



Birchington Heritage Trust

Reg. Charity No.1099250

LOCKDOWN NEWS SHEET

November 2020

Here are some more Birchington news items from the archives of 'The Thanet Advertiser'.

SIX DAYS WATER SUPPLY

Wells supplying Westgate and Birchington were reported yesterday (Thursday) to contain enough water for only six days.

In our advertisement columns to-day the Westgate and Birchington Water Company draw consumers' attention to the serious shortage. Until further notice the watering of gardens and the washing of cars with water is prohibited and anyone contravening the regulation is liable to a fine of £5.

Domestic users are urged to exercise the greatest economy.

Margate and Broadstairs supplies are in no danger at the moment, but if the situation does not improve watering of gardens will be banned.

30th July 1948

MEN—BY MRS. NEISH

"There is not a man in this country to-day who is not living on his wife's rations," said Mrs. J. Neish, a speaker from the Conservative Central Office, at Birchington, on Wednesday.

Mrs. Neish said she often wondered if men realised what the women had gone through in the last two years. "I am sure the men would not have gone through half as much," she said.

Declaring that men had sacrificed their womenfolk for trade unionism, Mrs. Neish said that, used fairly, trade unions could be useful. To-day they were vile and evil and none of them should be associated with a political body.

Regarding direction of labour, Mrs Neish said women should refuse to enter industry all the time men worked a five-day week.

5th December 1947

FOXES AT BIRCHINGTON.

DEPREDACTIONS AT FARMS.

The farms round Birchington have been suffering from the depredations of foxes, and heavy casualties have been occasioned among the poultry.

A determined effort has been made to rid the district of the raiders, and so far five foxes have been killed, one within 200 yards of the village. Reports, however, have since been received that foxes are still at large in the neighbourhood.

5th June 1920

BIRCHINGTON.

THE ROSSETTI MONUMENT.—Mr. Walter B. Kingsford writes to the *Times* after making a pilgrimage to the churchyard at Birchington—"the Rossetti country." He was much concerned to find that Rossetti's richly-sculptured monument, "designed," as the inscription tells us, "by his life-long friend, Ford Madox Brown," is injured irreparably by action of the weather. Every part of the delicate and beautiful carving is sadly blurred and defaced. He suggests that if the Madox Brown designs are still in evidence, as probably they are, it would seem to be no very difficult matter to substitute an exact facsimile in some material much harder and more enduring.

22nd September 1900

BIRCHINGTON.

Once a Week Only.—Birchington Parochial Committee have rejected the suggestion of a bi-weekly collection of house refuse in the town.

Shelters Deferred.—Birchington Parochial Committee have decided not to proceed with the suggested provision of a number of shelters at Minnis Bay until the future of the district has been definitely settled.

17th March 1933

BIRCHINGTON.

A Clean Face.—The clock at All Saints' Church, Birchington, is about fifty years old, and its dial has just been cleaned and re-gilded after a lapse of thirty years. Those who had difficulty in seeing what the time was before will no doubt appreciate the action of the churchwardens in deciding to give the clock face another wash.

14th August 1923

A WALK TO SCHOOL

FROM THE MEMOIRS OF WILLIAM CLARKE - born 1906

Illustrated with pictures from the Birchington Heritage Trust collection.



(East End Farm in the snow 1912)

“The walk from Epple to the Square was lovely in those days. On the corner of Epple Road was East End Farmhouse. The farmer was Mr. Charlie Pemble, who was a jolly type of man. The farm covered ten acres, bounded by Alpha Road, and nearly to Albion Road.

Chickens and bantams were always around the farmhouse, and one bantam cock would fly up and attack me, and I was very frightened if he was just inside the farm gate.



Leaving the farm on the right there was an archway of trees, sycamore and beech, which met over the road. These were known as Grey's trees, after Mrs. Grey, who lived in Birchington Hall. The trees were so lovely from springtime until the fall.

(1938 East End Villas on the right. The houses are still there, opposite the top of Epple Road.)

Next came Mrs. Vincent's sweet shop, the first shop on the way to school. So many different sweets could be bought there, such as Calibunkers bars, sherbet dips, aniseed balls and Spanish everlasting strips. The best chocolate could be had for tuppence, lemonade, cherry-cider and ice-cream soda were sold in bottles that had a glass marble in the top which was pushed inside by forcing the bottle mouth onto a little knob on the side of the counter.



(shops opposite Park Road, c1938. Now the site of Yew Tree Close)



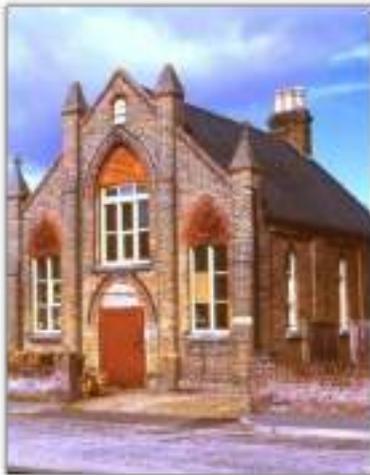
A little further on stood Yew Tree House, a few yards up a driveway where there were several walnut trees. We often scrumpted the new walnuts on the ground. On the ground close to the roadside the Rose Show was sometimes held, usually opened by Mrs. Major Powell Cotton.

(Yew Tree House, now the Yew Tree estate)

Behind what is now the fish and chip shop, stood a large barn where the Church held late summer Sunday School treats, and was probably the largest barn I ever saw. On the roadside was a small cottage, the roof outline of which can still be seen on the end of the Smuggler's Restaurant. Here an old lady, Mrs Brockman, lived, and always stood at the wooden gate. She was part of the walk to the Square and most everyone stopped to talk to her, she was quite interesting too.



1.(Neame Barns, I wonder if that is Mrs. Brockman at the gate.) 2. (How it looked in 1999)



I went to a small school in Albion Road, where we had slate pencils and boards, and a pad with velvet on two sides to rub out the letters or figures for the next lesson.

(This was at the Primitive Methodist Chapel, which became part of Birchington Engineering, and the site is now Taplin Court retirement flats)

At the age of seven we went to a larger school in Park Lane. I remember there used to be an old man, called Hamish Golder, who sold things like aniseed balls, tiger

nuts, and in winter time, scorched peas, which the boys called 'Amy's scorched farts'. All his goodies were on a small barrow, and everything could be had for a halfpenny or a penny.



(One of the Golder family started a shop in a shed next to his home at 2 Fountain Cottages, now no. 9 Park Lane, the white house in the picture.)

Games used to be played on the way to school, like marbles and spinning tops. All these games were played at certain times in the season. In winter we sometimes had tins with holes in the two ends, with smouldering pieces of rag inside called winter warmers. Very often these got too hot to hold, and were kicked in the road.



(The old Park Lane School 1959)

The headmaster at the school was a much loved and respected slim-built man who, when bad weather threatened, would see to it that those children who had to walk far would be let out earlier. His name was Mr. Charles Laming, a very kind and thoughtful man, who during that terrible war (WW1) thought of the boys he had taught, now in France and parts of the old Empire. He organized and collected warm scarves and clothing, not forgetting the proverbial

Woodbine cigarettes, which were sent to the war zone. He lived in the house attached to the school.



Mr. Laming took a great interest in the boys when they left school at fourteen years of age. So much so that he acquired a small piece of land from Major Powell Cotton in Park Lane, and had several apprentice boys to build a clubhouse. I was a bricklayer's apprentice, and he would sometimes call on my mother and ask if I could go and help. My mother was as concerned as the headmaster, and would let me know in no uncertain manner, by the look in her eye, that she would not be pleased if I did not take my tools and go. Eventually the club-house

was completed and served as a club called The Old Scholars."

(The Old Scholars Club 1971 – later the Band Hut)

William Clarke spent his working life as a bricklayer. He worked for Lockwood's of Westgate, building the golf clubhouse, and Rice and Sons when they were building the telephone exchange in Addington Square in Margate.

I hope you have enjoyed this wander around Birchington, which is only part of Williams memoirs, the full article is in the files at the museum.

We also have more than one full file on the history of Park Lane School, and I am sure there will be a picture of Charles Laming in one of them.

Special mention must go to Bob Hinge, who set up and runs the website for Birchington Heritage Society, and keeps the Image Gallery up- to- date. If you haven't been on the site for a while do have a look, there are some lovely pictures of Birchington through the ages

Janet Robinson.