



# Newsletter

May 2016

Charity No. 1099250

ISSUE 56

## 'Illustrious Churchyard Occupant'

This heading was used after two descendants of the 'occupant' of a grave [in All Saints' churchyard] came from Australia in 1999 & 2000, to find it. When they asked for help, we thought they meant Dante Gabriel Rossetti, but it turned out to belong to William Norman. He originally came from Upnor near Rochester. His father had been buried in our churchyard not long before his son's death in 1869. The researchers assured us he was 'the Founder of the Australian Navy'. This turned out to be slightly wide of the mark. He is credited with founding the 'State of Victoria' Navy, as the Federation of the Australian States was not created until 1901, some years after Commander Norman died.



Commander William Norman

William Norman was made a Commander and served his adopted country of Australia most of his working life. His story will be found under "NORMAN, the late Captain William" in our Museum Archives. In Australia, he is held in such high esteem that the town of Normanton, in Carpentaria, Queensland is named after him, as is a River, a Bay, a Point and at least two Roads. Finally, in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, a series of Mine-hunters now all bear his name. The latest of these Mine-hunters was launched by one of Commander

Norman's great-granddaughters, Miss Agatha Grey-Wilson MBE in 1999. The Australian Naval Association tends the graves of Commander Norman's wife and several of his nine children who are all buried in Australia. However, when this authority was approached to help fund the restoration of the Commander's own grave in Birchington churchyard, there was no response.

When we located the grave beside the north wall of the churchyard in 1999 and 2000, it was lost in a mound of weeds and brambles. The cost of renovating the grave was beyond our own limited resources, although several attempts were made to clear the 'jungle' from around it.



Grave of William Norman in 2008

The Australian Naval Association has recently bought some of Commander Norman's original Log Books and other memorabilia in an auction, which must make for fascinating reading.

Unfortunately the wording on the grave is no longer readable. It would be wonderful if the Australian authorities could see fit to fund the re-lettering of the side slab.

In 2015 two stalwarts, Terry Wilson and Ronnie Taylor, began restoring Commander Norman's grave - all for free! Unfortunately, Thanet Council have put a stop to any further work, but are not offering to improve the grave themselves, at the moment.



The Tidy Grave of William Norman in 2015  
Following many hours of hard work to improve our Village by two praiseworthy volunteers

Jennie Burgess

## AGM and Talk by Neville Hudson

"The Origins of Birchington's Road Names"  
Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2016 - 7.30 pm  
At "The Centre" - Birchington



Park Lane C of E School c. 1960s

**May 2 [May Day]** - "A few children absent "garlanding". The children carried home-made garlands round the village and were given pennies.

*[a springtime version of Guy Fawkes?]*

*By the beginning of May the school room had been converted.*

**May 9** - "School room converted into a temporary church".

**May 28** - "Average attendance 59".

*The Inspector's Report on the school is interesting. The report is written in the log book.*

**1864 May 28** - "Summary of the Inspector's Report on the school.

The school is very quietly carried on.

Answers on Religious Knowledge satisfactory.

General attainments fairly good except arithmetic in which many failed.

Needlework very fair but very slow.

Average attendance 59. Note this is for all ages.

Number of children presented for examination 30.

On examination [*passes*]:-

Reading 28	Writing 25	Arithmetic 12
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School awarded at 2s 8d a head = 65

*[known as 'Payment by Results']*

On attendance only.

Infants under 6 at 6s 6d

Average Attendance	£8	17s	0d
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Examination	£6	10s	0d
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Infants under 6	£2	3s	11d
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Total	£17	10s	11d
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*On this report was based the amount of grant the school would get.*



*Alfred Walker  
And the  
Sports  
team*

*Park  
Lane*

*C. 1935*

*The following entry shows that the Head Teacher was experiencing some difficulty with certain people in the place.*

**July 11** - Finding that false reports are in circulation carefully and sedulously disseminated by malicious persons for their own base purposes respecting the time of commencing school mornings and afternoon. I have determined that I will henceforth carefully note the exact time when I begin prayers in the morning and the Doxology in the afternoon.

I hereby testify that the time in every case will be exact by the **Wesleyan Chapel Clock** and entered here at the moment and signed by me.

Witness my hand

W. Lockyer Banks.

Monday afternoon - opened school at 2 p.m. *W.L.B.*

12 Tuesday commenced at 9 a.m. *W.L.B.*

**Sept. 12** - Mr Hodges Steam waggonette being on the Square I allowed the children to look at it for a quarter of an hour and therefore P.M. opened school at 2.15. *W.L.B.*

**Oct 19** - This entry refers to the restoration of the parish church in 1863.

"As it seems unlikely that the church will be completed before Christmas it was thought better to return at once to the proper room."

*There were staffing difficulties in those days as well as now.*

**1864 Nov** - *There are several entries about the want of assistance.*

The Curate, Rev Whish, "denies help" under the plea of "want of funds."

**1865 Feb 24** - Feast of St. Matthias.

The church was re-opened today after restoration and the school had a holiday.

**March 9** - "The Vicar and Curate came into school this morning with the agreeable announcement that I should be allowed a pupil teacher to help me in school and that my stipend should be raised from this time".

**1866 Jan** - Mr W. L. Banks left.

The Curate Rev H. Whish took charge.

**Jan 15** - Mr. Thos Williams entered upon his duties as Master.

*The log book entries end Feb 6<sup>th</sup> 1866.*

*The next log book opens Jan 31 1870.*

Thomas Goodbourn in charge after being absent since mid-summer 1869. Average attendance was then 49.

**1870 March 2** - Ash Wednesday.

Children attended church this morning. I was not at all pleased with the order. Compelled to punish four boys for light conduct during the service.

**7<sup>th</sup> March** - Henry Brooks entered upon his duties as Master.

3 boys punished for going to church to see a wedding against the Curate's desire and the Master's orders.

**In July** - *there was a falling off in attendance owing to the harvest.*

## BIRCHINGTON C. of E. SCHOOL THE NATIONAL SCHOOL

(Continued from page 2)

**Nov 22** - *This entry is interesting.*

Gave C. Pemble one stroke with the cane for continued disobedience. He then ran out of the school and in a few minutes returned with his father who assaulted me with a horse whip in hand calling me a B----- fool, and using other foul language in the presence of the school children, after which he left the room saying he would take d--- good care not to send his children here again.

**Note.** *Mr. Pemble was a butcher and a member of the church choir. He was suspended from the church choir.*

**Nov 28** - Another school being opened near the Mill, several children in that locality have left.

**In 1871** - Birchington became a separate parish with its own Vicar. Rev Alcock was the first Vicar. Rev Alcock frequently visited the school to hear reading.

**Sep 22** - The school treat brought the children from field work but not to school and some who were not well with measles attended the feast.

**1872** - Mr. Herbert Catford was Master.

**1873 Sept** - Several children absent gleaning and some gathering hops.

**1874** - Average attendance 80.

**1875** - Average attendance 120.

**In June** is mentioned the recent enlargement of the school - "affords a better opportunity for the separate instruction of the classes".

**July 23** - 2 classes taken to Margate to see the Prince and Princess of Wales. The day was very wet.

*[Later these became King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra.]*

**1876 Jan** - Average attendance 120.

**April Friday 21<sup>st</sup>** - Holiday on Tuesday, it being the occasion on which the foundation stone of the School Church was laid at Acol.

**Nov 3<sup>rd</sup>** - Many children absent in consequence of there being a wax works exhibition in the Square.

**1877 Sept** - Attendance low as "whole families" are gone hopping.

**1879 Nov** - A few boys away from school to go "Guy Fawkesing."

**1880 Jan 5** - School reopened. Took the pence.

*Note. Children still had to pay to go to school.*

Average attendance 144.

**1881 May 6<sup>th</sup>** - Only fair attendance, there was a procession through the streets of Oddfellows, headed by a band on the occasion of a Lodge being formed in the Village.

**1884** - Average attendance 170.

**1887 Sept** - Treat in Quex Park in celebration of the coming of age of Mr. Percy Cotton.

**Nov** - Serious outbreak of measles. School closed for a month.

**1889** - Mr Alfred W. G. Scorer new Head of the school.

*The log book of the Acol and Birchington Infant School began in 1873. The Mistress was Harriet Sidders. The Infants School was first held in the Old Institute Building behind the International Stores in the Square.*

***Italicised text are comments made  
by Alfred Walker***

***Italicised text in Square brackets  
By Jennie Burgess***

## LAW & ORDER in BIRCHINGTON

3

The Cage, the Stocks & Whipping Post and the Maypole

**B**irchington had each of these items and all were situated round the Square.

There are references in the Churchwardens' Books for the repair of the stocks. In 1606 the C.Ws'. spent 4s 4d for 'pinnes' for the stocks. The books also mention replacing the cage.

**The Cage** was by the Churchyard wall near the Powell Arms Inn latterly. It was for the immediate detention of law breakers. One of the entries is in the Vestry Book, circa 1785 -

"Agreed to build a cage at ye end of the poorhouses to confine ill-behaved and riotous persons".

A new cage was built in 1788 at a cost of £12 0d, according to the Vestry Books.

Stephen and John Kemp were paid 3s. for a one night-guard duty at the cage. Money was spent in repairing the cage and for new locks.

The Cage was a common sight in the centre of most villages. Birchington's was brick-built and was used not only for imprisoning 'ill-behaved and riotous persons' but was also used for storing Parish property and for tools needed for repairing the roads. Often the people apprehended for offences connected with bastardy orders were kept in one of the local inns for the night, until they could be brought before a magistrate by the Deputy the following day.

**The Stocks & Whipping Post** stood beside the Churchyard wall in the Square. One of the uprights of the stocks was used for the whipping post, with suitable rings attached for holding the offenders wrists. The stocks could be used for almost any offence.

[From Accounts of the Deputy of Birchington 1648-1654 See notes Vol. 6 p68a]

"Paid to Robert Covell for staples for the stocks and whipping post - 1s 0d".

"Paid to old Coppin for whipping of three vagabonds - 6d".

The constable was responsible for the whipping of vagrants - men, women and even children - for such crimes as begging without a licence. There are several entries of money spent on whips for the Constable.

**The Maypole** in Birchington was situated on the triangular green in the Square. It is shown on the Map drawn for the sale to John Bridges of Church Hill Farm of 1688. There are several references to the Maypole in the accounts for taking it down and for setting it up again.

"1606 for taking down the Maypole viii d".

"1636 towards ye setting up of ye Maypole 6s 8d".

The Maypole was used at May Day, at Whitsuntide, and also at Hocktide.

The Puritans banned it for a number of years, but it was eventually re-erected.



Sketch of the Cage  
In Birchington Square

# Noticeboard

## **BHT DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

**A Talk by Tony Child,  
Thanet District Council  
"Thanet Coastal Project"**

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2016**

**AGM & Talk by Neville Hudson  
"The Origins of Birchington's Road Names"**

**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2016**

**"Summer Variety" Evening**

**Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2016**

**A Talk by  
Jennie Burgess & Terry Wilson  
"Grave Matters"**

**Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2016**

**Ann & Doug Holmes present  
A Wine & Wisdom Evening**

**Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

**A talk by John Robinson  
"1970's Revisited"**

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016**

**Colin Bridge &  
The Chalumeaux Quartet  
A Musical Christmas Evening**

Quarterly meetings 7.00 for 7.30pm at  
The Centre, Birchington.  
The Bar will be available

## **Membership Subscriptions**

A polite reminder, it is that time of year  
when your of your membership  
subscriptions are now due.  
£7.50 per person or £12.50 a couple.

## **SPONSORS REQUIRED**

We need sponsors to help pay the printing costs of the Trusts 2017 calendar. We ask our sponsors to pledge a minimum of £10, their names will then be acknowledged on the sponsor page of the calendar, (optional). Please add your name to the list in the museum room.

I need to have the names by the end of June so this newsletter is our last chance.

Also, any member not on our e-mail list can keep up to date with any Trust news by sending a request to [robinsons@the2jays.f2s.com](mailto:robinsons@the2jays.f2s.com).

Thanks in advance  
John Robinson

## **'TAPPINGTON', Shakespeare Road**

A member of BHT recently received an email from an estate agent who is selling 'Tappington'. We were asked for as much of its history as we knew. We hold a number of pieces about the old house, among them the sale details in a brochure dated 1924, when it was part of the estate of Sir Charles Gill QC.

Having sent off the required information, the next query was, "What did we know about Sir Charles Gill?" By chance, we have a photo of him with his family in the garden of 'Orion', Nasmyth Road in 1904. This was relayed to the agent, who then fed back some fascinating details about Sir Charles. This, in turn, set us off on a hunt for the man's life story, which also involved us in tapping into the expertise of Pat and Cliff Cole, our family history experts. The 'Tappington' file has grown considerably as a result of that one email and a great sense of discovery and interesting detail has emerged.



Sir Charles Gill QC

## **Birchington Postscript**

**BANKS** - The first bank to open in Birchington was Cobb's which built the premises in The Square in about 1898, now occupied by Lloyds. The Westminster was the next to open in 1923. It originally occupied premises almost opposite its present position. It moved to its new site in 1931. It merged with the National Provincial Bank in about 1960, becoming the Natwest Bank. Barclays Bank moved into their premises in the middle of 1937. The last to arrive was the Midland Bank, now taken over by HSBC, which came to Birchington in 1964. (Soon there will be none).

**BAY HOTEL** - the Bay Hotel was built in 1905 on the corner of the sea front and Minnis Road, on what had previously been a chalk pit. In its hey-day it also sported an 'Uncle Tom's Cabin', a single story building built on the south side of the hotel where parties and festivities were celebrated in the bar and large reception room. It was demolished in 1964.

*Janet Robinson*