



Preserving the Past for the Future

## Newsletter

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### FREDERICK'S and STANLEY'S



Frederick's Bakers c. 1960

In his memoirs James Thomas tells how his grandfather worked for a local bakery in Station Road, Birchington, Lovett's, which became Frederick's. This shop and its neighbour Stanley's once stood at numbers 13 and 15 Station Road, between the old National Westminster Bank (now a pizza shop) and Ferguson's the butcher, formally Frank Maxted (now an upholsterers).

They were built originally in the late 1600s and were the last of the really old buildings on this side of the road. Because of their age and style, they projected out beyond the 20<sup>th</sup> century building line. Thanet Council decided that they needed to go, so the road could be straightened and widened, so they were demolished in 1973.



Lovett's/Frederick's was the bakery and was the left hand one of the pair, at number 15. The last baker was Frederick Norris, who chose his own Christian name for the shop. The door to the shop was not at the front of the shop, but at the side facing west. There was a step down into the premises and at the rear were the ovens, one of the last working brick ovens in Thanet.

Fred Norris worked in his Birchington shop for nineteen years and on a normal weekday he would bake as many as 250 loaves and twice as many on a Saturday. In an interview with the East Kent Times when the shop was due to close, he explained that each of the ovens was over 15ft long and heated to 600 degrees. Heating used as much as one ton of coal every three weeks. At the age of 12 he had taken his first bakery job and at 14 he served a three-year apprenticeship under German and Swedish instructors.

On retirement he intended to take a holiday, his first since 1945.



Stanley's Newsagent c. 1960

Stanley's, formally S. A. Gatter at number 13 Station Road, was a newsagent's shop. Like Frederick's the door was not on the road side, but on the side and faced eastwards towards the Square. Mr. Stanley and his daughter ran the shop, with well stocked shelves of reading matter, sweets, tobacco, small gifts and postcards.

After the two shops were demolished and the road widened, the plot remained in a derelict state for a number of years, until two new properties were built, with offices downstairs and flats above. Having widened Station Road in various places in the 1970's Thanet Council then saw fit to narrow it again in the 1980's, in what was euphemistically called "traffic calming" procedures!

Janet Robinson

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In the month of May 1934 my pregnant mother decided to holiday at the home of her mother at a place called Birchington-on-Sea. This is where I was born, in the top front bedroom of 1 Southend Cottages, Canterbury Road. My father was stationed at the local RAF station at Manston. When my mother was fit to travel, we returned to Penryn, to my paternal grandmother, where I was duly christened in Falmouth. My father was posted abroad and when I was two, we were due to join him in the Persian Gulf. We were unable to do this as I developed bronchial asthma, so my father returned to Manston, where we joined him, living in a bungalow in Park Avenue.

My maternal grandfather was Alfred Wood, a lovely old man with a white bushy moustache and a wonderful sense of humour. He was a baker, working in Station Road at Lovett's Bakery, which later became Frederick's. I can remember being wheeled up to the shop and the smell of hot bread. Because of his work he suffered greatly from a sweat rash and my grandmother, Mary, used to make him special shirts out of unbleached flannel. These shirts could not be boiled – which was the usual fate of linens – and as there were no detergents or washing powders available garments used to be pummelled in a tin bath of hot water, in which a block of green soap had been swished in a wire cage, then rinsed in copious supplies of cold water in a shallow pottery sink in the washhouse.

I was sometimes wheeled to my grandfather's allotment in a holly green painted high wheeled scout cart that he used to keep in a cart shed in the garden of his rented house. He also kept a number of rabbits in hutches, kept to augment the diet.



*Powell's, just beyond Park Avenue.  
Although a private house it still  
retains some shop front features.*

Grandad's father had been employed by the Powell Cotton family of Quex Park and the Southend Cottages were part of the estate and grandad was allowed to rent one. The row of four cottages used to have small front gardens and a communal back yard containing two pairs of galvanised "Lodges" which comprised of a store and a large copper for the weeks wash. White linen on Monday, coloureds Tuesday and ironing Wednesday, with flat irons heated by a coal fired cooker. The needs of the occupants were supplied by "Powell's" shop, a general grocer and first aider at the end of the terrace and for the more affluent, a general store up the road, called "Beddingfields".

Granddad, initially was the round man's boy (having left school at twelve years of age) and was eventually forcibly retired at the age of eighty-two. As rounds man's boy he had to rise early, around four o'clock and catch the horse, harness it to the bread cart and bring it round to the bakery for the first load of the day. They delivered bread over a wide area around Birchington, Westgate, Garlinge, Margate and Acol to Sarre and Monkton, as well as the Quex estate. There were many anecdotes about this period as the horse never wanted to be caught. Also, it had served as the motive power for the local fire engine in its younger days and the result of its early indoctrination was that if it heard the fire bell it would take off at full gallop. On one memorable occasion it tried to clear a hedge with the bread van in tow. Another escapade involved one of the early motor cars, which was coming along a local road, which intersected the bread round. The noise of its passage frightened the horse, who bolted and tried to drag its cart over the top of the motor car. Poor grandad ended up in court over that one, but got away with a severe reprimand, for driving a horse in a furious manner.



*Southend  
Cottages*

Two brothers occupied the house at the end of Southend Cottages. They ran a small haulage business with the aid of a four-wheeled cart and a pair of decrepit horses that were stabled near the allotments in the road called "The Mill". They lived together with a large grey wolfhound type of dog, in poor circumstances. One very hot summer they disappeared and the local 'mafia' discovered they had moved into the stables with the horses! A day or so later the communal yard became infested with fleas, which we witnessed coming over the windowsill of the brother's house in an apparently endless wave. They had, I suppose, experienced a sudden lack of food in the house and were migrating to pastures new. The neighbours decided to deter them by flooding the yard with water from the pumps, but it would seem that fleas are not deterred by such reprisals. So someone – probably Granny Wood – had to call out the 'rat man'. A couple of men turned up and sealed up the house with sticky tape, before fumigating it with burning sulphur. We all had regular daily baths for a week, liberally dosed with Lysol, a potent, but evil smelling pesticide.

When I was about three and a half, my father was posted to RAF Eastchurch, on the Isle of Sheppey, where my mother and I joined him in married quarters. Initially this was in galvanised iron structures on the hill overlooking the airfield and known as Tin Town. After about three months one of the brick-built quarters became vacant across the railway line from the airfield and we moved again.

*(These extracts are from a longer document which can be found in our files) - Compiled from BHT museum sources by Janet Robinson*

**THE BAY HOTEL ORIGINAL PLANS**

Daphne Corney of Penryn, Cornwall had the original plans of the Bay Hotel produced by her father, Harry L Knapman, the Architect and wondered if we were interested in having them.



*Harry L. Knapman - Architect of The Bay Hotel*

The Bay Hotel was built on the headland overlooking Minnis Bay and demolished in 1961, the site is now occupied by Bay View & Sea View Heights.

There are two drawings dated 1907 of the outside elevations in colour and two of the floor plans, measuring 75 cm x 52 cm. We also received a photograph of her father.

We were of course delighted to receive them and they are a valuable asset to our archives.



*Architect's illustration of the Front Elevation of The Bay Hotel*

**Christmas Greetings**

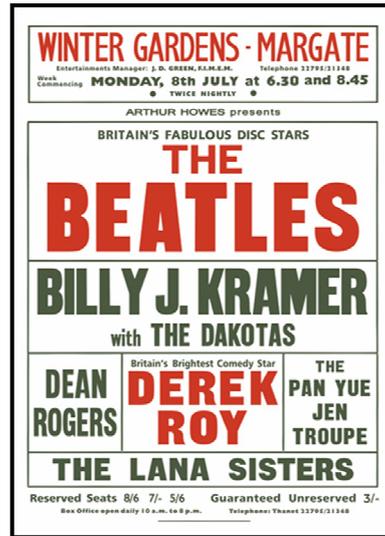
THE BIRCHINGTON HERITAGE TRUST WISH ALL OUR MEMBERS A JOYOUS AND PEACEFUL CHRISTMAS ALONG WITH A HEALTHY AND PROSPEROUS 2020



**THE BEATLES**

Mark Lewisohn from London, an acknowledged authority on The Beatles who has written several books, came into the Museum. He wanted to know what information we had on them when they appeared at the Winter Gardens in July 1963.

We had details of their stay at the Beresford Hotel where photos were taken for the 'Beatles Monthly' magazine. They also had dental work carried out by Norman Bier in Station Road, the bill for which was disputed in a letter by Brian Epstein, their Manager. We are going to receive copies of the bill and letter together with a copy of the magazine for our files.

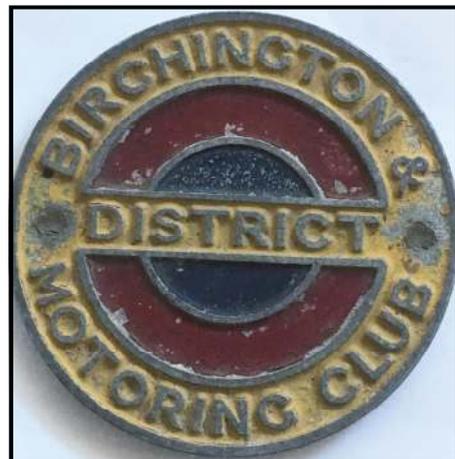


*Winter Gardens Poster advertising The Beatles 1963*

**BIRCHINGTON and DISTRICT MOTORING CLUB**

Barry Knight from Ripple, Kent has given us a Birchington & District Motoring Club badge. The earliest reference we can find to this club is 1932 when it was mentioned in the *Thanet Advertiser* as holding a meeting at the 'New Inn'.

If you have any information on the club we would be very pleased to hear from you.



*Birchington and District Motoring Club Badge*

## BHT Dates For your Diary Talks/Events –

### 2019

**28<sup>th</sup> November** A light hearted early Christmas themed musical evening with the Chalumeaux sound led by Colin Bridge and interspersed with stories

Tickets will be available from the Museum at £6

### 2020

**27<sup>th</sup> February** 'Phantasmagoria' (Audio Visual)  
Jeff Wagner

**26<sup>th</sup> March** Quiz Night  
With Ann & Doug Holmes

**30<sup>th</sup> April** Talk on 'Beyond The Call' VAD by John Drewry

**4<sup>th</sup> June** Race Night  
Howard Willicome

**25<sup>th</sup> June** AGM and 2 Talks by Members

**30<sup>th</sup> July** Talk on Dreamland by Brian Faulkner

**24<sup>th</sup> Sept.** Thanet On Film  
John Robinson & Guests

**29<sup>th</sup> October** Two Talks:  
'A House History' by Colin Bridge  
'Richard Ayres, A Birchington Hero' by Janet Robinson

**26<sup>th</sup> November** Christmas Quiz Night  
Ann & Doug Holmes

7.00 for 7.30pm all Thursdays at  
The Centre, Alpha Road, Birchington.  
The Bar will be available

## Birchington's Alphabet

**CHARLES FIELD.** This was the early name for what is now called Minnis Bay Green, the area behind the dip. It is bounded by Dane Road, Canute Road, Minnis Road, The Parade and is bisected by Arthur Road

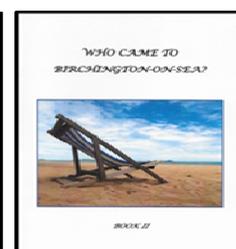
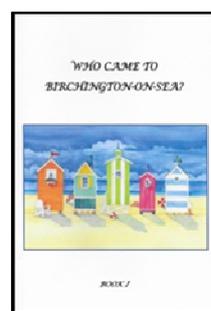
**CHURCH HILL FARM.** The farm used to stand in Canterbury Road, in the plot opposite Kent Gardens. Our records show it as far back as 1688. It was demolished in about 1970 and Ferndale Court retirement flats were built on the site. Part of the old wall of the farm, with its original gateway still stand.

*Janet Robinson*

## WE HAVE PRODUCED THREE NEW BOOKLETS THIS YEAR:

'The Story of the 1847 Sampler' by Jennie Burgess. This Sampler was worked by Ann Hogbin aged 8/9 who lived at Crispe Farm and attended the Crispe Charity School.

'Who Came to Birchington-on-Sea?' Books I & II by Janet Denyer. These books contain brief resumes of who visited, lived or had a direct connection with Birchington, from artists, royalty, authors, barristers and entertainers.



The booklets are A5 in colour and are available in the Museum at £2.50 each.

## PAST EVENTS

### 'A Schoolgirl's War'

This was an interesting talk on 26 September from Mary Smith, a retired Headteacher of Maidstone Grammar School for Girls, who has researched the history of the school.

On searching the school's archives, a bound volume was found containing a scrap book of detailed drawings and paintings of school life during the days of WW2. These had been drawn by Helen Keen, the Art Teacher and are unique insofar as they are colourful and humorous giving a perspective on the day to day life at the school during those momentous years.

Mary Smith has produced a book containing some of Helen Keen's drawings and has even contacted 53 'old' girls to record their recollections during their time at the school. The underground shelters in the grounds where lessons continued during the air raids have now been opened up to allow school visits today, to see the conditions that prevailed during WW2.

*Janet Denyer*

## A Christmas Stocking Filler?

We now have on sale in Our Museum  
Our 2020 Calendar  
£5.00 each