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GIFT OF FOUNTAIN ACCEPTED

The fountain at Beresford Gap was funded by Alderman A.H. Scott in 1935.

So, who was Alderman A.H. Scott, and why was the fountain placed at Beresford Gap? A search of the internet and local street directories gave us the answer.

Alfred Henry Scott [24th June 1868 – 17th July 1939] was a British Liberal politician. He was born in Ardwick, Manchester, and entered business as a merchant. He was elected to Manchester City Council in 1897. At the general election in 1906 he stood at Ashton under Lyne, and was elected as the towns Liberal Member of Parliament, a seat he held until December 1910. Alfred moved to London and in 1913 became a Progressive Party alderman on the London County Council.

He retired to Birchington, and was very involved in local life, becoming an Alderman, a

Justice of the Peace, and president of the Birchington Chamber of Commerce. In the museum is a lovely photo of him taking part in the 1933 village carnival, riding a horse while dressed as Lady Godiva, complete with long hair and a pink body stocking!

While Alfred Scott and his family were in Birchington they lived at Wild Air on the cliff top at Beresford Gap. This was an imposing property built in the late 1920s. Initially it was known as Floramel Court, and was occupied by champion billiard player

Melbourne Inman. It was Alfred who renamed it. The house stayed in the Scott family until Arthur's wife died in 1952. It was sold to a development company in 1989, and was demolished, but it would be 1998 before the three-story block of apartments was built on the site, and given the name of 'Wild Air'.

The public fountain, which had been sited on the green at Beresford Gap in view of Scott's house, is built of stone in an

octagonal shape. It has two hollows at the base from which dogs could drink and two entries for pipe work on the rim. A panel on the south side of the structure reads 'For public use. Please respect it.'

Alfred Henry Scott and his house have gone, but the fountain is still there, but sadly no longer working, so do have a look at it the next time you are in the area.

Janet Robinson

