

# The Exhibition – Minnis Bay From Miss Haig

## 1885 – Exhibition and fair

Exhibition building in hollow at Minnis Bay – built by Mr Arthur Rayden, a stockbroker.

He was a friend of Mr Haig, Miss Haig's father.

The Exhibition was, I believe, in aid of the Institute founded by Major Bell.

## 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1885 – Keble's Gazette

Has advertisement of the Exhibition, which was a great success and made a profit of £240. The advert was 3 columns of the front page. Next to Exhibition building was Conservatory where Mr Rayden kept rare tropical birds.

Mr Rayden was the ? spirit of the Birchington Bay Estate ?.

In 1885 the Institute were planning a “?, exhibition, fancy fair and horticultural show” in aid of their friends.

Mr Rayden, with an eye no doubt on publicity for his estate offered to erect in the Bay, at his own expense, “a large substantial building” to house the stalls and exhibits and in a short time a rather barn-like structure arose in the grassy hollow near the sea. From the timber left over from the Exhibition building and the local labour available on its completion a little wooden congregational church was built.

Storm November 19<sup>th</sup> 1897 wrecked the exhibition building and the conservatory.

Water came up to Minnis Bay Post Office.

**J.P. Barrett. In his History of Birchington** - “The Exhibition opened for 3 days, visited by a large number of people from all parts of the island and elsewhere. (Cheap tickets were issued by the railway to Birchington to visit the Exhibition). **The object was to reduce the mortgage upon the Institute.**”

**From Keble's Gazette 4<sup>th</sup> July 1885** – “The Exhibition building is to be 100 feet long by 30 feet wide, with 2 wings, each 25' x 20'.

**22<sup>nd</sup> August 1885** – The Exhibition was advertised on the front page of the Keble's Gazette – 3 columns the whole length of the page.

It was under the patronage of H.R. Imperial Highness the Duchess of Edinburgh. In the newspaper there is a long account of the Exhibition – the building was under the direction of Mr Arthur Rayden (he also erected the gasholder in Gas Row at Birchington some years previously. He later had provided the wood for a church built to seat 250 persons at the Birchington Bay Estate by Charles Haig.

**29<sup>th</sup> August 1885** – A long account of the opening of the Exhibition - **in aid of the Institute funds**. Major Bell – President of the Institute, acted as Chairman and introduced Mrs Brassey who opened the Exhibition. The contents of the Exhibition were insured for £8000. It was visited by 4 or 5 thousand people during the 3 days it was open and **over £240 profit for the Institute funds**.

**1900** – (Parish Magazine) Arrangements were made for services to be held in the Exhibition for the Anglicans in the Exhibition Building on Thursdays at 7pm for the benefit of Coastguards and families.