



Preserving the Past for the Future

Newsletter

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All Saints Church at end of Canterbury Road and Village Pond c. 1882

MY FAVOURITE THING

The museum holds a wealth of photographs that date back to the 1870s. My favourite photo can be seen in the Museum (Library) window, viewable when passing in Alpha Road.

It shows an idyllic scene from around 1882 in Canterbury Road with All Saints Church in the background. The village pond can be seen on the right, whilst on the left is a gentleman wearing a top hat driving a horse drawn carriage. He is believed to be the village doctor on his rounds.

Although the pond was filled in during the widening of the road in the mid 1930s, the scene today is still recognisable, because of the landmark church in the background.

The original picture was in fact made as a stereocard, viewable in 3D using an optical viewer. This type of photograph was extremely popular in Victorian times, and were very collectable. We have this photo in our archives, and to date, it is the only known stereocard of Birchington.

John Robinson

MY FAVOURITE THING



In Birchington and Minnis Bay we experience some of the most stunning sunrises and sunsets that anyone could wish for throughout the year.

The sunrise, for me, signifies the unfolding of a new day and the prospect of new exciting events which lay ahead. During the summer we see the sun rising from the sea in the northeast, frequently preceded by the bright red hue in the sky, painting the clouds and many windows reflecting the flame red light. The red road reflected on the sea leading to the rising sun is like an expression of hope that all will be well with the day ahead.

The sunset heralds the drawing to a close of the hustle and bustle of the busy day. In the summer, it is seen over the sea in the northwest, with a lightshow as stunning as seen in the morning. Whereas during the autumn, the setting sun drops behind the Reculver Towers.

Peter Bateman



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Following the talk by Colin Winstone at the AGM on 31 May 2018, Colin gives us more information on the subject.

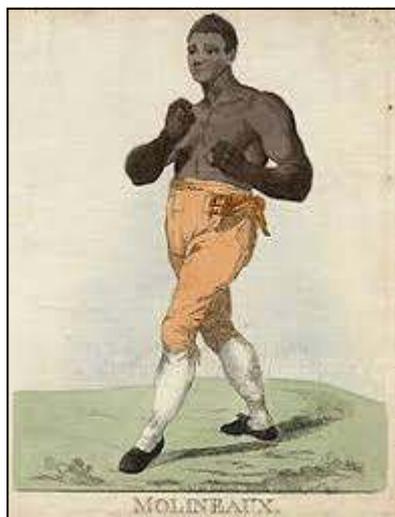


Epple Bay c. 1919

Pugilism, or the sport of Boxing/Fist-Fighting as it is more commonly known, has been practiced since ancient times all over the world. The rules for Boxing, as we know them today, come from the Marquis of Queensbury which made the use of gloves compulsory, and were drawn up in 1867, though the legality in Britain was surprisingly not established until 1901.

Previously, fighting was done with bare fists/knuckles, often away from the authorities ending only when a contestant was felled and stayed down. One such site was our own Epple Bay where the horseshoe shaped chalk cliff edge allowed a perfect viewing of a fight down below. The fight would probably have begun when the tide started to go out.

Many aspiring men fought in such places to 'make their name' and be allowed to fight tougher opponents. Prize money could be very good as you worked your way up through the ranks and was extremely popular with spectators.

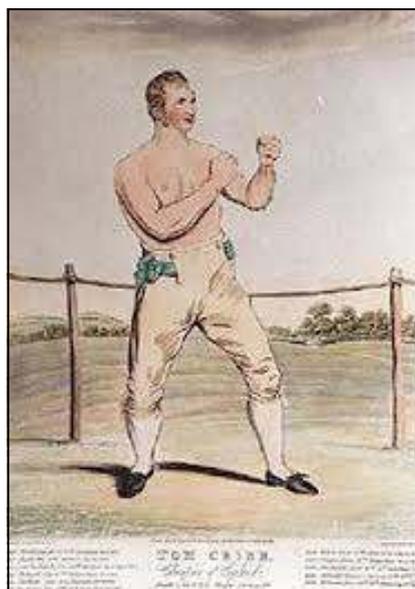


Tom Molineaux

One such man, who started at the bottom and fought his way up to the top was Tom Molineaux. A former American slave, he gained his freedom fighting for his owner, worked his passage to Britain and worked the system including Epple Bay.

Tom Molineaux

- Born: 1784 Virginia USA
- Died: 1818 Ireland
- Weight: 200 pounds
- Height: 5 ft 8 ins



Tom Cribb

Tom Cribb

- Born: 1771 Bristol
- Died: 1848 Woolwich
- Weight: 200 pounds
- Height: 5 ft 10 ins

On a reported very hot day in the exceptionally hot summer of 1810, Tom Molineaux, titled the black Champion of America, fought a veteran English boxer, Tom Tough, otherwise Blake, and gained a very hard earned victory after a prodigious number of rounds. Mr Friend (probably of Birchington Hall) was the referee and the umpires were Lord George Sackville and Captain Prideaux.

After several years and many epic fights, he was finally able to challenge the then greatest boxer in England, Tom Cribb, and enter into the annals of boxing history despite losing the match.

Colin Winstone

**'Special Edition' Booklet
THE GREAT WAR - 1914-1918**

Jennie Burgess and Janet Denyer have produced a booklet to mark the Centenary of the Great War. Proceeds will initially go to support events being held in The Village to commemorate this centenary.

BIRCHINGTON & ACOL
The Great War
1914-1918




Dedication Ceremony 28 March 1920

MEMORIAL PLAQUE

Memorial Plaque (known as 'Dead Man's Penny') individually cast in bronze with the name of the loved one who lost their life. Over 1,355,000 were issued to the nearest relative and sent together with a letter from King George V.






126 mm (almost 5") diameter with an image of Britannia holding a trident and standing with a lion. Britannia holds an olive wreath above the name of the deceased, who in this case is Charles Payne from Birchington.

Envelope in which the plaque was received with the letter

THE SOLDIER
If I should die, please send this letter to my nearest relative. That I have been a member of the "The Soldier" Club. Thank you very much.

In this booklet we include details of many of the men who lost their lives and the names of all those recorded on the War Memorial in The Square. You will find the houses that were opened as 'temporary' hospitals and the many organisations and volunteers that were involved at this time.

This is a 20 page A5 illustrated booklet obtainable from the Museum and the Parish Clerk - BPC, Burley Gallery, Library, Alpha Road at £3 a copy.



Mansford House in Spenser Road opened on 10 October 1914. It had 26 beds with 10 Nurses under the Matron, Miss Worthington. It closed in March 1917.



St Michael's or The Thicket in Cross Road, opened on 1 October 1914. It had 30 beds with 21 Nurses under the Matron, Miss Denning. It closed on 21 January 1919.



YOUR FAVORITE THING in BIRCHINGTON

Following on from a suggestion made by our Chairman, John Robinson, we are inviting our readership to submit short a article about what is your "Favourite Thing" with regard to Birchington accompanied with a brief explanation.

Although we cannot guarantee an article will be published, any contribution will be appreciated.

Editor

VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

If any of our members would be interested in assisting us by volunteering in our Museum, please pop in to the BHT Museum on Saturday mornings to have a chat with Gillian.

Our volunteers find it rewarding when assisting visitors to our museum who often present interesting questions about our village's past.

War Weapons Week



On 23 May 1918 an aeroplane and a Red Cross lorry, fitted out as an office, came to The Square. The aim was to raise £5,000 for two aeroplanes. In the event £13,600 was donated which in 2018 is equivalent to £749,496.



War Relief Fund Concert & Play at The Public Hall 1 October 1914



War Fund Christmas card

18 January 1919 - Thanksgiving Week for the Sale of War Bonds. Organised by Major Powell-Cotton, Mr R Grant and Rev. S Wilks, terminated with £22,022 being raised (equal to £1,213,632 in 2018).



BHT Dates For your Diary

Events for 2018

- 27th Sept Talk on 'Doodlebugs & Rockets'
by Bob Ogley
- 25th Oct 'Quiz Night'
with Ann & Doug Holmes
- 29th Nov Talk on 'Bover on the Hover'
by Brian Laverick Smith

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

Annual General Meeting - 31 May 2018

We had a very well supported AGM with 66 Members signing in. The Chairman thanked the Executive Committee and all the volunteers for the smooth running of the Trust. He also thanked the Membership without whose continued support the Trust would not exist.

Membership for the year totalled 250. The Statement of Accounts was presented which showed a reduction in our income over expenditure, due mainly to some external Village events not being held. The Audited Accounts were duly accepted by the Membership. The Election of Officers for the forthcoming year with John Robinson as Chairman, was ratified by the Membership. The annual Raven Award was made to the Sea Shelters and Amenities Group for their contribution in rebuilding Shelter No. 2 between Hengist Road and Queen's Avenue. A plaque was presented to the Group to go on the shelter.

Following on from the AGM we had three interesting and diverse talks by Members of the Trust, namely:

'Washed Up Birchington' by Luke Warburton with fragments of pottery that had been found, including part of a flagon from the New Inn dating c1829.

'Postboxes' by Chris Wyer showing the iconic nature of these from Victorian times and those still remaining in The Village.

'Pugilism in Birchington' by Colin Winstone on bare knuckle fights held on the sands of Epple Bay with an audience viewing from the cliffs above.

On 28 June we had two in-depth talks on Birchington community buildings. Firstly from Jennie Burgess on the Institute Hall 1878 and the Public Hall 1902. Neville Hudson followed this with a talk on 'Village Centre Dream' and how it developed and became The Centre as we know it today in Alpha Road.

Birchington's Alphabet

GRENHAM HOUSE SCHOOL - The school originated in Minnis Bay in 1901 and was then called The Bay School for Boys. In 1910 the schools partners, Mr. Ransome and Mr. Jeston, purchased a ten acre site next to the Bungalow Hotel in Lyell Road on which to build a new larger school. This opened in 1911 and was named Grenham House School. In 1984 it was sold to developers and demolished in 1987. Homebirch House was built roughly on the site of the old school building, and the playing fields, which had been home to the village cricket team for many years, were used to build the Hunting Gate estate. Old boys of the school include John Le Measurier, and brothers David and John Suchet.

GROVE HOUSE - Tucked away from the main Canterbury Road, Grove House which dates from the late 1600s is built in the Flemish Dutch gable style, with later additions. The building was probably originally two cottages which were later joined together. The Forge at the road edge of the property was let separately as early as 1687.

GUILD OF PLAYERS - The idea for the Guild was formed by the Revd. Neville Granville Sharp in December 1935, and called All Saints Guild of Players. Qualification for membership was that one had to be a regular communicant at the Parish Church. Productions continued throughout the war, including a concert party called 'The Mystericals' who entertained members of the armed forces billeted locally. Its first pantomime 'Cinderella' was presented in January 1945. In 1964 the 'All Saints' was deleted from the Guild's title and was replaced by 'Birchington'.

HERSCHEL ROAD - The building of houses in this road started in 1920. It was named after the Herschel family. Sir Frederick Herschel was a famous astronomer, and his son Sir John Herschel was as astronomer, mathematician, chemist and experimental photographer.

HOLLYDENE - 55 Alpha Road was built in about 1897, and was one of only three properties in the eastern half of Alpha Road until 1900. It was sold for development in about 1980 and Olantigh Court now stands on the site.

HOMESTEAD FARM - The farm stood on the Canterbury Road, and was originally the farm for Birchington Hall (later the Spurgeon's Homes). The area was later developed as the Birch Hill estate.