



Showing the two blocks ■ the First Houses' and the 'St Valerie' block. The Shops were not yet built.

Things weren't going as well in Arthur's business world as in his private life. In June 1890 another article in the newspapers regarding the new estate stated "I hope that although slow, its progress may be sure, for it is well planned. Two terraces of an ornamental character give an inkling of the future of the site." These were what today we call the First Houses and St. Valerie. Each block contained four separate properties, built for the express purpose of allowing the owners, or occupiers, to let out rooms

to visitors who came to "take the waters" at Minnis Bay. They had elegant balconies set to catch the afternoon sunshine, and to watch the sunsets over Reculver and Minnis Bay.

On the 29th February 1897 a violent storm hit Birchington. The sea wall and promenade at



Minnis Bay was badly damaged. The Dip was flooded, with only the roof of the Exhibition Building being visible. The Isle of Thanet Gazette wrote that during the afternoon of the storm, the waves poured over the damaged sea wall into the valley (the Dip) without let or hindrance, changing a pretty spot into a temporary swamp. There were two large conservatories near the building and these were also flooded in eight to ten feet of

water. Arthur Rayden had many valuable belongings stored in the buildings, as well as a number of family relics, and it was feared that these were now valueless. The cost of all this destruction would fall entirely on Arthur. The newspaper stated that "the gentleman has spent a fortune, to say nothing of the most persevering efforts over a number of years in developing this estate and protecting the sea front. He has accomplished this in the face of many difficulties and discouragements, and much sympathy is felt for him in the present disaster."

The article was accompanied by the paper's artists' impression of the scene. The artist was Felicia Wain, who was the sister of Louis Wain, the cat artist, who also worked for the Isle of Thanet Gazette.

By July 1900 it had all gone horribly wrong. In the London Bankruptcy Court Arthur Robinson Rayden, and his partner William Addinall, described as stockbrokers, were declared defaulters on the Stock Exchange. Rayden was the senior partner. On 23rd May Arthur had executed power of attorney in favour of his son, and had not been heard of again since the following day. The liabilities amounted to £10,000 - £12,000, against assets of £430. The failures of the partnership were mainly attributed to losses in connection with the Birchington Bay Freehold Land Estate Company, in which Arthur was the principal shareholder. The debt would be the equivalent of approx. £1,500,000 today.

Benjamin, Robinson Rayden was born 8 June 1842 – died 21 Oct 1932 – buried in grave B. 188

Arthur Rayden b. May 1845 – d. 21 st ? 1906	Buried in grave L. 1107
His wife Emma b. May 1845 d. 12 th ? 1898	“ “