

## **Press Release: Birchington Artworks: gifting celebration**

KCC has recently agreed to gift 4 artworks to the Birchington Heritage Trust including 3 by famous local artist David Burley.

The pictures were part of the Thanet library collection, but KCC agreed to gift them when they were approached by local County Councillor Roger Latchford on behalf of the Birchington Heritage Trust earlier this year.

David Burley is probably best known for his railway posters but he also worked on camouflage design in the Second World War and undertook commissions for Hovis, Whitbread and other major clients. He retired to Birchington in 1948 where he and his wife Lorna played a major role in village life until his death in 1990. He is still fondly remembered and The Village Centre is testimony to his contribution to community life.

The Chairman of Birchington Heritage Trust, Gerry Davis said 'we are delighted that KCC has agreed to gift these pictures which will be put in our Museum'.

Mike Hill, KCC Cabinet Member for Libraries, Registration and Archives, said: "KCC is keen to ensure the best possible public access and we are confident that Birchington Heritage Trust is the most appropriate body to own these artworks which have special significance for the people of Birchington. KCC no longer provides a local museum service and we are keen to ensure works of art remain in the ownership of local community'.

The pictures are Self Portrait, Old Margate and Yacht in Harbour by David Burley and a watercolour of Birchington Square dated 1848.

### **ENDS**

The Media are invited to attend a celebration to mark the gifting of the artworks at 3.00 p.m. on 22<sup>nd</sup> October at Birchington library. Tea and cakes will be served following speeches by Mike Hill and Gerry Davis.

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## **DAVID BURLEY - 1902/1990**

- Born in Greenwich in 1902. Married Lorna and lived in Blackheath.
- Studied at Goldsmith's College of Art.
- Joined Southern Railway as a staff artist. His paintings were used in railway carriages and on station platforms to advertise resorts all over the country. The National Railway Museum has a collection of his posters.
- Worked on camouflage design for the War Office in WW2. His work also included advertisements in books, magazines and newsprint.
- Undertook private commissions such as posters for Hovis, Chessington Zoo and advertisement designs for Cunard's 'Queen Mary'.
- Designed a map for Whitbread's Brewery showing the inn signs of their public houses in East and West Kent.
- Exhibited at Royal Academy and Royal Institute of Watercolour Painters.
- Retired early in 1948 when he and his wife Lorna (a professional musician) came to Birchington.
- They moved into part of 'Beaconsfield' a large house in Alpha Road.
- It was the west side of the 'Beaconsfield' garden on which Birchington Library was built in 1967.
- A tutor for Galleon Holidays and also taught in Adult Education within Thanet.
- He took groups on painting holidays in England and abroad.
- David & Lorna's interest in village life involved them in the Guild of Players, Art Groups and with Margate Theatre.
- He started a fund in 1953 for what he called the 'Village Centre' and designed the building to house it. It was through his initiative that the Quexpo Events from 1970 to 1986 raised funds for the Village Centre to be built in 1974 on ground at the rear of the Library.
- Sadly he died in 1990 aged 88, but the legacy left to the village is enormous. In 1994 the large room at the front of the Library was renamed 'The Burley Gallery' in his honour and opened by John Brazier, Head of Arts Promotion, KCC.



David and Lorna Burley at Minnis Bay c. 1985