



Newsletter

November 2018

Charity No. 1099250

ISSUE 66

LESSONS FROM THE GREAT WAR



Two Unknown Soldiers in a Field of Poppies

I was recently asked to make a list of all the men in Birchington who had made the ultimate sacrifice in World War One...

It was the ages of these lads - so many of them still in their teens and twenties. It made me think about some of the WW 1 poets and I felt much more consciously about the enormous waste of all that potential.

"Without their sacrifice, who knows where we would all have been by now?". The saddest part is that some of our fellow men didn't seem to learn any lessons from that terrible waste.

Sayings like "Peace in our time", "The War to end all Wars" and "A land fit for Heroes" end up with a rather hollow ring to them.

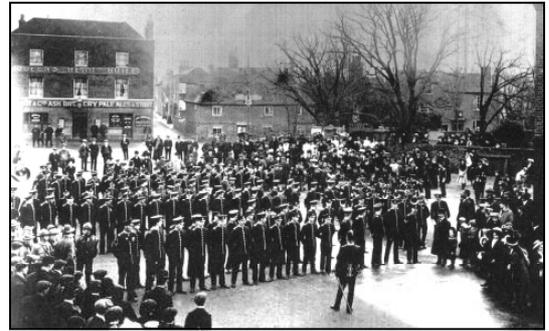
Jennie Burges

After the war perhaps I'll sit again
Out on the terrace where I sat with you,
And see the changeless sky and hills beat blue
And live an afternoon of summer through.

I shall remember then, and sad at heart
For the lost day of happiness we knew,
Wish only that some other man were you
And spoke my name as once you used to do.

After the War By May Wedderburn Cannan

THE GREAT WAR IS OVER



Armistice Day 1919 in Birchington Square

With the war over, the exhausted heroes returned home with broken bodies and minds to broken families and country. They were expected to resume their original roles at work and socially...

During the war employment of women increased by 2 million, 700,000 working in weapons factories. The peace brought social change, women over 30 years old were given the vote...

Table with 2 columns: Rank and Pay Rate. Includes ranks like Private, Sergeant, Lieutenant, Major, Colonel and their corresponding pay rates in 1914.

An estimated death of anywhere between 0.8% and 3.6% of the entire world population during WW1. 80,000 British Army soldiers suffered from shell shock. In the British Army, 2,300 were sentenced to death by kangaroo courts...

Over 8 million horses, donkeys and mules also died.

It is unimaginable, the number of spoilt lives resulted from the charnel house of The Great War.

Dedication of Birchington War Memorial c.1920



Peter Bateman

In this Issue: Page 1 - Lessons From the Great War? + The Great War is Over

Page 2 - The Memorial Ground Birchington

Page 3 - Birchington's Contribution to the Great War

Page 4 - Noticeboard:- Dates for your Diary + BHT Talks and Activities + Birchington's Alphabet + Season's Greetings

MEMORIAL GROUND - Birchington



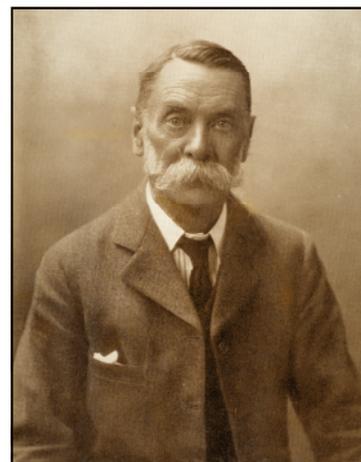
*Henry Erlebach
1886 – Oct. 1915
buried near Ypres, Belgium*



*Arthur Erlebach
1894 – July 1917
buried at St Omer*



*Teddy Erlebach
1897 – Feb. 1917
buried at Linsells near Menin*



*Henry Arthur Erlebach c. 1925
(father)*

On the 15th July 1922, Mr H. Arthur Erlebach signed a deed of conveyance with Percy C. H. Powell-Cotton, in which he bought a section of Quex Park. Within the deed is the addition of a plot of two-three acres, which was the gift of Mr Powell-Cotton to help make the shape of the land more uniform. The ground lies between Park Lane and Park Road in Birchington and abuts the northern edge of Quex Park land.

Sometime in 1923, the ground was fenced and mowed at Mr Erlebach's expense and was in use before the end of that year. It was already being called the Memorial Recreation or Sports Ground. Mr Erlebach gave it to the people of Birchington with the specific statement that it was for all kinds of sport, not just for cricket (as some people initially had thought.) He made the donation in memory of his three sons, who were killed in the First World War.

On 10th June 1924 it was officially opened by Mr Erlebach. A Trust Fund was set up on 11th February 1925, with the Trustees named below:

Mr P. C. H. Powell-Cotton (Owner of Quex Park)

Henry Haversham Godwin-Austen (a Solicitor from Godalming, acting on behalf of Mr Powell-Cotton).

Gerald McCloud Powell-Cotton.

Francis Errington (Solicitor).

H. Arthur Erlebach (Headmaster and co-founder of Woodford House School, Birchington).

Stanley Alfred Erlebach.

Albert Hodges (who married Winifred Erlebach and later became Headmaster of Woodford House School).

Donald Eustace Erlebach.

Hubert Collard (a local business man).

Henry Etough Eyre Jeston (Headmaster and founder of Grenham House School, Birchington).

William John Gardner (owned the large Corn Merchant' the corner of Station and Albion Rd).

Dave Dallas (very involved with the Cricket and Football teams in the village).

The grounds were used extensively in the ensuing years and a pavilion was erected from funds raised by local people.

On the 1 April 1935, the Parish of Birchington was incorporated into the Borough of Margate, instead of remaining a Limb of the Cinque Port of Dover.

On the 31st December 1938, the current Trustees of the Memorial Recreation Ground conveyed the care and maintenance (not the ownership) of the ground to the Margate Borough Council, under the public Recreation Section of the 'Open Spaces Act' of 1906. On the Deed of Conveyance, the following names appear:

Frederick Sheppard Oldham.	Stanley Alfred Erlebach.
Albert Hodges.	Donald Eustace Erlebach.
Hubert Martin Collard.	H. Jeston.
William John Gardner.	George Edward Ewing.
Basil John King.	

As the Ground was set up as Memorial gift, it comes under the oversight of the Charity Commissioners, so that any change of use for the ground would have to be vetted by this body, who would, among other procedures, seek the local community's opinion.

Thanet District Council now holds the deeds to the Memorial Ground at Birchington. In the deeds it states that "the grounds are provided for the use of the people of Birchington for the enjoyment of sports and recreation for perpetuity".

Birchington Heritage Trust holds a photocopy of the deeds.

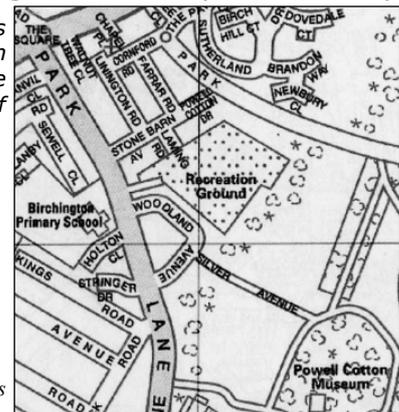
The Memorial Ground has the same purpose as our War Memorial in Birchington Square and is in the process of being listed as such. We are deeply grateful to the long-sighted vision that Mr Erlebach had when he made that wonderful gift to the people of Birchington in 1924 – and we need to guard it carefully and thankfully.

(Some of this information came from Barry Maplebeck of the Legal Department of Thanet Council)

The Memorial Ground

We need to guard this small corner of our village very carefully, because it represents some of the cost of our freedom

Jennie Burgess

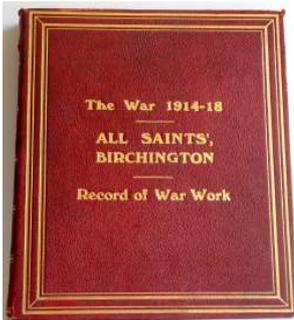


Birchington was greatly blessed during WW 1 by having a retired Major in their midst, Major Geoge E. Holland. He helped with the organising of the community's defences and suggested ways in which each area of need could be covered from among those who were still in the village.



Major Holland

As the war was coming to an end, Major Holland and some of the other residents decided to put together a record of what had happened in Birchington during the four and a half years of the battle, recording the residents' contributions in each area.



The Record of War Work

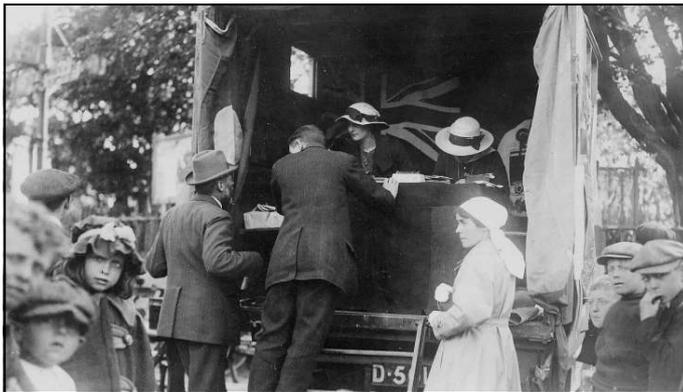


Artist, Miss Smith who prepared The Record of War Work

This large hand-made book is beautifully illuminated and contains a record of how the people of Birchington responded to the events and needs of the men and their families during the 1914 - 1918 War. It also has numerous photographs and drawings and each page has beautifully illuminated border.

In the book, we find some amazing facts about the life of this enterprising and caring community during those difficult times. Men like Major Powell-Cotton of Quex Park, lent his home to serve as one of five hospitals in Birchington and who oversaw the care of the hundreds of wounded men sent to Birchington and Thanet for care and recuperation. Major Holland of 'Clovelly', Berkeley Road, ran the military side of things in the village, taking care of their safety and welfare. Without this book we would not have known of the part each resident played.

During War Weapons Week, when the community was asked to contribute £5,000 to buy two planes, we discover that over that one weekend, the residents raised more than enough to buy 5 planes!



Local Residents contribute towards War Weapons Week

Quex Park and WW1



WW1 Wounded Servicemen Recovering at Quex Park

Quex Park also played its role during the Great War, the grounds were used as a training and holding camp for the servicemen who were being transferred to and from England and the areas of conflict.

The Quex Mansion and Museum were used as one emergency hospital to accommodate the injured servicemen. It must have been quite an unnerving experience for the recovering patients, lying in bed and seeing wild animals looking down at them from the Dioramas.

JIM THE AIRDALE

Even a dog owned by a local coastguard became known as a hero during the conflict. His acute canine hearing was able to detect, then by barking, warn his handler of the approach of a German Zeppelin, which was on a mission to attack Ramsgate. The aircraft was chased away by the scrambled British fighters back to the continent.

Once it was realised such dogs, like Jim, could be valuable to the war effort. Col Edwin Richardson, a soldier, dog breeder and dog lover, pressed to create the very first War Dog School.

However as the Zeppelin pilots soon realised their throbbing engines could be heard on the ground. To avoid detection, they throttled back their engines to tick-over before dropping their bombs. Afterwards, without the weight of the bombs, they floated up above the then flying ceiling of the British planes so avoiding being shot. The airships' vulnerability was that they were filled with hydrogen. When shot at with ordinary bullets, they would pass through the skin only leaving a small hole. Later on, incendiary bullets were employed to ignite the escaping hydrogen gas to bring down the aircraft. With more attacks on our coastline, a more formal watch was introduced to protect our harbours.



Jim on lookout duty by Epple Bay

BHT Dates For your Diary Forthcoming Events

- 29th Nov 2018 Talk on 'Bover on the Hover'
by Brian Laverick Smith
- 2019**
- 28 March 2019 Talk 'History of Epple Bay'
Janet & John Robinson
Talk 'History of 'Priory Mews'
Mike Kite
- 25 April 2019 'Quiz Night' with
Ann & Doug Holmes
- 30 May 2019 AGM + Short Talks
- 27 June 2019 Talk 'Blue Sky Drifter'
Jennie Burgess
Talk 'Quexpo'
Neville Hudson
- 25 July 2019 Cockney Night with
Nigel Archer
- 26 September 2019 Talk Mary Smith
'Schoolgirl's War' WW2
Mary Smith
- 24 October Talk 2019 'Magic Lantern Show'
Dr Jocelyn Marsh
- 28 November 2019 Musical Evening with
Colin Bridge

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

BHT Talks and Activities

Thursday 27 September 2018 - Bob Ogley's talk on 'Doodlebugs & Rockets' was both entertaining and informative and the large audience made it all the more memorable. We heard how Tempests, then Spitfires would fly alongside the 'buzz' bombs (V1s known as 'doodlebugs') disturbing the airflow and 'tipping' them so that they would crash to earth in an unpopulated area. The nickname 'doodlebug' comes from the larvae of a vicious North American insect the Antlion.

V2 rockets followed the V1s these reached altitudes of over 100 miles at a speed of more the 3000 mph. In retrospect this was the start of the space age with many of the German scientists involved with missile design spirited away to America. Sadly and amazingly no War Crimes were apportioned to the individuals concerned who had caused the loss of so many lives.

Thursday 25 October 2018 - The Quiz Night with Ann & Doug Holmes was yet again a most enjoyable evening with questions that taxed our brains.

Janet Denyer

Birchington's Alphabet

HORTICULTURAL SHOW SOCIETY - an old 1923 Annual Summer Show programme in the museum shows that the society was inaugurated in 1886. The 1923 show was held in the Hall Meadows, Margate Road (now Canterbury Road). The classes were open to residents of Birchington and Acol not holding more than 40 perches of garden ground.

HUDSON'S MILL - The Mill, its outbuildings, and Mill House, were all built in the mid 18th century. The Hudson family owned it for over 50 years before selling it in 1891, and it was later demolished. The footings of the base of the mill and the old coach house may still be seen in the garden of Mill Haven, in Mill Lane.

HUGHENDEN PLACE - This consists of two terraces of houses at the top end of what is now called Westfield Road. It originally consisted of just the short terrace on the east side, but by 1905 the longer terrace on the west side had been added. This section was called Victoria Terrace, but in the Kelly's Directory of 1906-07 the two terraces are both listed under Hughenden Place.

HUGHENDEN LAUNDRY - The laundry stood in Paddock Road, it was advertised in a Birchington brochure for 1903-04, and spoke of the work being done by experienced laundresses and mentioned that it had spacious drying grounds. By 1930 it traded under the name 'Snowdrift Hand Laundry'. The altered building still stands in Paddock Road, but it is now used for storage and a car workshop. The 'drying grounds' have now become the gardens of Hughenden Terrace.

HUNTING GATE - The Hunting Gate estate is built on the site of the playing fields of the old Grenham House School, which closed in 1983. The seventy houses and bungalows were built by the Hunting Gate Homes Southern Limited which was established in 1946.

Janet Robinson

Seasons Greetings

The Birchington Heritage Trust Committee wish all our readership a Merry Christmas and healthy and prosperous New Year.

We look forward to seeing you when visiting our Museum or during any of our events which will be held this coming Year. Better still, bring along a friend as well, which will help spread the word about our museum and our volunteers' hard work.

