

PRIVATE SCHOOL IN MINNIS BAY

During the 1930s there was a small private school in Minnis Bay run by Miss H. Lawrance. She owned a house in Horsa Road called "Sunset View", which stood at the end of the road near the railway line and its pedestrian crossing. In the first few entries under her name in Kelly's Directory, the school is not specifically named, but it must have been functioning from about 1930-31.

In the 1935 Kelly's she is listed under her own name first and beneath this it states;

"MINNIS BAY PREPARATORY SCHOOL for BOYS & GIRLS - Miss H. Lawrance N.F.U. L.T.C.L. Principal"

The first of her qualification is "National Froebel Union", a qualification that was specifically aimed at teaching very young children. Her other qualification may have been "Licentiate of the Teachers' College, London", but this is only an educated guess.

This entry is repeated in 1936, but by 1937 the school has been closed and she has moved to 5, Coast Guard Cottages, Minnis Bay. She remains there until WW 2 began. There is no sign of her after the war either in Minnis Bay or anywhere else in Birchington.

It is quite possible that she was evacuated away from Birchington during the war, as so many people were, and simply chose not to return at the end of it. Although her school was active for such a brief period, a number of people have enquired about it in the last couple of years. Their abiding memory seems to be of its site, so near the railway and looking across at some amazing sunsets. There was a large shed at the foot of the garden, which is still standing. It was used as a classroom and the walls were lined with boarding, as both insulation and to make it look more like a classroom.

There are no photos of it during its active years, unfortunately. Apart from the enquirers, it would have faded entirely into oblivion, so we have to thank these people for prodding us into uncovering a snippet of our educational past.

Jennie Burgess (Archivist) July 2009