol – R. Wilson

Birchington – A. R. Rayden & Wm. Tomlin etc. etc.

21st June 1887 – To celebrate the 50th anniversary of Queen Victoria's accession, the inmates were to be given a feast of 'Roast Beef and Plum Pudding'. They were also to each receive a pint of beer and the usual allowance of tobacco or snuff to each adult and oranges or nuts for each child.

3rd June 1897 – A survey had been undertaken on children sent to Canada. There were 69 boys and 110 girls and only 2 boys and five girls had turned out to be unsatisfactory.

Diamond Jubilee Celebrations - £10 was to be spent on these for the inmates - £6 were to be used for the Sports and £4 for the 'Brakes' for the children.

October 1897 – discussed the possibility of building a Children's Home somewhere else in Thanet. This was partly the result of need for more

infirmery accommodation for the present adult inmates. They were also saying how much better such an arrangement would be for the children themselves. By mid-May of 1898, they were making firm plans to build 'Cottage Homes' at 'Manstone'. In the last entry they are giving orders for the purchase of land.

These homes were renamed the Lees Homes, Manston and were still in use in the 1970s. They have now been closed and redeveloped as private housing. (2007)